

17.14 David Spares Saul at Engedi (1 Samuel 23:29; 24:1–22; Psalm 57)

✓ “*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.
- A robe with a piece of fabric pinned to it. This fabric can be taken off at the appropriate time in the story.

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.

- *wilderness*: wild, uninhabited place
- *oasis*: a place in a desert where water is found

Scripture: (ESV)

1 Samuel 23:29 And David went up from there and lived in the strongholds of Engedi.

24:1 When Saul returned from following the Philistines, he was told, “Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi.” 2 Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel and went to seek David and his men in front of the Wild Goats’ Rocks. 3 And he came to the sheepfolds by the way, where there was a cave, and Saul went in to relieve himself. Now David and his men were sitting in the innermost parts of the cave. 4 And the men of David said to him, “Here is the day of which the Lord said to you, ‘Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you.’” Then David arose and stealthily cut off a corner of Saul’s robe. 5 And afterward David’s heart struck him, because he had cut off a corner of Saul’s robe. 6 He said to his men, “The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the Lord’s anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the Lord’s anointed.” 7 So David persuaded his men with these words and did not permit them to attack Saul. And Saul rose up and left the cave and went on his way.

8 Afterward David also arose and went out of the cave, and called after Saul, “My lord the king!” And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the earth and paid homage. 9 And David said to Saul, “Why do you listen to the words of men who say, ‘Behold, David seeks your harm’? 10 Behold, this day your eyes have seen how the Lord gave you today into my hand in the cave. And some told me to kill you, but I spared you. I said, ‘I will not put out my hand against my lord, for he is the Lord’s anointed.’ 11 See, my father, see the corner of your robe in my hand. For by the fact that I cut off the corner of your robe and did not kill you, you may know and see that there is no wrong or treason in my hands. I have not sinned against you, though you hunt my life to take it. 12 May the Lord judge between me and you, may the Lord avenge me against you, but my hand shall not be against you. 13 As the proverb of the ancients says, ‘Out of the wicked comes wickedness.’ But my hand shall not be against you. 14 After whom has the king of Israel come out? After whom do you pursue? After a dead dog! After a flea! 15 May the Lord therefore be judge and give sentence between me and you, and see to it and plead my cause and deliver me from your hand.”

16 As soon as David had finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, “Is this your voice, my son David?” And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. 17 He said to David, “You are more righteous than I, for you have repaid me good, whereas I have repaid you evil. 18 And you have declared this day how you have dealt well with me, in that you did not kill me when the Lord put me into your hands. 19 For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go away safe? So may the Lord reward you with good for what you have done to me this day. 20 And now, behold, I know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. 21 Swear to me therefore by the Lord that you will not cut off my offspring after me, and that you will not destroy my name out of my father’s house.” 22 And David swore this to Saul. Then Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

To the choirmaster: according to Do Not Destroy. A Miktam of David, when he fled from Saul, in the cave. Psalm 57:1 Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my soul takes refuge; in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, till the storms of destruction pass by. 2 I cry out to God Most High, to God who fulfills his purpose for me. 3 He will send from heaven and save me; he will put to shame him who tramples on me. Selah God will send out his steadfast love and his faithfulness!

4 My soul is in the midst of lions; I lie down amid fiery beasts—the children of man, whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongues are sharp swords.

5 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth!

6 They set a net for my steps; my soul was bowed down. They dug a pit in my way, but they have fallen into it themselves. Selah 7 My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast! I will sing and make melody! 8 Awake, my glory! Awake, O harp and lyre! I will awake the dawn! 9 I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you among the nations. 10 For your steadfast love is great to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.

11 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth!

Introduction/Review:

We are learning that Saul keeps on chasing David. Saul reminds me of Satan, who constantly tries to make us sin. Just as David escaped from Saul, so God causes God's child, the one who knows Jesus Christ as his/her Saviour, to escape Satan's tricks. God will protect us from sin, sometimes at the last minute, as we saw in David's life last week, when Saul's men were just about to catch David. At the very last minute a messenger called Saul to fight the Philistines, and David was spared.

Story:

Saul hunts David

Saul did go fight those Philistines and apparently ✓chased them back into their own country. As soon as he got home, people told Saul that David was hiding in the wilderness of Engedi. Remember that a wilderness is, as the word itself states, a *wild* place, an uninhabited place. It could be a desert or a forest. The wilderness of Engedi was a place with lots of rocks, a desolate area close to the Dead Sea, but it did have an oasis.

Saul chose 3000 men out of all Israel and went to look for David at a place called "The Rocks of the Wild Goats." Some sheep pens and a cave were in that area. Saul went into the cave, ✓perhaps to sleep but at least to take a break.

David spares Saul

What he didn't know was that David and some of his men were farther in the dark parts of the cave. When they saw Saul, they were excited. ✓They whispered, "Look, David, this is the day God is giving your enemy into your hands!" They meant that Saul was by himself in this solitary place and that David could now slay and be done with him.

David crept toward Saul, took out his sword or knife, and cut off part of Saul's robe.¹ No sooner had he done this, however, than he felt guilty and ashamed. He said to his men, "God forbid that I should do this disrespectful thing to my master, the one God anointed. I will not slay him because he is the anointed king of the Lord." With these words, David stopped his men from slaying Saul.

They went back to their hiding places in the cave, and Saul later left and went on his way.

David calls Saul

A short time after Saul had departed, David came out of the cave and called after Saul, "My lord the king!" When Saul looked back, David knelt with his head on the ground. Then David said, "Why do you listen to

men who say, ‘David wants to hurt you’? Look and see how today God delivered you into my hand in the cave. Some men encouraged me to kill you, but I didn’t and said, ‘I will not put my hand against you, for you are the Lord’s anointed.’ In addition, my father, look and see part of your robe in my hand, for I cut it from your robe and did not slay you. I did no evil, and I have not sinned against you. Yet, you hunt me. I will not raise my hand against you. May the Lord judge between us and deliver me out of your hand.”

Saul commends David

When David stopped talking, Saul answered, “Is this your voice, my son David?” Then he wept loudly and, *✓*gaining his composure, said, “You are more righteous than I because you rewarded me good when I did evil to you. You’ve shown me how you didn’t take my life even when the Lord put me where you could get me. No one lets an enemy go his way as you did. May the Lord reward you for the good you did to me today.

“Now, David, I know that you will become king. Swear to me that you won’t destroy all my children so that I have no more name in Benjamin.”

David promised, as Saul had asked, not to cut off Saul’s name by slaying all his offspring.

Saul and David go their ways

Then Saul went back home, but David didn’t go home. Why not? He knew Saul would not stay gentle and remorseful but would soon come after David again. So instead of going back to Gibeah, David and his men found other safe places to hide.

It was probably while he was hiding that David wrote these words from Psalm 57: “I will cry unto God most high. . . . He shall . . . save me . . . Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be above all the earth!”

¹The text does not say that Saul fell asleep in the cave, but the cutting from the robe and the nearby discussion of David’s men imply that Saul was asleep. The pictures of this scene found below show both Saul’s being asleep and being awake while David cuts from his robe.

Lessons from This Lesson:

- We see Jesus

David rendered “good for evil to him from whom he had received evil for good.” In this he is a “type of Christ, who saved his persecutors” ([1 Samuel 24 Commentary - Matthew Henry Commentary on the Whole Bible \(Complete\) \(biblestudytools.com\)](#)).

As David did not trust Saul and knew he would again seek to slay him, so “[w]e read of those who believed in Christ, and yet [Jesus] did not commit himself to them because he knew all men” ([1 Samuel 24 Commentary - Matthew Henry Commentary on the Whole Bible \(Complete\) \(biblestudytools.com\)](#)).

Activities:

- Play dough: robe; cave; sword
- Snack: Cheese (sometimes aged in caves)
- Play-act the story, using a cave made by covering *a large table with a sheet. Use the robe with fabric attached.
- Review questions: (Game: Provide a small piece of fabric that has lines drawn on it and a pair of scissors that can cut fabric. A student who answers a question correctly may cut the fabric along one of the lines.)

1. Tell the name of the place where David and his men hid in a cave. [Engedi.]

2. How many men did Saul take with him to Engedi? [Three thousand.]
3. What did David's men say to him when they observed Saul in the cave? ["The Lord has given your enemy into your hand."]
4. Although David did not slay Saul, what did he do to him? [Cut off a piece of Saul's robe.]
5. Why wouldn't David slay King Saul? [Because the Lord had anointed Saul to be king.]
6. What did Saul do when he saw David had spared his life? [Wept; said David was more righteous than he.]
7. What did Saul ask David to promise? [Not to fully cut off his name by slaying all his offspring.]
8. True or false. David went back to his home in Gibeah. [False.]
9. Correct the false statement in the previous question. [David and his men did not go back to Gibeah but found other safe places to hide.]

Memory Verse[s]: (KJV)

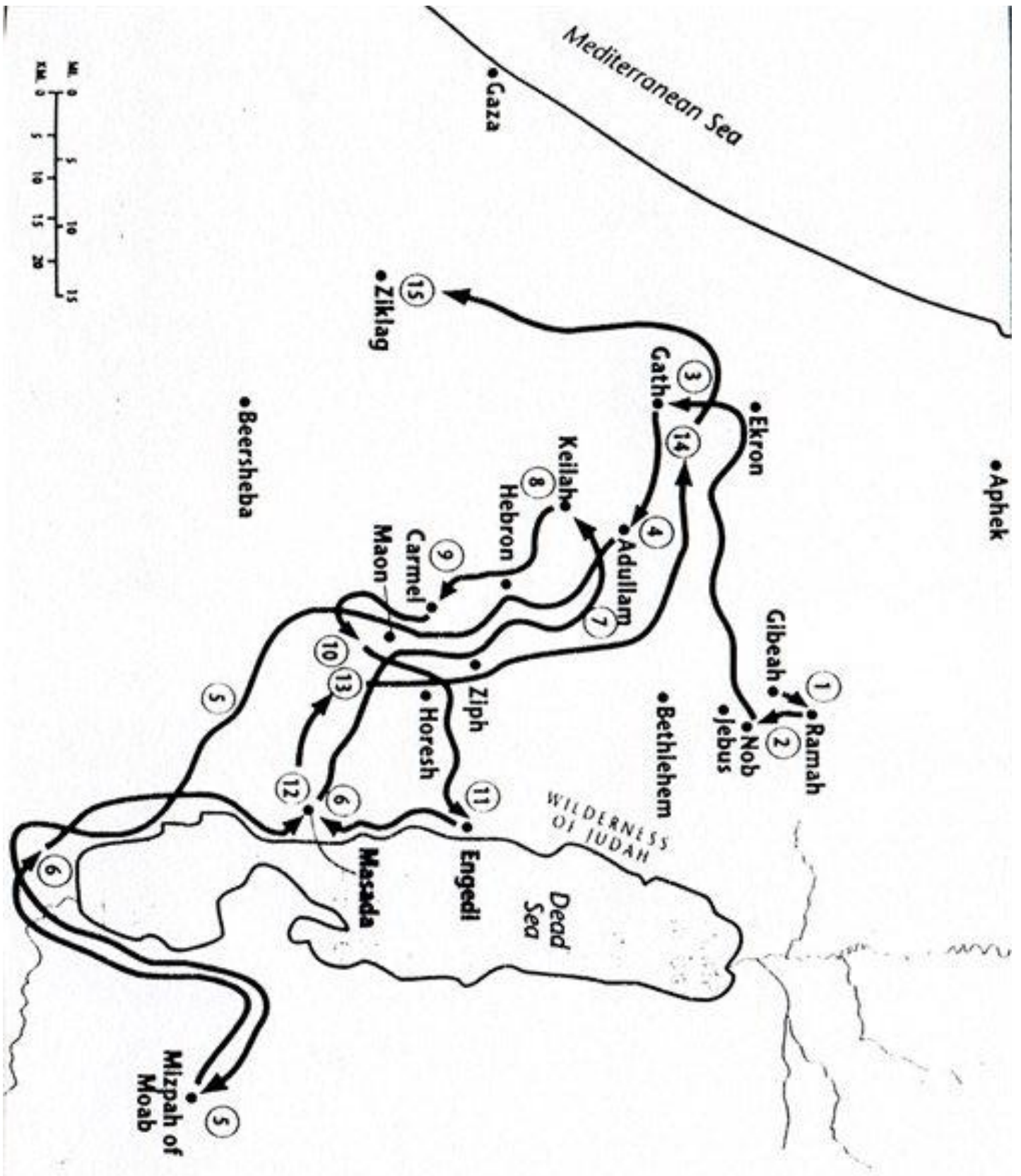
- Psalm 23:1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. 3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will 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:

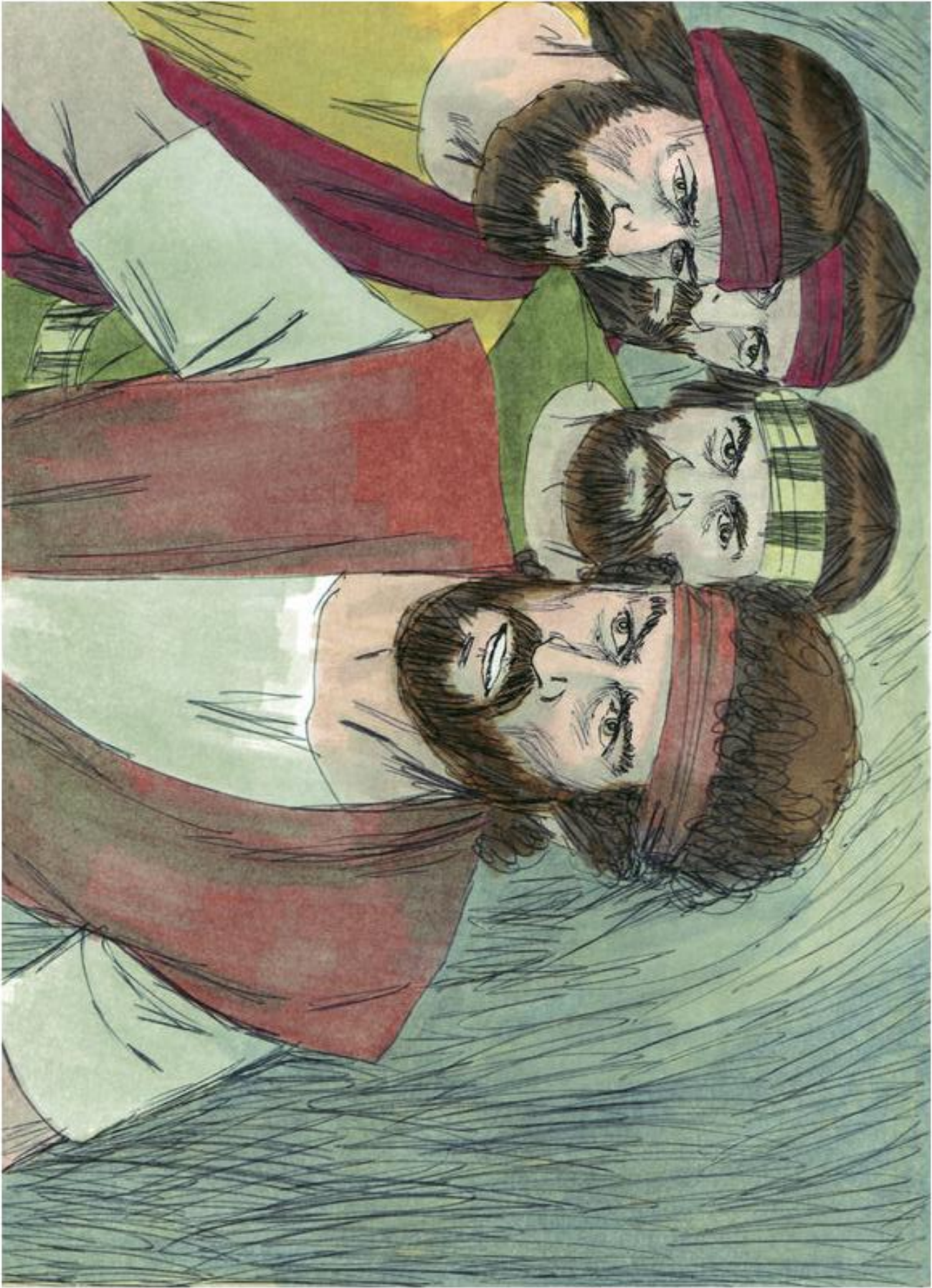
- Make a story cube with a printable at [david and saul cube.pdf - Google Drive](#). Other activities for young students can be found at this same site: [Flame: Creative Children's Ministry: David cuts Saul's robe \(a lesson with 3-5s\) \(flamecreativekids.blogspot.com\)](#).

wilderness

oasis











This picture is by an artist whose last name is Brock and shows King Saul asleep. (site resource unknown)

