

17.12 David at Keilah (1 Samuel 23:1–18; 1 Chronicles 12:8–18)

✓ “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.
- Lego blocks and 4-inch three-dimensional Bible people or wooden human shapes if not using the pictures found below

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.

- *imprecatory psalms*: psalms that ask God to punish the enemy
- *ephod*: kind of shirt that covered the back and front and was long enough to go just past the waist; in this story, the high priest’s garment
- *Urim and Thummim*: stones kept in the pocket of Israel’s high priest’s breastplate by which the priest could enquire regarding the will of God

Scripture: (ESV)

1 Samuel 23:1 Now they told David, “Behold, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are robbing the threshing floors.” 2 Therefore David inquired of the Lord, “Shall I go and attack these Philistines?” And the Lord said to David, “Go and attack the Philistines and save Keilah.” 3 But David’s men said to him, “Behold, we are afraid here in Judah; how much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?” 4 Then David inquired of the Lord again. And the Lord answered him, “Arise, go down to Keilah, for I will give the Philistines into your hand.” 5 And David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines and brought away their livestock and struck them with a great blow. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.

6 When Abiathar the son of Ahimelech had fled to David to Keilah, he had come down with an ephod in his hand. 7 Now it was told Saul that David had come to Keilah. And Saul said, “God has given him into my hand, for he has shut himself in by entering a town that has gates and bars.” 8 And Saul summoned all the people to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men. 9 David knew that Saul was plotting harm against him. And he said to Abiathar the priest, “Bring the ephod here.” 10 Then David said, “O Lord, the God of Israel, your servant has surely heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah, to destroy the city on my account. 11 Will the men of Keilah surrender me into his hand? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? O Lord, the God of Israel, please tell your servant.” And the Lord said, “He will come down.” 12 Then David said, “Will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?” And the Lord said, “They will surrender you.” 13 Then David and his men, who were about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah, and they went wherever they could go. When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he gave up the expedition. 14 And David remained in the strongholds in the wilderness, in the hill country of the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God did not give him into his hand.

15 David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life. David was in the wilderness of Ziph at Horesh. 16 And Jonathan, Saul’s son, rose and went to David at Horesh, and strengthened his hand in God. 17 And he said to him, “Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Saul my father also knows this.” 18 And the two of them made a covenant before the Lord. David remained at Horesh, and Jonathan went home.

1 Chronicles 12:8 From the Gadites there went over to David at the stronghold in the wilderness mighty and experienced warriors, expert with shield and spear, whose faces were like the faces of lions and who were swift as gazelles upon the mountains: 9 Ezer the chief, Obadiah second, Eliab third, 10 Mishmannah fourth, Jeremiah

fifth, 11 Attai sixth, Eliel seventh, 12 Johanan eighth, Elzabad ninth, 13 Jeremiah tenth, Machbannai eleventh. 14 These Gadites were officers of the army; the least was a match for a hundred men and the greatest for a thousand. 15 These are the men who crossed the Jordan in the first month, when it was overflowing all its banks, and put to flight all those in the valleys, to the east and to the west.

16 And some of the men of Benjamin and Judah came to the stronghold to David. 17 David went out to meet them and said to them, “If you have come to me in friendship to help me, my heart will be joined to you; but if to betray me to my adversaries, although there is no wrong in my hands, then may the God of our fathers see and rebuke you.” 18 Then the Spirit clothed Amasai, chief of the thirty, and he said, “We are yours, O David, and with you, O son of Jesse! Peace, peace to you, and peace to your helpers! For your God helps you.” Then David received them and made them officers of his troops.

Introduction/Review:

David now had about 400 men with him who had come because they were in trouble or were discontented. Some were from Saul’s tribe (Benjamin), and some were from David’s tribe (Judah).

Story:

“Shall I help?”

One day a messenger came to David: “The Philistines are attacking Keilah (“KEE lah”). Keilah was a town in Judah a little southwest of the Forest of Hareth, where David had fled.

David wondered, “Should we go down and save the town from the Philistines?” So he asked God, “Shall I go and smite these Philistines?”

God answered, “Go and smite the Philistines and save Keilah.”

But David’s 400 men were frightened. “We’re afraid to be here in Judah in a thick forest where Saul might get us. How much more afraid we’ll be if we go against the Philistines in Keilah, a public city?”

So David asked the Lord again. This time the Lord said, “Get up and go to Keilah.” But God added, “I will deliver the Philistines into your hand.” God said they’d win the battle!

So David went to Keilah. What do you think happened? Does God keep His word? Yes! David fought with the Philistines and really beat them. As a result of this great victory, he took the cattle of the Philistines (that supplied a lot of food for David’s men!) and saved the people of Keilah. Now David could live in a town instead of the forest. Or could he?

Someone informed Saul, “David is at Keilah.”

“Aha!” thought Saul. “Now I can get David because he’s in a town with gates and walls.” So Saul called all his men together to for war in Keilah.

Which tribes came to David?

It was about this time that another 200 men joined David. From the tribe of Gad across the Jordan came eleven officers of the army who are described as “mighty and experienced warriors, expert with shield and spear, whose faces were like the faces of lions and who were swift as gazelles upon the mountains.” In addition, “the least [of these men] was a match for a hundred [men] and the greatest [of the men was] a match for a thousand.” These were impressive soldiers!

Other soldiers from the tribes of Benjamin (Saul’s tribe) and Judah (David’s tribe) came to join forces with David. They said when they came, “We are yours, O David, and with you, O son of Jesse! Peace, peace to you, and peace to your helpers! For your God helps you.”

“Shall I leave?”

Abiathar, the priest who had escaped being killed while all his priestly relatives were slain by Saul, also

came to David at about this time. He brought with him an important piece of the priest's clothing, an ephod.¹ This was a kind of shirt that covered the back and front and was long enough to go just past the waist. It had a beautiful purple, blue, red, gold, and white sash. It also had black stones at the shoulders with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel engraved in them. The breastplate of woven material with twelve beautiful stones was to be attached to these shoulder stones and rings. The Israelites considered the ephod to be very important when asking God's will. In fact, some people actually worshiped this shirt, which the second commandment tells us was wrong.

Now was the opportunity to use the ephod to ask God's will, for David knew that Saul would surely come after him. "Bring me the ephod," he said to Abiathar, the priest. Then, ✓probably using the Urim and Thummim to inquire², he said, "O Lord God of Israel. I, Your servant, have certainly heard that Saul is coming to Keilah to destroy the city because of me. Will the men of Keilah give me over to Saul? Will Saul come down as I, Your servant, have heard? O Lord God of Israel, please tell me."

The Lord answered, "He will come down."

"Will the men of Keilah give me up to Saul?"

The Lord said, "They will deliver you up."

Can you imagine how ungrateful and disloyal these citizens of Keilah would be? After all, hadn't David saved them from the Philistines? On the other hand, maybe the men of Keilah had heard about Saul's mass killing of all the 85 priests in Nob and didn't care to face the same fate. Also, Saul was the king and David was not.

Since David now knew he couldn't trust this town, he and his men, 600 of them now, got out of Keilah before Saul got near the place ✓(maybe even before Saul left Gibeah).

Will God save David?

As he did so many times, ✓David wrote psalms during this difficult time and praised and prayed to God. Some of these psalms are called imprecatory psalms; they ask God to punish the people who are traitors to him. We are not to pay back evil for evil, but we can ask God to do it. [Read all or part of Psalm 109:1–20, found below, for the imprecatory part and the rest of the psalm that is mostly David's appeal to God for safety.]

Will God save David? Yes. Even though David had to live in the hill country and in the wild places, even though Saul hunted for David every day, Saul was not able to get David, for God kept David safe.

One day while David was hiding out in the wild places in a place called Ziph, he had an unexpected visitor—his best friend. Who was that? [Yes, Jonathan.] Somehow, Jonathan was able to find David, and when they visited, Jonathan encouraged him to trust God. "Don't be afraid," Jonathan said. "Saul, my father, will not find you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be under you. My father Saul knows all this."

Again, the two men promised, making a covenant, to uphold each other. Jonathan went home, and David stayed in the woods of Ziph. Will they ever see each other again?

¹Since Abiathar was the son of the high priest Ahimelech, Bible commentators think the ephod Abiathar brought with him was the high priest's ephod, the one with all the regalia including the breastplate, which contained the Urim and Thummim (Leviticus 8:8).

²David's inquiry might have been similar to Saul's when he said, "O LORD God of Israel . . . [i]f this guilt is in me or in Jonathan my son, O LORD, God of Israel, give Urim. But if this guilt is in your people Israel, give Thummim" (1 Samuel 14:41). It appears, then, that the priest retrieved from a pocket in his breastplate a stone, in this case the Urim, which gave the answer to the inquiry.

Lessons from This Lesson:

- We see Jesus:
 “Well might David complain of his enemies that they rewarded him evil for good, and that for his love they were his adversaries, Ps. 35:12 Ps. 109:4 . Christ was used thus basely, Jn. 10:32” (1 Samuel 23 Commentary - Matthew Henry Commentary on the Whole Bible (Complete) (biblestudytools.com)).
- We should always pray about important decisions. Although we do not have the Urim and Thummim to guide us, God will direct.
- As David did, always speak of and to God with deep respect.

Activities:

- Play dough: trees and rocks
- Snack: Rocky Road Candy. A recipe is at [Rocky Road Candy Recipe \(thespruceeats.com\)](http://thespruceeats.com).
- Make a cave or stronghold with boxes, and let young students hide in them.
- Read some imprecatory words, *e.g.* verses 6–15, from Psalm 109 printed below. Remind students that we may pray that God avenges wrongs but we may not take revenge ourselves.
- Review questions: (Game: On a small piece of paper, write the word *Urim*. Write *Thummim* on another paper of the same size. The teacher will hold these papers behind his or her back with one paper in each hand, mixing them up after each question. When a student has answered a question correctly, [s]he will say either “Urim” or “Thummim” and select which hand the teacher is to reveal. If the word on the paper agrees with the student’s selection, that student gets a point.)
 1. A messenger told David something was happening in the city of Keilah. What was it? [The Philistines were fighting against Keilah.]
 2. What did David do before going against these Philistines? [Inquired of the Lord whether he should go.]
 3. When God said to go, what did David’s servants say? [“We are afraid in this forest and will be even more afraid in a city.”]
 4. When David inquired of the Lord again, what was God’s reassurance? [God would give David victory.]
 5. Did God keep His promise? [Yes.]
 6. Who found out David was in Keilah? [Saul.]
 7. Why did David inquire of the Lord again? [To see if the citizens of Keilah would turn him over to Saul.]
 8. Who found David and visited him? [Jonathan.]

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.

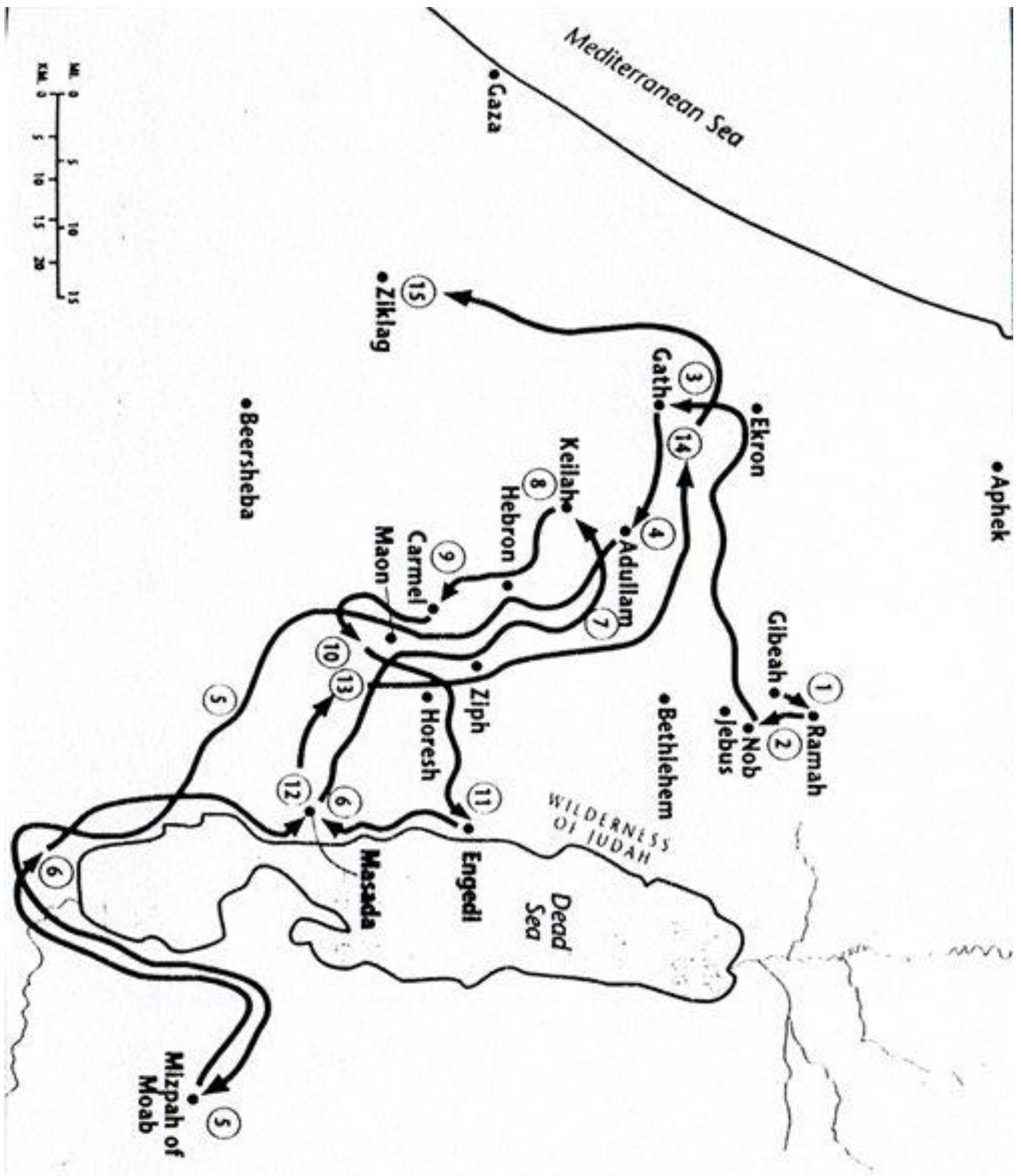
Handwork:

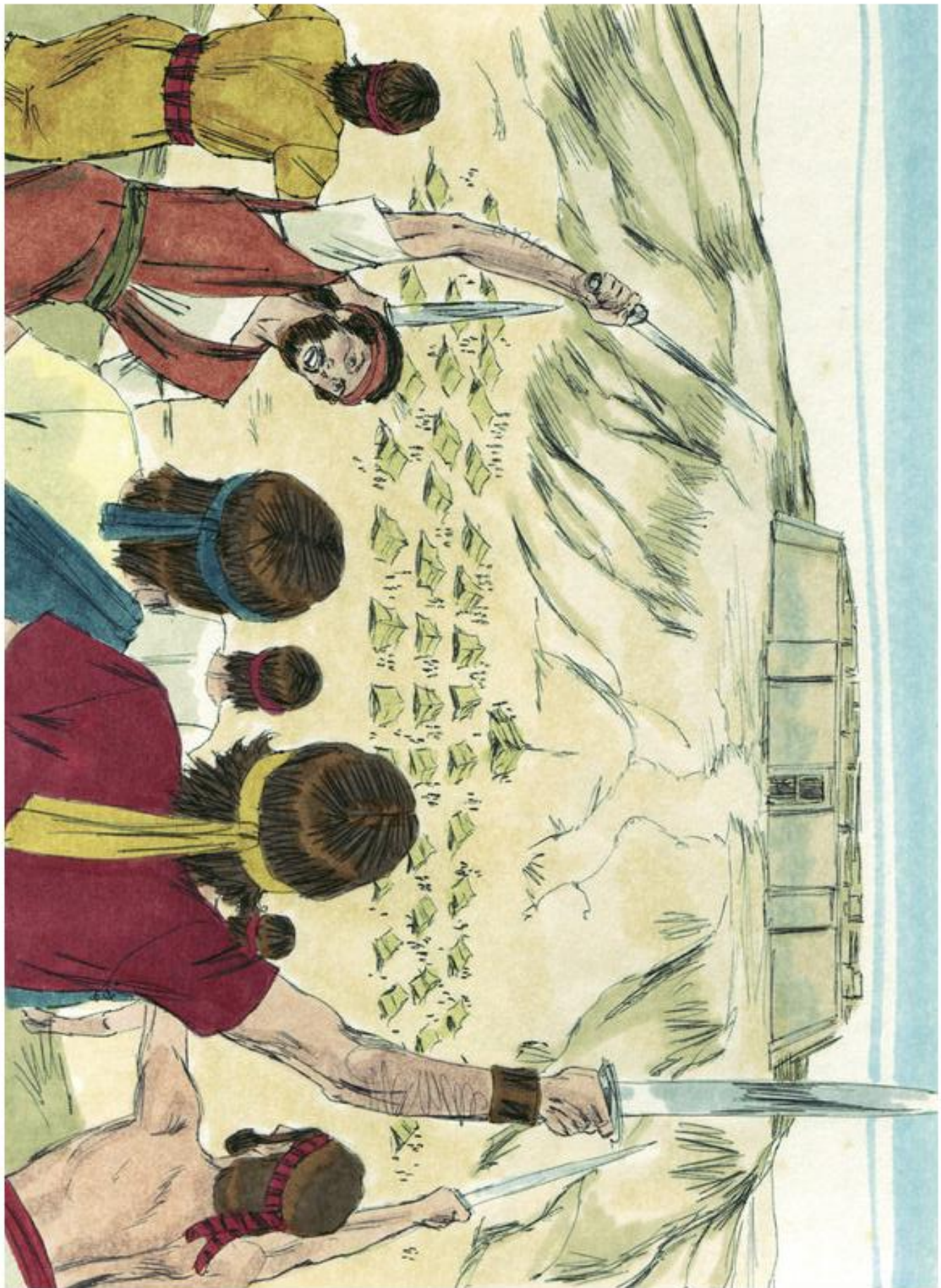
- Make a paper doll priest out of card stock. This is found at [\(834\) Pinterest](https://www.pinterest.com/pin/834/).

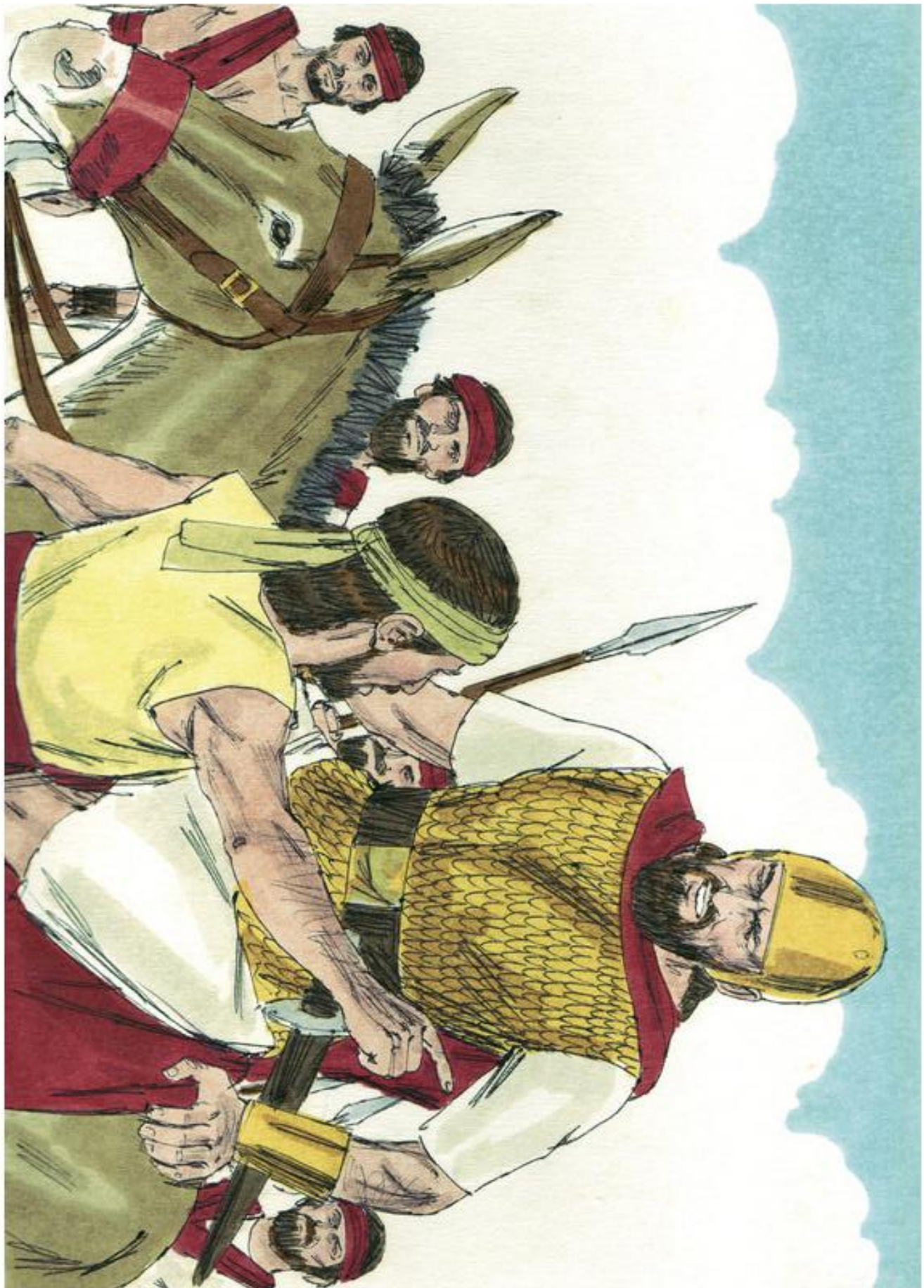
imprecatory psalms

ephod

Urim and Thummim









[urim_thummim_1_original.jpg \(2048×1536\) \(versebyverseministry.org\)](#)



redeemer-of-israel.blogspot.com

[Engraved-hp-breastplate.jpg \(1600×1066\) \(bp.blogspot.com\)](#)





TO THE CHOIRMASTER. A PSALM OF DAVID.

109:1 (ESV)

Be not silent, O God of my praise!**2**
For wicked and deceitful mouths are opened
against me,
speaking against me with lying tongues.**3**
They encircle me with words of hate,
and attack me without cause.**4**
In return for my love they accuse me,
but I give myself to prayer.**5**
So they reward me evil for good,
and hatred for my love.

6
Appoint a wicked man against him;
let an accuser stand at his right hand.**7**
When he is tried, let him come forth guilty;
let his prayer be counted as sin!**8**
May his days be few;
may another take his office!**9**
May his children be fatherless
and his wife a widow!**10**
May his children wander about and beg,
seeking food far from the ruins they inhabit!**11**
May the creditor seize all that he has;
may strangers plunder the fruits of his toil!**12**
Let there be none to extend kindness to him,
nor any to pity his fatherless children!**13**
May his posterity be cut off;
may his name be blotted out in the second
generation!**14**
May the iniquity of his fathers be remembered
before the LORD,
and let not the sin of his mother be blotted
out!**15**
Let them be before the LORD continually,
that he may cut off the memory of them from the
earth!

16
For he did not remember to show kindness,
but pursued the poor and needy
and the brokenhearted, to put them to death.**17**
He loved to curse; let curses come upon him!
He did not delight in blessing; may it be far from
him!**18**
He clothed himself with cursing as his coat;
may it soak into his body like water,
like oil into his bones!

19
May it be like a garment that he wraps around
him,
like a belt that he puts on every day!**20**
May this be the reward of my accusers from
the LORD,
of those who speak evil against my life!
21
But you, O GOD my Lord,
deal on my behalf for your name's sake;
because your steadfast love is good, deliver
me!**22**
For I am poor and needy,
and my heart is stricken within me.**23**
I am gone like a shadow at evening;
I am shaken off like a locust.**24**
My knees are weak through fasting;
my body has become gaunt, with no fat.**25**
I am an object of scorn to my accusers;
when they see me, they wag their heads.
26
Help me, O LORD my God!
Save me according to your steadfast love!**27**
Let them know that this is your hand;
you, O LORD, have done it!**28**
Let them curse, but you will bless!
They arise and are put to shame, but your servant
will be glad!**29**
May my accusers be clothed with dishonor;
may they be wrapped in their own shame as in a
cloak!
30
With my mouth I will give great thanks to
the LORD;
I will praise him in the midst of the throng.**31**
For he stands at the right hand of the needy one,
to save him from those who condemn his soul to
death.