

17.16 Ziphites Betray; David Spares Saul Again (1 Samuel 26:1–25)

✓ “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.

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Scripture: (ESV)

1 Samuel 26:1 Then the Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah, saying, “Is not David hiding himself on the hill of Hachilah, which is on the east of Jeshimon?” 2 So Saul arose and went down to the wilderness of Ziph with three thousand chosen men of Israel to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph. 3 And Saul encamped on the hill of Hachilah, which is beside the road on the east of Jeshimon. But David remained in the wilderness. When he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness, 4 David sent out spies and learned that Saul had indeed come. 5 Then David rose and came to the place where Saul had encamped. And David saw the place where Saul lay, with Abner the son of Ner, the commander of his army. Saul was lying within the encampment, while the army was encamped around him.

6 Then David said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Joab’s brother Abishai the son of Zeruiah, “Who will go down with me into the camp to Saul?” And Abishai said, “I will go down with you.” 7 So David and Abishai went to the army by night. And there lay Saul sleeping within the encampment, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head, and Abner and the army lay around him. 8 Then Abishai said to David, “God has given your enemy into your hand this day. Now please let me pin him to the earth with one stroke of the spear, and I will not strike him twice.” 9 But David said to Abishai, “Do not destroy him, for who can put out his hand against the Lord’s anointed and be guiltless?” 10 And David said, “As the Lord lives, the Lord will strike him, or his day will come to die, or he will go down into battle and perish. 11 The Lord forbid that I should put out my hand against the Lord’s anointed. But take now the spear that is at his head and the jar of water, and let us go.” 12 So David took the spear and the jar of water from Saul’s head, and they went away. No man saw it or knew it, nor did any awake, for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from the Lord had fallen upon them.

13 Then David went over to the other side and stood far off on the top of the hill, with a great space between them. 14 And David called to the army, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, “Will you not answer, Abner?” Then Abner answered, “Who are you who calls to the king?” 15 And David said to Abner, “Are you not a man? Who is like you in Israel? Why then have you not kept watch over your lord the king? For one of the people came in to destroy the king your lord. 16 This thing that you have done is not good. As the Lord lives, you deserve to die, because you have not kept watch over your lord, the Lord’s anointed. And now see where the king’s spear is and the jar of water that was at his head.”

17 Saul recognized David’s voice and said, “Is this your voice, my son David?” And David said, “It is my voice, my lord, O king.” 18 And he said, “Why does my lord pursue after his servant? For what have I done? What evil is on my hands? 19 Now therefore let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If it is the Lord who has stirred you up against me, may he accept an offering, but if it is men, may they be cursed before the Lord, for they have driven me out this day that I should have no share in the heritage of the Lord, saying, ‘Go, serve other gods.’ 20 Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth away from the presence of the Lord, for the king of Israel has come out to seek a single flea like one who hunts a partridge in the mountains.”

21 Then Saul said, “I have sinned. Return, my son David, for I will no more do you harm, because my life was precious in your eyes this day. Behold, I have acted foolishly, and have made a great mistake.” 22 And

David answered and said, “Here is the spear, O king! Let one of the young men come over and take it. 23 The Lord rewards every man for his righteousness and his faithfulness, for the Lord gave you into my hand today, and I would not put out my hand against the Lord’s anointed. 24 Behold, as your life was precious this day in my sight, so may my life be precious in the sight of the Lord, and may he deliver me out of all tribulation.” 25 Then Saul said to David, “Blessed be you, my son David! You will do many things and will succeed in them.” So David went his way, and Saul returned to his place.

Introduction/Review:

Seven times Saul has tried to slay David. Can you recall the places where this happened? [(1–3) Three times in Saul’s house in Gibeah; (4) in David’s house in Gibeah; (5) Samuel’s town, Ramah; (6) on the mountain of Maon when Saul was on one side and David on the other; (7) the cave at Engedi, where David cut off part of Saul’s robe.] Each time God protected David.

Story:

David in Ziph

In today’s story David has gone back to Ziph [locate] in the Hill of Hachilah (“blackness”) near Jeshimon (“waste”). Do you remember the people of Ziph? They were the ones who lived here but had gone all the way to Gibeah [locate] in order to tell Saul that David was in their area. Sure enough, they went all the way to Gibeah and told Saul again that David was in their wilderness. And sure enough, even though Saul had said he was sorry for chasing David, now he chose his best 3000 soldiers and headed out again to get David.

Saul in Ziph

David had heard Saul was coming; so he sent spies and learned Saul had actually arrived at Ziph. David himself; Ahimelech, a Hittite; and David’s nephew, Abishai; sneaked down the cliffs, hiding among the trees, and discovered where Saul and his army captain, Abner, were sleeping with Saul’s soldiers sleeping all around them.

David in Saul’s camp

David asked, “Who wants to go down with me into the camp to Saul?” Abishai answered, “I’ll go.” So the two went down and saw everyone sleeping and Saul sleeping with his spear stuck in the ground by his head.

Oh, how convenient! Abishai was excited: “The Lord has given you your enemy today. Let me smite him with his spear, please. It will take only one thrust for me to pin him to the ground.” (Can you imagine their being able to talk, even to whisper, in the enemy camp? It was possible because God had caused a deep sleep to fall on the enemy.)

David answered, “Do not destroy him, for who can raise his hand against the Lord’s anointed and not be terribly guilty? One day the Lord will destroy Saul—maybe in a battle or whatever. But God forbid that I should stretch forth my hand—and if you stretched out your hand, it would be my hand—against the Lord’s anointed. Please take Saul’s spear and this jar of water, and let’s go.”

David across the valley

David and Abishai climbed down farther from this place, crossed a valley, and climbed up to the top of a hill on the other side a long way from Saul but not so far that they couldn’t call to Saul and his commander.

“Abner!” David shouted. “Aren’t you a great soldier? The best in Israel? Why, then, haven’t you taken care of the king? One of the people came in to destroy the king. You are worthy to die because you didn’t guard your master, the Lord’s anointed. Look now for the king’s spear and his jar of water that was by his head.”

At this point, Saul spoke up. “Is this your voice, my son David?”

“It is my voice, my lord, O king. Why does my lord chase after his servant? What have I done that is evil? If people have stirred you up, they have driven me out of my own home, my own land. They tempt me to serve

other gods. Please do not shed my blood. Your coming after me is like coming out to seek a flea or a partridge in the mountains.”

Saul answered, “I have sinned. Come back, my son David. I will no more do you harm because you counted my life worthy. I have played the fool and have made a huge mistake.”

David called back. “See the king’s spear in my hand. Let one of the young men come over here and get it. The Lord delivered you into my hand this day, but I would not stretch forth my hand against the Lord’s anointed. May God protect me as I protected you.”

Saul answered, “Blessed are you, my son David. You shall do great things and will win in the end.”

Again, David went his way, and Saul returned to Gibeah.

Lessons from This Lesson:

- We see Jesus:
David refused to slay the Lord’s anointed king. As prophesied in Isaiah 42:3, Jesus, being meek and gentle, would not break a bruised reed nor quench a faintly burning wick. This is figurative language for His treatment of individuals coming to Him.

Activities:

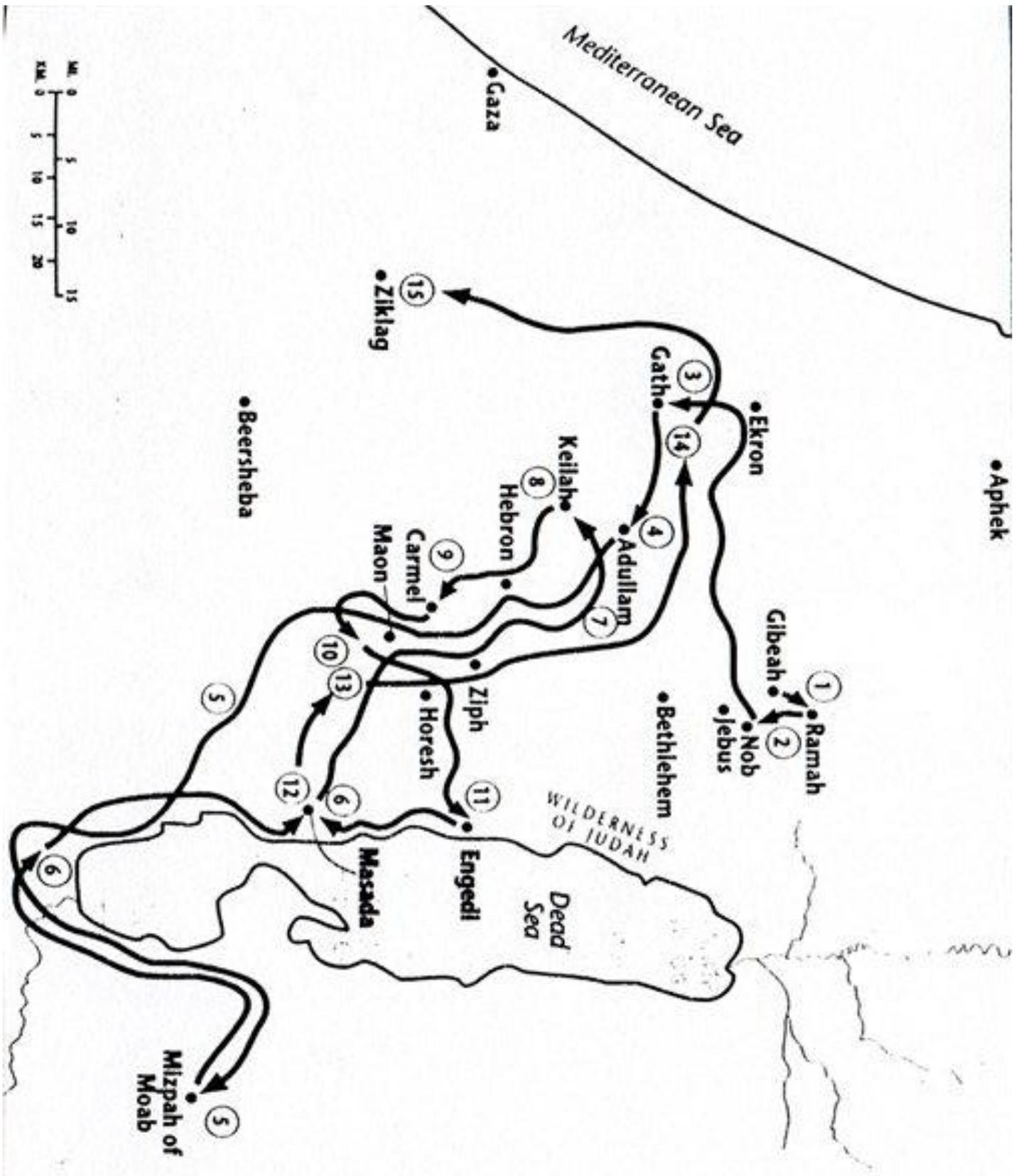
- Play dough: sword, jar
- Snack: Watermelon (if in season); otherwise, a lemon-lime float
- Stick a plastic toy sword in a container with dirt and have available a little clay jar with water. Students will take turns being Saul, David, and Abishai as they play act this story.
- Review questions: (Game: Students who answer questions correctly may hold a toy spear and water jar until another student answers a question correctly.)
 1. Who again went to Saul to inform him of David’s whereabouts? [Ziphites.]
 2. What did David, Ahimelech, and Abishai observe in Saul’s camp? [Everyone was asleep.]
 3. Who went with David into Saul’s camp? [Abishai.]
 4. What did Abishai want to do to Saul? [Destroy him with Saul’s own spear.]
 5. Why did David say Saul should not be slain? [Because he was God’s anointed king.]
 6. What did David and Abishai take with them when they left Saul’s camp? [Saul’s spear and water jar.]
 7. David called across the valley to Saul’s army captain. What was his name? [Abner.]
 8. Fill in the blank. Then Saul said, “I have _____. I will no more do you harm.” [Sinned.]

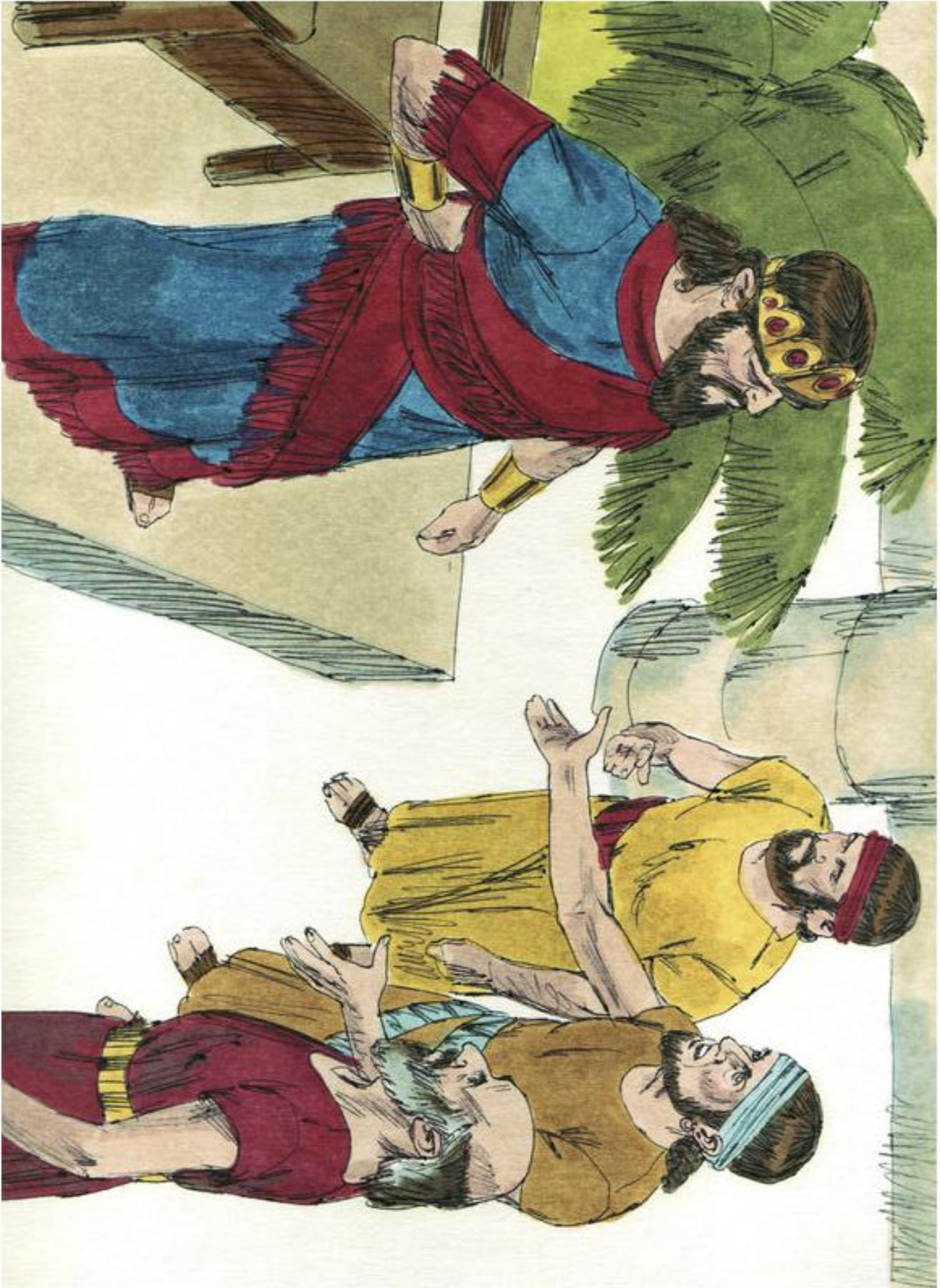
Memory Verse[s]: (KJV)

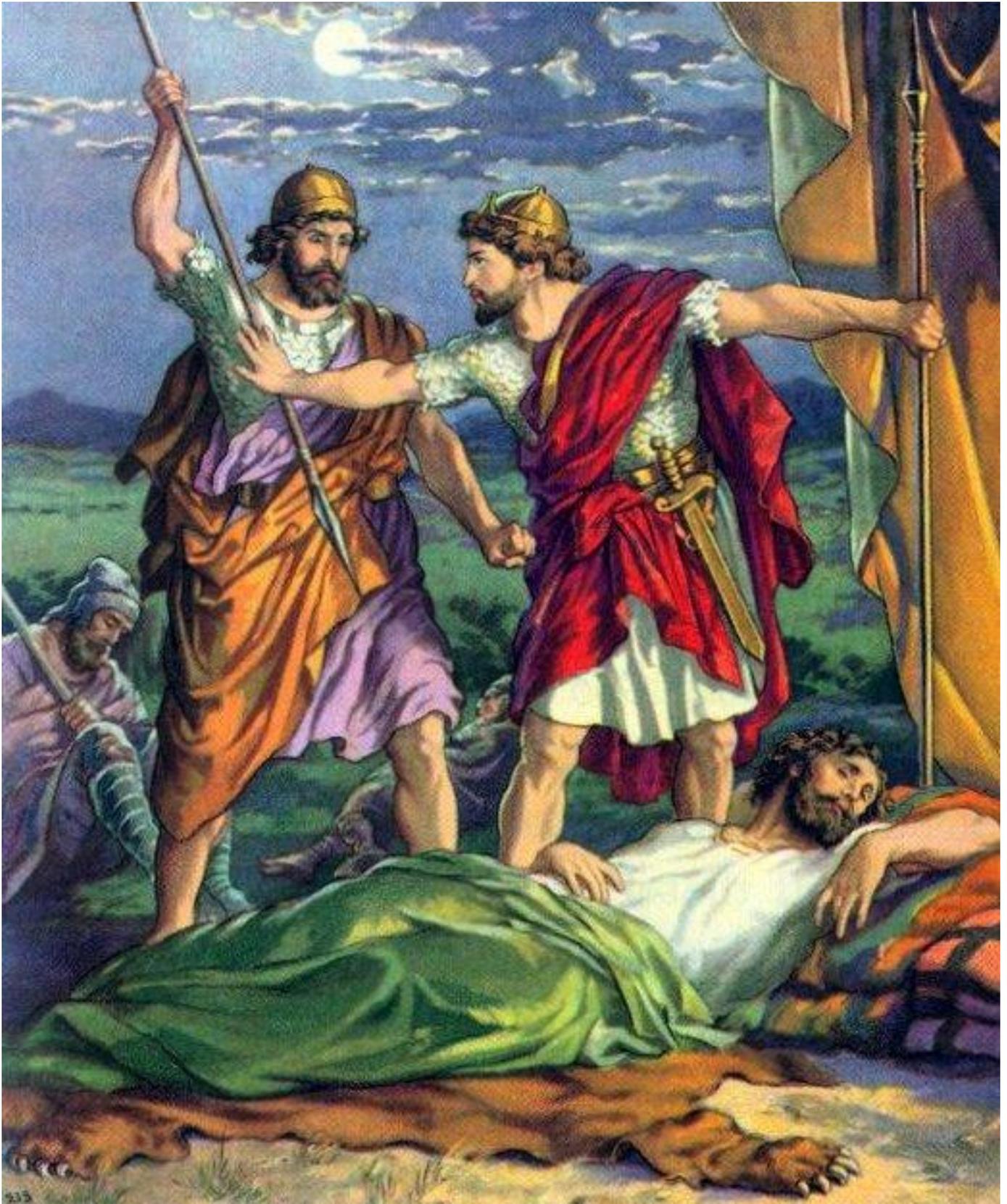
- Psalm 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Handwork:

- Make a stained glass jar and spear. Instructions and templates are at [Doc Thelma's Kitchen: David takes Saul's jug and spear craft \(docthelmaskitchen.blogspot.com\)](http://docthelmaskitchen.blogspot.com).









"Behold the king's spear."—1 Sam. xxvi. 22.



[david-calls-to-sauls-camp-GoodSalt-rhpas0619.jpg \(600x205\)](#)