

14.10c Fifth Judge, Gideon's Victory (Judges 7:9–25)

✓ “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.
- Beka Flash-a-Cards for “Judges” are recommended.

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach: (None for this lesson.)

- *middle watch*: the time to guard from 10:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m.

Scripture: (ESV)

Judges 7:9 That same night the Lord said to him, “Arise, go down against the camp, for I have given it into your hand. 10 But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant. 11 And you shall hear what they say, and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp.” Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outposts of the armed men who were in the camp. 12 And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the people of the East lay along the valley like locusts in abundance, and their camels were without number, as the sand that is on the seashore in abundance. 13 When Gideon came, behold, a man was telling a dream to his comrade. And he said, “Behold, I dreamed a dream, and behold, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian and came to the tent and struck it so that it fell and turned it upside down, so that the tent lay flat.” 14 And his comrade answered, “This is no other than the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel; God has given into his hand Midian and all the camp.”

15 As soon as Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, he worshiped. And he returned to the camp of Israel and said, “Arise, for the Lord has given the host of Midian into your hand.” 16 And he divided the 300 men into three companies and put trumpets into the hands of all of them and empty jars, with torches inside the jars. 17 And he said to them, “Look at me, and do likewise. When I come to the outskirts of the camp, do as I do. 18 When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then blow the trumpets also on every side of all the camp and shout, ‘For the Lord and for Gideon.’”

19 So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outskirts of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, when they had just set the watch. And they blew the trumpets and smashed the jars that were in their hands. 20 Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the jars. They held in their left hands the torches, and in their right hands the trumpets to blow. And they cried out, “A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!” 21 Every man stood in his place around the camp, and all the army ran. They cried out and fled. 22 When they blew the 300 trumpets, the Lord set every man’s sword against his comrade and against all the army. And the army fled as far as Beth-shittah toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel-meholah, by Tabbath. 23 And the men of Israel were called out from Naphtali and from Asher and from all Manasseh, and they pursued after Midian.

24 Gideon sent messengers throughout all the hill country of Ephraim, saying, “Come down against the Midianites and capture the waters against them, as far as Beth-barah, and also the Jordan.” So all the men of Ephraim were called out, and they captured the waters as far as Beth-barah, and also the Jordan. 25 And they captured the two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they killed at the winepress of Zeeb. Then they pursued Midian, and they brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon across the Jordan.

Introduction/Review:

Gideon’s name is also Jerubbaal, which means “let Baal plead.” Why did this become Gideon’s name?
[Because when Gideon destroyed Baal’s altar and images, Gideon’s father, Joah, said, “Let Baal plead for

himself.” Did Baal plead for himself? Did he do anything to repair his altar? No. Why not? Because Baal is not the one true God.

What sign regarding fleece did Gideon ask for? [On the first night, that the fleece be wet and the ground be dry; on the second night, that the ground be wet and the fleece dry.]

Tell how many soldiers showed up to fight. [32,000.] When the army was pared down to the size God wanted, how many soldiers of Israel were there? [300.]

Story:

Checking out the enemy

Those few 300 men of Gideon got provisions ✓perhaps food, rams’ horns, clay jars, and torches for themselves. That same night the Lord again spoke to Gideon: “Go down against the camp of the Midianites in the valley, for I have delivered it into your hand. But if you are afraid, go down with just your servant. You will hear what they say, and afterward you will be encouraged to go against the camp.”

So Gideon and his servant went down, set themselves near a tent on the outskirts of the camp, and overheard a man telling a friend his dream: “A loaf of barley bread tumbled down into the camp of Midian and struck a tent so that the tent collapsed upside down!”

The Midianite’s friend replied, “This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel! God has delivered Midian and the whole camp into Gideon’s hand.”*

When Gideon heard this, he worshiped and returned to Israel’s camp, saying, “Get up, for the Lord has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand.”

Preparing for battle

Listen to this strange battle plan: Gideon divided the 300 into three companies of one hundred men each. He gave each man a ram’s horn trumpet in his right hand and empty pitchers with torches inside in their left hands. Gideon instructed his men, “When we get to the edge of the camp, when I blow the trumpet, then you blow the trumpets all around the camp and say, ‘The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!’”

Standing in battle

Surrounding them in three companies, Israel came close to the enemy camp when they were changing guard at the middle watch at 10:00 p.m. ✓Perhaps the enemy was noisy and focused on its own activities.

Unexpectedly, Gideon’s 300 blew their trumpets, broke their pitchers, held high their torches, and cried, “The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!” Not advancing but blowing and shouting, Israel stood there. Listen to the blaring trumpets, crashing jars, and shouting voices. Imagine the sudden blaze of light all around.

What happened next was certainly of God. Many of the Midianites died in the battle.

Wait a minute! Didn’t I say Gideon’s men did not advance but stood on the hill shouting and blowing? How did the Midianites die then? This is what happened: God caused the Midianites, Amalekites, and people of the East to be so confused that they began to fight against themselves. One soldier fought against his fellow soldier. It happened all over the Midianite camp. Those who escaped being killed by a fellow soldier fled. They wanted to get out of there!

Mopping up

Now Gideon’s men pursued, and more men of Israel—from Naphtali, Asher, and all Manasseh—(✓maybe the former cowards and the former “lappers” of water) also chased after Midian. Gideon increased their number by sending messengers throughout the mountains of Ephraim, saying, “Go against Midian and stop them at the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan.” No doubt, this was to slay many and to keep the Midianites, Amalekites, and people of the East from crossing the Jordan in order to escape to their own countries.

The soldiers from Ephraim did as they were told: they pursued the Midianites and were able to kill two princes of Midian. There's more to this story. We will continue it next week.

*Because of what happens later, one wonders how widespread the fear of Gideon was.

Lessons from this lesson:

- We see Jesus:
God gave Gideon the victory in the physical battle against Israel's enemies. God gives believers victory over their sin and against the enemy, Satan, through Jesus Christ. (See memory verse.)
- Do you worship when you hear good news as Gideon did at the tent of the Midianite soldier? Start saying, "Praise the Lord," when He blesses you.

Activities:

- Play dough: pitchers; ram's horns; torches
- Snack: Barley bread served with preserves. It was considered very poor bread, representative of the low respect for Israel by Midian. A recipe that has the dough rising twice is found at <https://www.food.com/recipe/egyptian-barley-bread-423725>. As for finding barley flour, it appears that Wal-Mart carries it. Look for Bob's Red Mill® label, or order online from <https://www.bobsredmill.com/barley-flour.html>.
- Roll the barley loaf game: roll a soft rubber ball to knock over a basket or a "tent" made out of a piece of cloth held up by stick.
- Review questions: (Game: Print and cut apart the clipart torches found below. Students may place a torch in a pocket chart or on a flannel board after answering a question correctly.)
 1. Where did God send Gideon and his servant? [To the outskirts of the camp of Midian.]
 2. The number of Midianites was compared to what two things? [Locusts; sands of the seashore.]
 3. Gideon overheard a Midianite tell his dream. What was the dream? [A loaf of barley bread came down the hill and destroyed a tent.]
 4. What was the interpretation of the dream? ["This is no other than the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel; God has given into his hand Midian and all the camp."]
 5. What did Gideon do immediately after hearing the dream and its interpretation? [Worshipped.]
 6. Into how many camps did Gideon divide the 300 men? [Three.]
 7. What did Gideon give all the soldiers? [Trumpets (ram's horns), empty jars with torches inside the jars.]
 8. What did Gideon's soldiers do at about 10:00 p.m.? [Blew the trumpets; smashed the jars so that the torches could shine; cried out, "A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!"]
 9. What happened to the Midianites? [The Lord set every man's sword against his comrade and against all the army. Those who did not die in the "friendly fire" fled.]
 10. Why did Gideon ask Ephraim to stop the enemies at the Jordan? [So that this natural barrier might stop them from getting away and so that they might slay the enemy.]

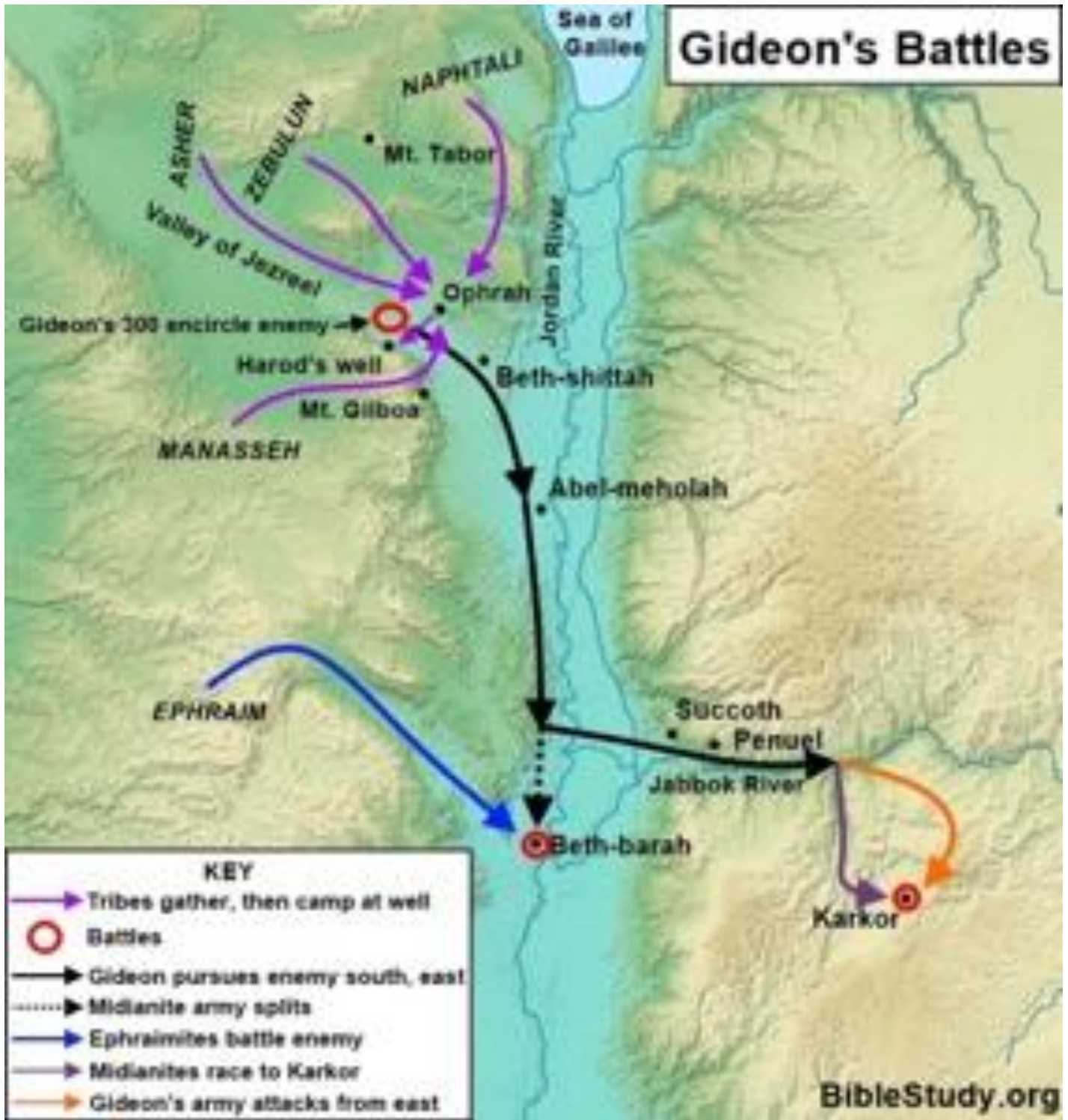
Memory Verse[s]:

- 1 Corinthians 15:57—But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Handwork:

- Make Gideon's torch with or without a tea light as found at <https://www.ohmy-creative.com/kids-crafts/glowing-tea-light-olympic-torch/>. (Sorry. Lots of advertisements crowd this site.)

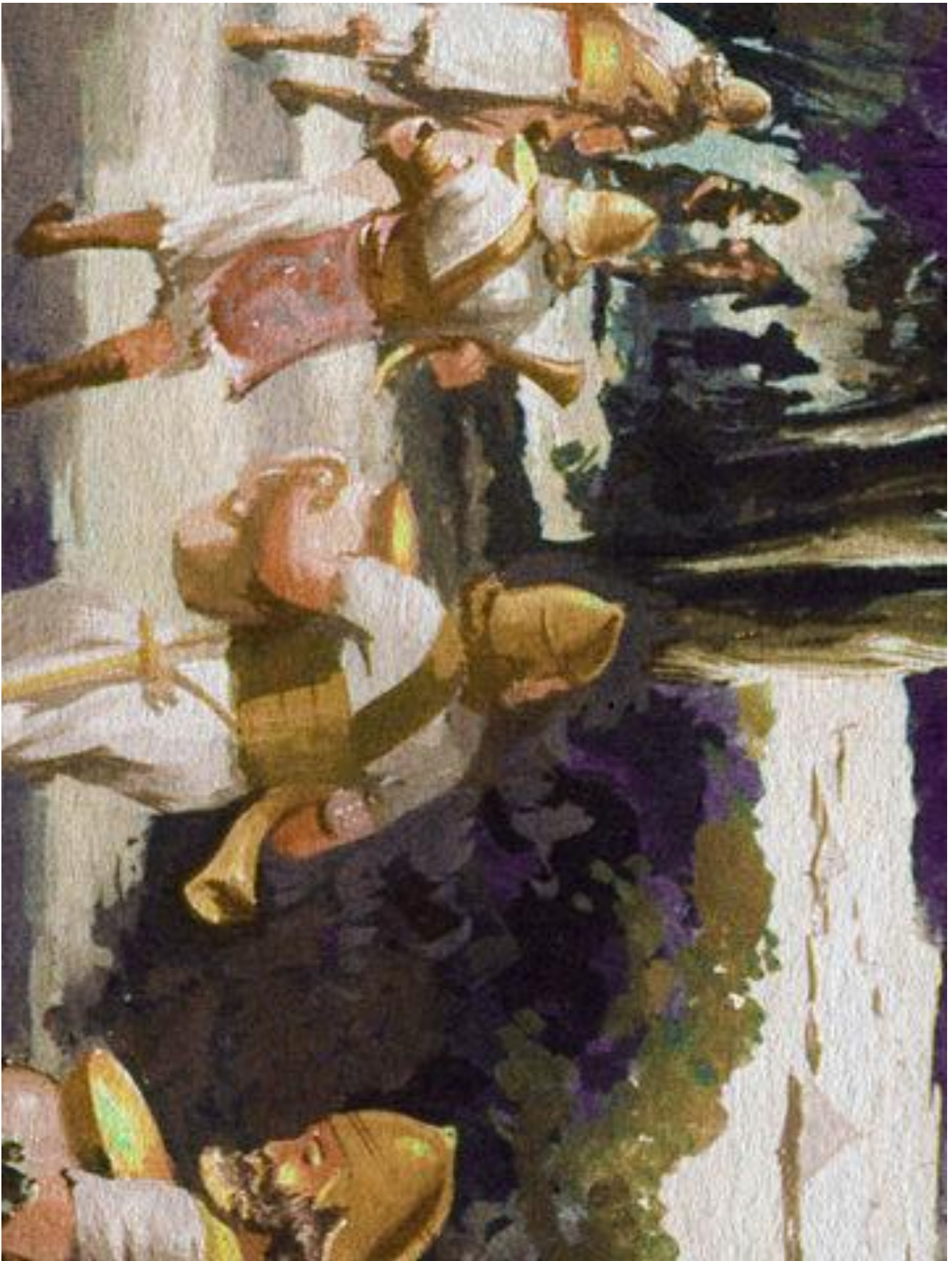
middle watch



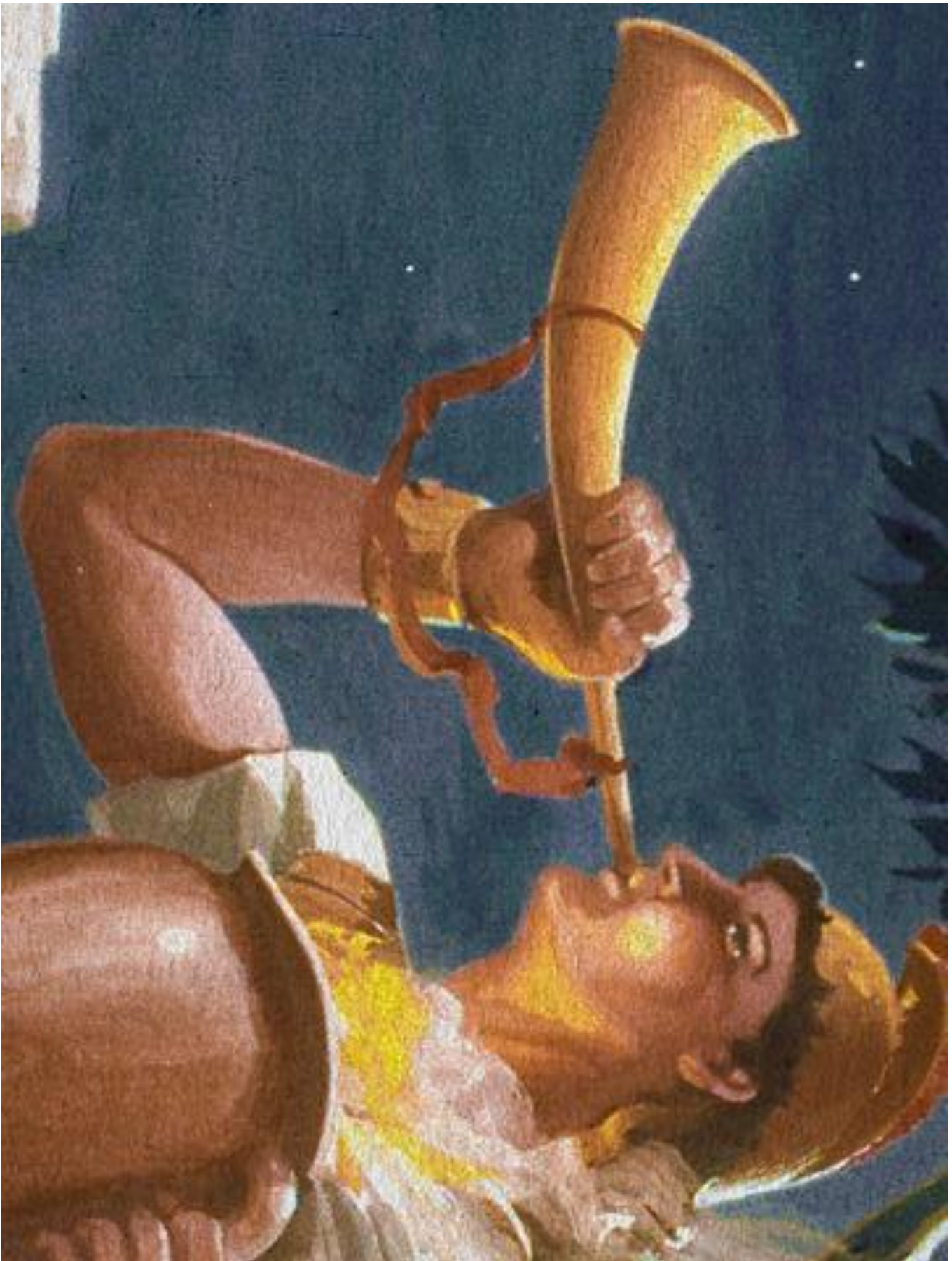
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