

17.11 At the Cave of Adullam; Priests Slain at Nob (1 Samuel 22:1–23; Psalms 142; 52)

✓ “*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:

- 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.

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.

- (none this lesson)

Scripture: (ESV)

1 Samuel 22:1 David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam. And when his brothers and all his father’s house heard it, they went down there to him. 2 And everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was bitter in soul, gathered to him. And he became commander over them. And there were with him about four hundred men.

3 And David went from there to Mizpeh of Moab. And he said to the king of Moab, “Please let my father and my mother stay with you, till I know what God will do for me.” 4 And he left them with the king of Moab, and they stayed with him all the time that David was in the stronghold. 5 Then the prophet Gad said to David, “Do not remain in the stronghold; depart, and go into the land of Judah.” So David departed and went into the forest of Hereth.

6 Now Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men who were with him. Saul was sitting at Gibeah under the tamarisk tree on the height with his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him. 7 And Saul said to his servants who stood about him, “Hear now, people of Benjamin; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, will he make you all commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, 8 that all of you have conspired against me? No one discloses to me when my son makes a covenant with the son of Jesse. None of you is sorry for me or discloses to me that my son has stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day.” 9 Then answered Doeg the Edomite, who stood by the servants of Saul, “I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, 10 and he inquired of the Lord for him and gave him provisions and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.”

11 Then the king sent to summon Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father’s house, the priests who were at Nob, and all of them came to the king. 12 And Saul said, “Hear now, son of Ahitub.” And he answered, “Here I am, my lord.” 13 And Saul said to him, “Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, in that you have given him bread and a sword and have inquired of God for him, so that he has risen against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?” 14 Then Ahimelech answered the king, “And who among all your servants is so faithful as David, who is the king’s son-in-law, and captain over your bodyguard, and honored in your house? 15 Is today the first time that I have inquired of God for him? No! Let not the king impute anything to his servant or to all the house of my father, for your servant has known nothing of all this, much or little.”

16 And the king said, “You shall surely die, Ahimelech, you and all your father’s house.” 17 And the king said to the guard who stood about him, “Turn and kill the priests of the Lord, because their hand also is with David, and they knew that he fled and did not disclose it to me.” But the servants of the king would not put out their hand to strike the priests of the Lord. 18 Then the king said to Doeg, “You turn and strike the priests.” And Doeg the Edomite turned and struck down the priests, and he killed on that day eighty-five persons who wore the linen ephod. 19 And Nob, the city of the priests, he put to the sword; both man and woman, child and infant, ox, donkey and sheep, he put to the sword.

20 But one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped and fled after David. 21

And Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the priests of the Lord. 22 And David said to Abiathar, “I knew on that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul. I have occasioned the death of all the persons of your father’s house. 23 Stay with me; do not be afraid, for he who seeks my life seeks your life. With me you shall be in safekeeping.”

Psalm 142:1 A Maskil of David, when he was in the cave. A Prayer.

With my voice I cry out to the Lord; with my voice I plead for mercy to the Lord. 2 I pour out my complaint before him; I tell my trouble before him.

3 When my spirit faints within me, you know my way! In the path where I walk they have hidden a trap for me. 4 Look to the right and see: there is none who takes notice of me; no refuge remains to me; no one cares for my soul.

5 I cry to you, O Lord; I say, “You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.” 6 Attend to my cry, for I am brought very low! Deliver me from my persecutors, for they are too strong for me! 7 Bring me out of prison, that I may give thanks to your name! The righteous will surround me, for you will deal bountifully with me.

To the choirmaster. A Maskil of David, when Doeg, the Edomite, came and told Saul, “David has come to the house of Ahimelech.”

Psalm 52:1 Why do you boast of evil, O mighty man? The steadfast love of God endures all the day. 2 Your tongue plots destruction, like a sharp razor, you worker of deceit. 3 You love evil more than good, and lying more than speaking what is right. Selah 4 You love all words that devour, O deceitful tongue.

5 But God will break you down forever; he will snatch and tear you from your tent; he will uproot you from the land of the living. Selah 6 The righteous shall see and fear, and shall laugh at him, saying, 7 “See the man who would not make God his refuge, but trusted in the abundance of his riches and sought refuge in his own destruction!”

8 But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God. I trust in the steadfast love of God forever and ever. 9 I will thank you forever, because you have done it. I will wait for your name, for it is good, in the presence of the godly.

Introduction/Review:

David escaped from his house; from Samuel’s school of prophets; from Gibeah, where Jonathan helped him; from Nob, when he got Goliath’s sword; and from Philistine Gath, where he acted insane. Now where will he go?

Story:

The cave at Adullam

David traveled about ten miles southeast of Gath to an area with high cliffs and many caves. A city was also in the area, but David stayed in the caves. His whole family, including his brothers, who were now also considered to be Saul’s enemies, learned where David was and went to join him at the cave of Adullam. Other men also came to David—men who were in trouble or had problems like being in debt or being discontented. About 400 men—not very desirable men—were with David, who was not going out against Saul but merely protecting himself if Saul should come after him.

This isn’t the first time we’ve heard about discontents and men of little repute coming to rally around a leader. Others were the judges Jephthah and Abimelech. How could a leader keep such problem-filled men from mutiny or from being disruptive in their new situation? I don’t know, but God uses the poor of this world and the things and people who are nothing, to accomplish His holy will. Also, consider how difficult it would be to hide and feed four hundred men.

David poured out his soul to God and depended on God to protect him. Psalm 142 was written in the cave.

[Teacher, perhaps this would be a good place to read it in order to see how David felt in this hiding place.]

But this cave was no place for his elderly mother and father. So he took them on the long journey around the Dead Sea to Mizpeh of Moab, where he asked the king to protect them “till I know what God will do for me” (1 Samuel 22:3).

After David’s parents were safe and he was safely back at Adullam, God sent a prophet named Gad to tell David to get out of the cave and go to Judah. There, about five to ten miles southeast, was the Forest of Hereth, another place to hide.

The king under a tree

Meanwhile Saul was back at Gibeah, sitting under a tree, spear in hand, with his servants standing around him. “David is seeking to slay me,” he whined.

Was that true? No! Saul was seeking *David’s* life.

Saul continued his complaint. “None of you servants has told me that my son Jonathan has stirred up David against me to try to get me by hiding away.”

Had Jonathan stirred up David? No. Was David waiting for a chance to slay Saul? No. Sometimes people imagine weird things when they don’t get facts straight.

“Now tell me,” continued Saul, “will David give you rewards ✓as I have—fields, vineyards, making you captains over thousands and hundreds? No, but you are all working against me. You don’t even feel sorry for me. You won’t even tell me what you know.”

The man from Edom

At that, Doeg, the man from Edom [locate south of Moab, east of the Dead Sea] spoke up. Do you remember him? Where did David see Doeg? [When he got bread and Goliath’s sword from the priests at Nob.]

Now Doeg produced some information for Saul. He said, “I saw the son of Jesse go to Ahimelech, the priest in Nob. Ahimelech asked God’s direction for David—.”

What a minute! Was that true? Scripture doesn’t record that Ahimelech asked God’s direction for David. In fact, the priest will later deny this charge.

Doeg continued, “Ahimelech gave David food and Goliath’s sword.”

Now, that was true, but Doeg left off the part that David had misled the priest by saying that he was on the king’s business when he was not.

The priests before Saul

What would Saul do with this news? Why, he would summon Ahimelech and all the eighty-five priests to come before him in Gibeah.

When the priests arrived, Saul commanded, “Listen to me, you son of Ahitub.”

“Here I am, my lord,” answered Ahimelech.

“Why did you and the son of Jesse plot together by giving him food and a sword and inquiring of God for him so that he can hide and then attack me?”

Ahimelech the priest answered, “Who is so faithful among all your servants as David, who is the king’s son-in-law and does whatever you ask and is honorable in your house? I didn’t inquire of God for him. I didn’t know what was happening. Please don’t blame me or my family for this.”

“You shall surely die!” ✓shouted Saul, “you and all you father’s family. Guards, slay these priests of the Lord because they side with David. They knew when he ran away and didn’t tell me!”

Oh, how Saul showed his wicked heart! He was willing even to slay the priests of God ✓because of his own self-interest. But the guards refused to slay the priests of the Lord, for they knew these priests had been anointed for God's service and should not be killed wholesale as Saul wished.

So the king saw Doeg standing there and commanded, "You turn and strike the priests." Being an Edomite, ✓Doeg really didn't fear God but readily did what Saul asked, even going back to Nob to destroy the whole city, including the women, children, and animals.

The escaped priest before David

Thankfully, one of Ahimelech's sons, Abiathar, escaped, found David, and told him what had happened. Surely, ✓David was full of sadness when he recalled, "I knew Doeg would tell Saul. I have caused all of your family to lose their lives. Now stay with me, Abiathar, because those who seek my life seek yours also. We will keep you safe."

Now, as bad as Saul's acts against the priests were, the deaths of the priests was actually a fulfillment of a prophecy that had to do with Eli. God had foretold He would cut off all of Eli's family from being priests because his sons were wicked and Eli did not restrain them. God uses means to accomplish His purposes. In this case, God used the madness of self-absorbed King Saul.

Another Scripture involved in this situation also shows God's work in all events. In 1 Samuel 21:7 we see that at the time when Doeg saw David, Doeg was "detained before the *Lord*" (emphasis added). God knew how He would use this man in carrying out His plans.

Lessons from This Lesson:

- We see Jesus:

(Display the "Cave of Adullam" chart found below and point out the comparisons between David and Jesus.)

In addition, consider that David provided a safe place of care for his parents. Jesus, on the cross, committed the care of His mother Mary to His disciple John.

Activities:

- Play dough: trees (for the Forest of Hereth or the tree under which Saul was sitting)
- Snack: Sugar cookies in the form of a cave or a tree (see next activity.)
- Put bed sheets over a table so that students may eat their snack under the table in a "cave."
- Discuss the following: Some churches and ministries are named Adullam. Why would they choose this name? Of the several possible reasons might be included the idea of helping people who are or have been in some kind of trouble. It could be a name for those who recognize that even in dark times, God is with them, and God might even exalt one "in a cave" to a higher place, at least spiritually if not physically.
- Read Psalms 142 and 52.
- Review questions: (Game: Using the pattern found below or the finished craft below, have students place a tree in a pocket chart for each correct answer.)
 1. What was the name of the cave to which David escaped? [Adullam.]
 2. What two groups of people came to David at Adullam? [His family; four hundred troubled men.]
 3. Where did David take his parents for safety? [To the king of Moab.]
 4. Fill in the blank. When Gad the prophet told David to leave Adullam, he went to the _____ of Hereth. [Forest.]
 5. When Saul sat under a tree with his servants around him, he complained that _____.

[Accept one answer from the following: “(1) No one discloses to me that my son has stirred up David against me; (2) no one feels sorry for me; (3) no one let me know when my son made a covenant with the son of Jesse.”

6. Who spoke up to give some information about David? [Doeg the Edomite.]
7. What did Doeg say? [He saw David with the priest in Nob; the priest gave David food, counsel, and Goliath’s sword.]
8. When Saul called all the priests to him, who refused to slay them? [The guards.]
9. Who did slay the priests, their women and children, and their animals? [Doeg.]
10. Who among the priests escaped and came to David? [Abiathar.]

Memory Verse[s]:

- Psalm 23:1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. 3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. 5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Handwork:

- To remind of the Forest of Hereth or of the tree under which Saul sat, glue 1-inch squares of green tissue paper to paper or card stock trees, attaching the paper with the eraser end of a pencil. (See pattern below.)

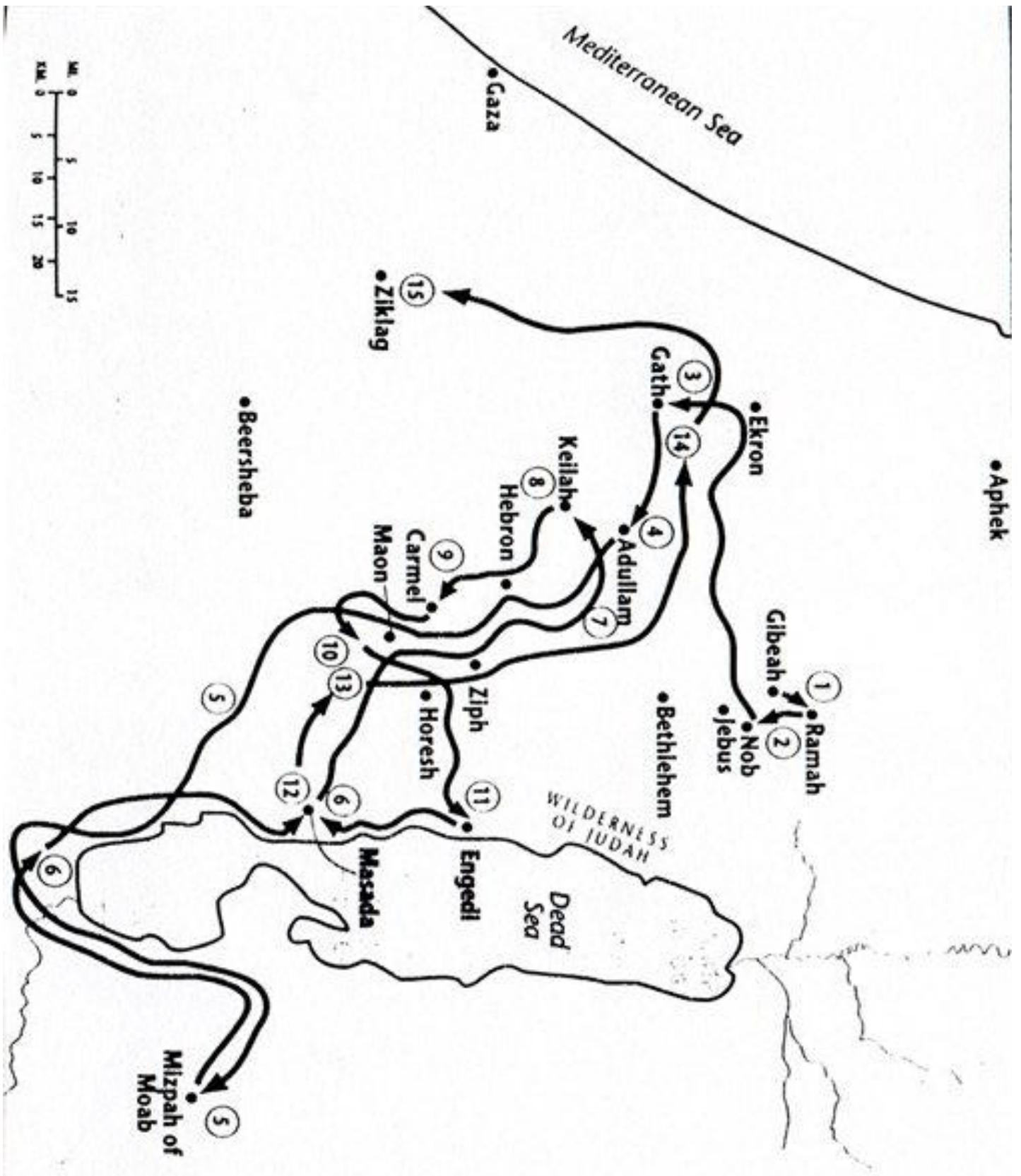




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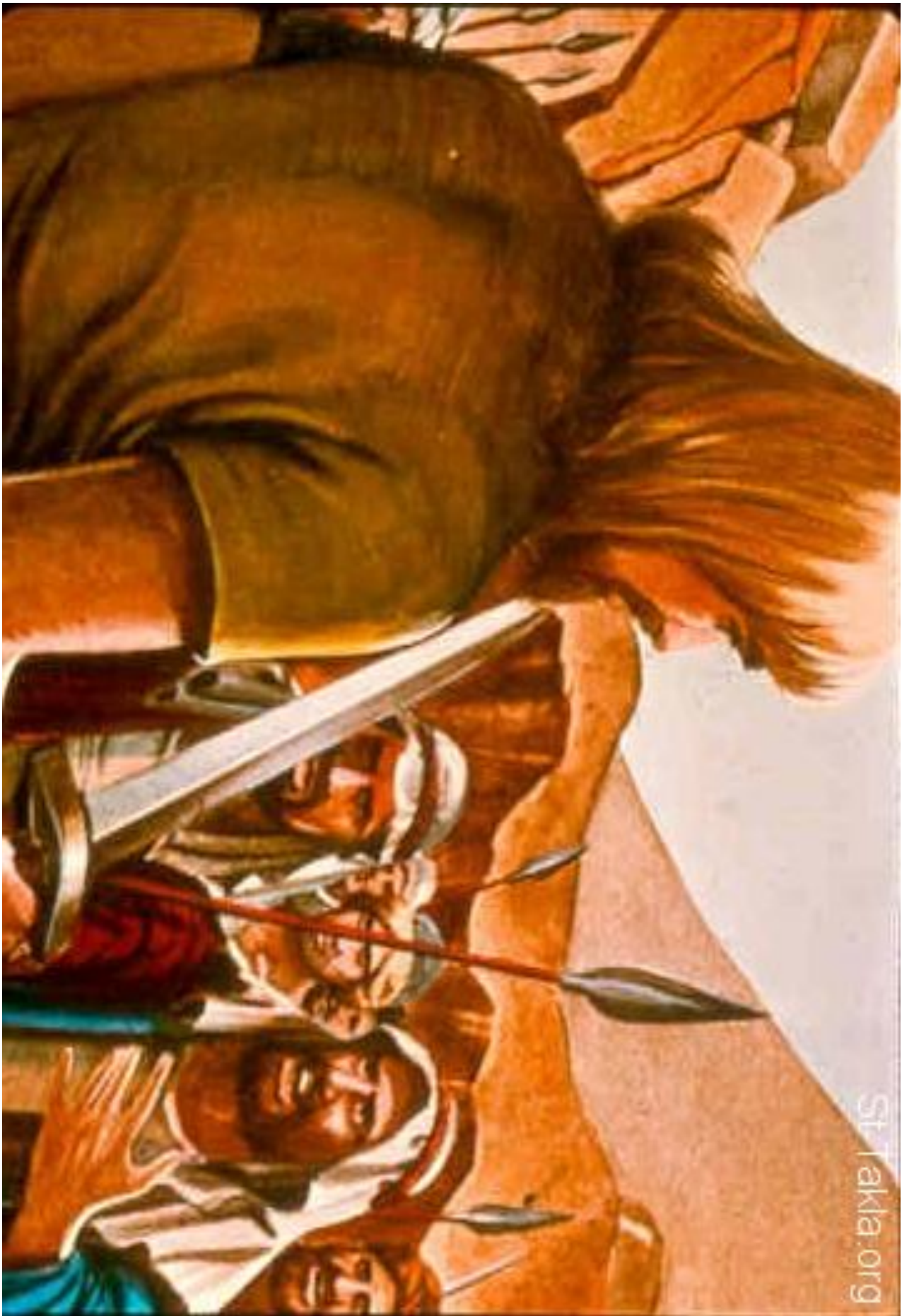


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Cave of Adullam

The Parallels between King Jesus and King David

(King Jesus understands your Cave experience)

- King David entered into a hiding Cave of Adullam
- King Jesus entered into the darkness of this world
- King David attracted to the hopeless souls
- King Jesus came to save lost souls, the sick, ..
- King David expressed his loneliness and inner pain to the Lord
- King Jesus experienced the agony of pain & suffering of the flesh
- King David became Captain & Leader over 400 men
- King Jesus became Captain of our souls, He leads us in this life to victory..

