

17.21a David Reigns in Hebron (2 Samuel 2:1–32)

✓ “*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.
- Note: some of the visuals found below might be too violent to show younger students.
- Color the main figures in the black and white picture 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.

- Show the chart found below of Ishbosheth and David so that the students might become acquainted with the associations of the various names.

Scripture: (ESV)

2 Samuel 2:1 After this David inquired of the Lord, “Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?” And the Lord said to him, “Go up.” David said, “To which shall I go up?” And he said, “To Hebron.” 2 So David went up there, and his two wives also, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel. 3 And David brought up his men who were with him, everyone with his household, and they lived in the towns of Hebron. 4 And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah.

When they told David, “It was the men of Jabesh-gilead who buried Saul,” 5 David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh-gilead and said to them, “May you be blessed by the Lord, because you showed this loyalty to Saul your lord and buried him. 6 Now may the Lord show steadfast love and faithfulness to you. And I will do good to you because you have done this thing. 7 Now therefore let your hands be strong, and be valiant, for Saul your lord is dead, and the house of Judah has anointed me king over them.”

8 But Abner the son of Ner, commander of Saul’s army, took Ish-bosheth the son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim, 9 and he made him king over Gilead and the Ashurites and Jezreel and Ephraim and Benjamin and all Israel. 10 Ish-bosheth, Saul’s son, was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned two years. But the house of Judah followed David. 11 And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

12 Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon. 13 And Joab the son of Zeruiah and the servants of David went out and met them at the pool of Gibeon. And they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool. 14 And Abner said to Joab, “Let the young men arise and compete before us.” And Joab said, “Let them arise.” 15 Then they arose and passed over by number, twelve for Benjamin and Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David. 16 And each caught his opponent by the head and thrust his sword in his opponent’s side, so they fell down together. Therefore that place was called Helkath-hazzurim, which is at Gibeon. 17 And the battle was very fierce that day. And Abner and the men of Israel were beaten before the servants of David.

18 And the three sons of Zeruiah were there, Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. Now Asahel was as swift of foot as a wild gazelle. 19 And Asahel pursued Abner, and as he went, he turned neither to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner. 20 Then Abner looked behind him and said, “Is it you, Asahel?” And he answered, “It is I.” 21 Abner said to him, “Turn aside to your right hand or to your left, and seize one of the young men and take his spoil.” But Asahel would not turn aside from following him. 22 And Abner said again to Asahel, “Turn aside from following me. Why should I strike you to the ground? How then could I lift up my face to your brother Joab?” 23 But he refused to turn aside. Therefore Abner struck him in the stomach with the butt of his spear, so that the spear came out at his back. And he fell there and died where he was. And all who came to the place

where Asahel had fallen and died, stood still.

24 But Joab and Abishai pursued Abner. And as the sun was going down they came to the hill of Ammah, which lies before Giah on the way to the wilderness of Gibeon. 25 And the people of Benjamin gathered themselves together behind Abner and became one group and took their stand on the top of a hill. 26 Then Abner called to Joab, "Shall the sword devour forever? Do you not know that the end will be bitter? How long will it be before you tell your people to turn from the pursuit of their brothers?" 27 And Joab said, "As God lives, if you had not spoken, surely the men would not have given up the pursuit of their brothers until the morning." 28 So Joab blew the trumpet, and all the men stopped and pursued Israel no more, nor did they fight anymore.

29 And Abner and his men went all that night through the Arabah. They crossed the Jordan, and marching the whole morning, they came to Mahanaim. 30 Joab returned from the pursuit of Abner. And when he had gathered all the people together, there were missing from David's servants nineteen men besides Asahel. 31 But the servants of David had struck down of Benjamin 360 of Abner's men. 32 And they took up Asahel and buried him in the tomb of his father, which was at Bethlehem. And Joab and his men marched all night, and the day broke upon them at Hebron.

Introduction/Review:

God had told Saul that David would be the new king and that Saul and his three sons would die in battle against the Philistines. Saul and his sons did die in the Battle at Gilboa. What did David do when he heard that Saul and Jonathan had died in battle? [Tore his clothes; mourned; fasted until evening; wrote a poem.] He did this to show his great sorrow and to remind Israel of the former greatness of Saul and Jonathan.

Story:

David, having been anointed by Samuel, knew he was to be the next king of Israel. The problem was that not everyone accepted or knew David was God's choice. In fact, ✓most of the tribes thought a son of Saul, Ishbosheth ("ish BO sheth"), who was 40 years old at this time, should be the next king. That's usually how it's done: the son of the king becomes the next king. But God had told Saul that the kingdom would be taken from him and given to David.

Reigning in Judah

David, way down in Ziklag [locate], had his 600 men and many more who came to him, some from Saul's tribe, Benjamin. It would seem that he could go and claim his throne, but he asked God, "Shall I go up to one of the towns of Judah?"

Notice that although David knew he was God's choice for king, he did not presume to assert himself over the people. Rather, he sought God's leadership in his actual taking over as king, asking "Shall I go up to one of the towns of Judah?" (Notice that David did not say "of Israel.")

✓Probably with Urim and Thummim, God answered David, "Go up."

"Where shall I go?" asked David.

"To Hebron" [locate], the Lord answered.

So David and his men and their families moved up to Hebron. There the men of Judah publicly anointed David king over his tribe. Which tribe was that? [Judah.] This one tribe was not all Israel.

Applauding Jabesh Gilead

Someone told David the men of Jabesh Gilead [locate] had properly buried Saul and his three sons; so David sent messengers to that city. "May the Lord bless you and show you kindness and faithfulness for showing this kindness to Saul. I will do good to you because you have done this thing. Now that your master is dead, be brave and strong, and know that Judah has anointed me king over them." ✓That was kind of an invitation to join David's cause.

Backing Ishbosheth

Meanwhile, way up in the north and east of Jordan in the town Mahanaim [locate], Abner, who had been Saul's army captain, was with Ishbosheth, Saul's son. Why were they so far from Saul's city of Gibeah [locate]? Remember that the Philistines had occupied cities west of the Jordan. ✓Perhaps Gibeah was one of those occupied cities.

At any rate, in Mahanaim Abner made Ishbosheth king over all the rest of Israel. After a while, Abner, his men, and King Ishbosheth, moved back to Gibeon [locate; note the difference between *Gibeah* and *Gibeon*]. That move caused Joab, David's army captain to take David's army to meet Abner's army for battle. Abner's men were on one side of a pool (or a well of water), and Joab's men were on the other side. Abner shouted to Joab, "Let's have a few of the young men fight in front of us."

"All right; let them do it," Joab answered.

✓Perhaps these army officers thought a small contest would decide the outcome of battle without having a full-blown war. So each side sent twelve men to fight, and each of those twenty-four men grabbed his opponent by the head and rammed his spear into the other so that they all—every one of them—died. Because so many died there, that place was named "The field of daggers" or "of conflict." Nothing was decided by the skirmish that killed all of these men; so a fierce battle took place that day with Joab's (David's) men chasing and beating Abner's (Ishbosheth's).

Chasing Abner

Joab's two brothers also fought in the battle. All three of these were nephews to David, sons of Zeruijah, David's sister [✓maybe half sister]. One of Joab's brothers, Asahel, was an extremely fast runner: he could run like a gazelle.¹ He chased after and intended to catch Abner and destroy him. Abner saw Asahel coming and asked, "Is that you, Asahel?" Asahel had passed the other soldiers but didn't turn aside to slay them. He wanted none less than Ishbosheth's captain. ✓If he could get him, David would surely be king over all Israel.

"Yes," answered Asahel.

"Turn aside; fight one of the young men, not me, for I am more experienced than you."

But Asahel kept gaining on Abner. Again, Abner, warned, "Stop chasing me. Why should I strike you down, and if I do, how could I look your brother Joab in the face?"

But Asahel wouldn't stop. Therefore, when he caught up, Abner thrust with the butt end of his spear behind him into Asahel's stomach, killing him. Abner still needed to get away as Israel continued to chase him; so he left Asahel's body in the road where he had died.

Ending strife

The Israelite soldiers, arriving at the death scene, stopped and wouldn't go further when they came upon Asahel's corpse. This delay allowed Abner to get farther away. After someone moved the body out of the road, they continued on their way. Joab and his other brother, Abishai, kept on chasing Abner until Abner and his men assembled themselves on a well-protected hill. From that high point Abner shouted to Joab, "Are we brothers going to fight forever? Don't you know all of this will end in bitterness? When are you going to stop chasing your brothers?"

Abner had a point: why should the children of Abraham be fighting each other? (This incident reminds me of brothers and sisters, children of the same parents, who fight each other. This happens all too often.)

Joab saw the wisdom of Abner's words and agreed with them. He blew the trumpet to signal his troops to stop chasing and killing. Three hundred sixty of Abner's men had died in battle, but only twenty of Joab's men, including Asahel, had died in the battle.

Instead of pursuing each other, both armies spent the night marching home. Abner and his soldiers arrived at Mahanaim around noon the next day, and Joab and his men arrived in Hebron at daybreak.

¹Gazelles can run 30–40 miles per hour.

Lessons from This Lesson:

- We see Jesus:
“[David] took his friends and followers with him [to Hebron], [v. 3](#). They had accompanied him in his wanderings, and therefore, when he gained a settlement, they settled with him. Thus, if we suffer with Christ, we shall reign with him, [2 Tim. 2:12](#). Nay, Christ does more for his good soldiers than David could do for his; David found lodging for them—They dwelt in the cities of Hebron, and adjacent towns; but to those who continue with Christ in his temptations he appoints a kingdom, and will feast them at his own table, [Lu. 22:29](#), [Lu. 22:30](#)” ([2 Samuel 2 Commentary - Matthew Henry Commentary on the Whole Bible \(Complete\) \(biblestudytools.com\)](#)).

Activities:

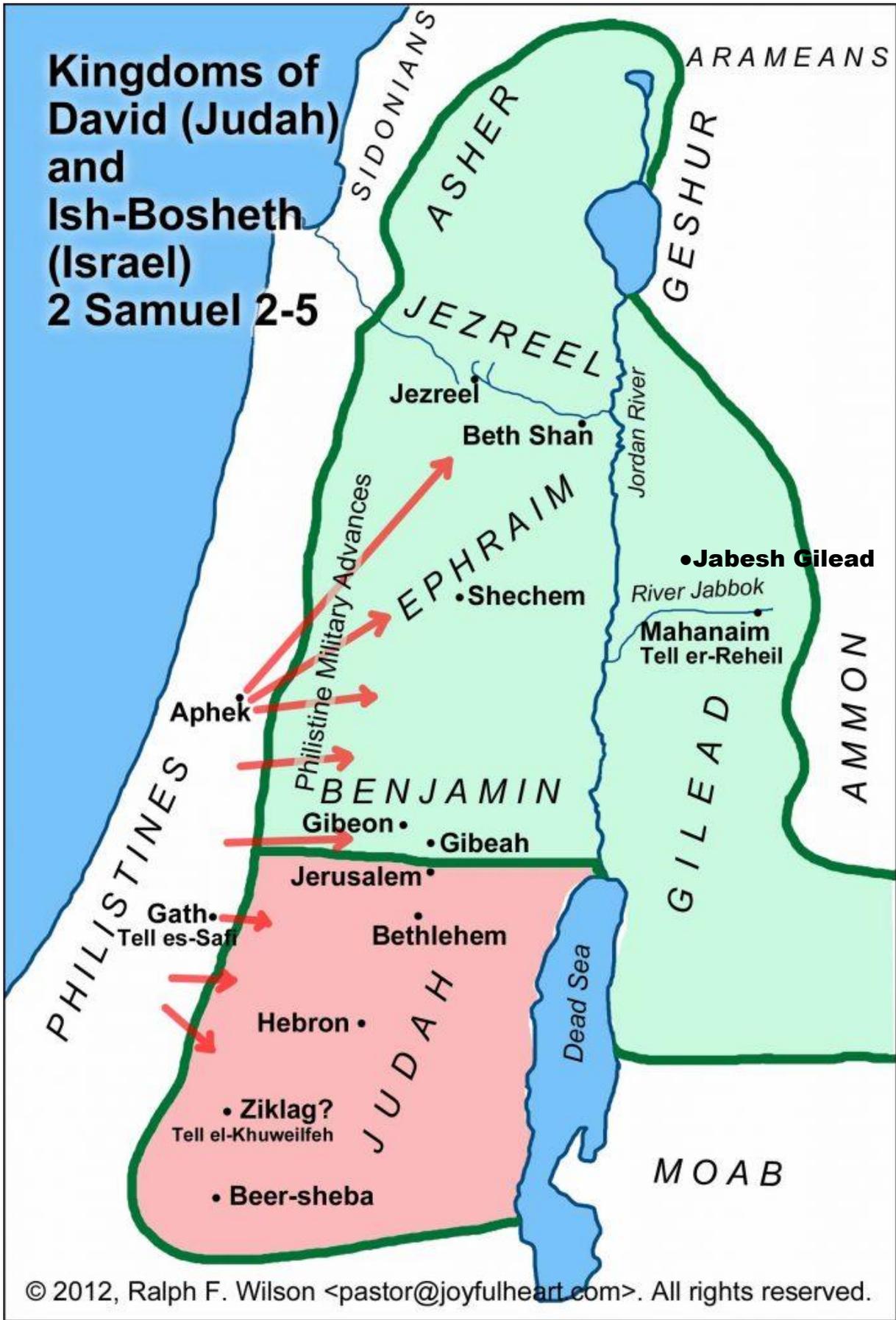
- Play dough: spears
- Snack: Dill pickle or dill okra spears
- Play act Asahel’s chasing Abner or use plastic toy soldiers to enact the scene.
- Review questions: (Game: Younger students may play “Duck, Duck, Goose.” Students will be seated on the floor in a circle. A student who answers a question correctly becomes “Abner,” and goes around the circle no more than once. [S]he taps a student, “Asahel,” on the head and runs on around the circle no more than once, sitting down in “Asahel’s” place. The tapped student chases “Abner,” attempting to catch him. Both sit down after the chase and wait for the next question. For older students, merely tally points—individual or team points.)
 1. Where did God say David should move? [To Hebron.]
 2. After David and his men moved to Hebron, what did the tribe of Judah do to David? [Anointed him king over Judah.]
 3. What did David promise to do for Jabesh Gilead because they had properly buried Saul and his sons? [To do them good.]
 4. What was the name of Saul’s son who intended to be king over Israel? [Ishbosheth.]
 5. What was the name of the captain of Israel’s army? [Abner.]
 6. What was the name of the captain of David’s army? [Joab.]
 7. What happened to the 24 soldiers who battled at the pool of Gibeon? [All of them died.]
 8. Who refused to stop chasing Abner? [Asahel, Joab’s brother.]
 9. Who spoke reasonably that Israelite brothers should stop fighting? [Abner.]

Memory Verse[s]: (KJV; last week on this psalm)

- 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.

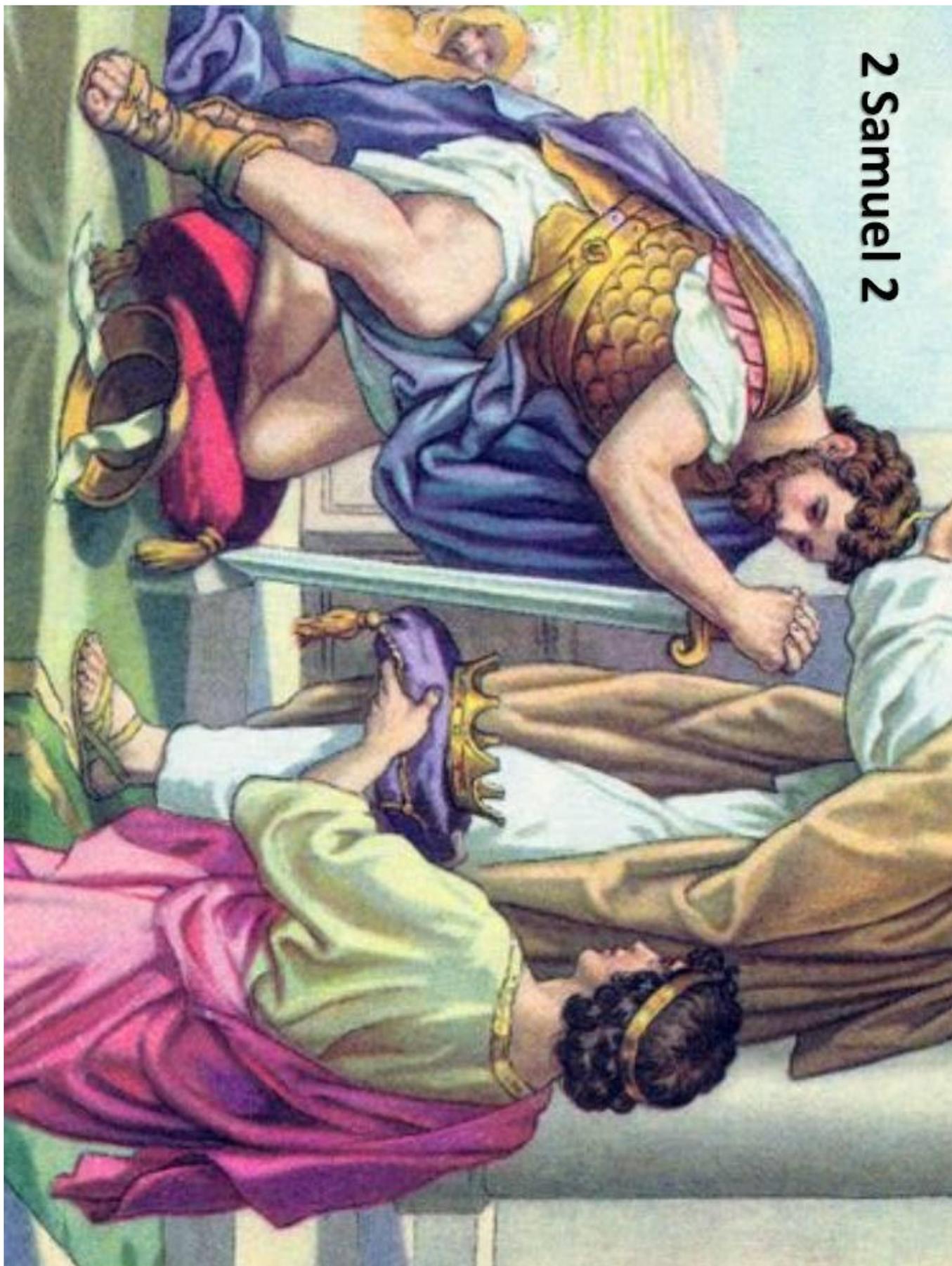
Handwork:

- Print out a worksheet that asks students to match the description to the name. The worksheet is found at <http://www.sundayschoolsources.com/classmat/DavidsPeople.htm>.



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2 Samuel 2

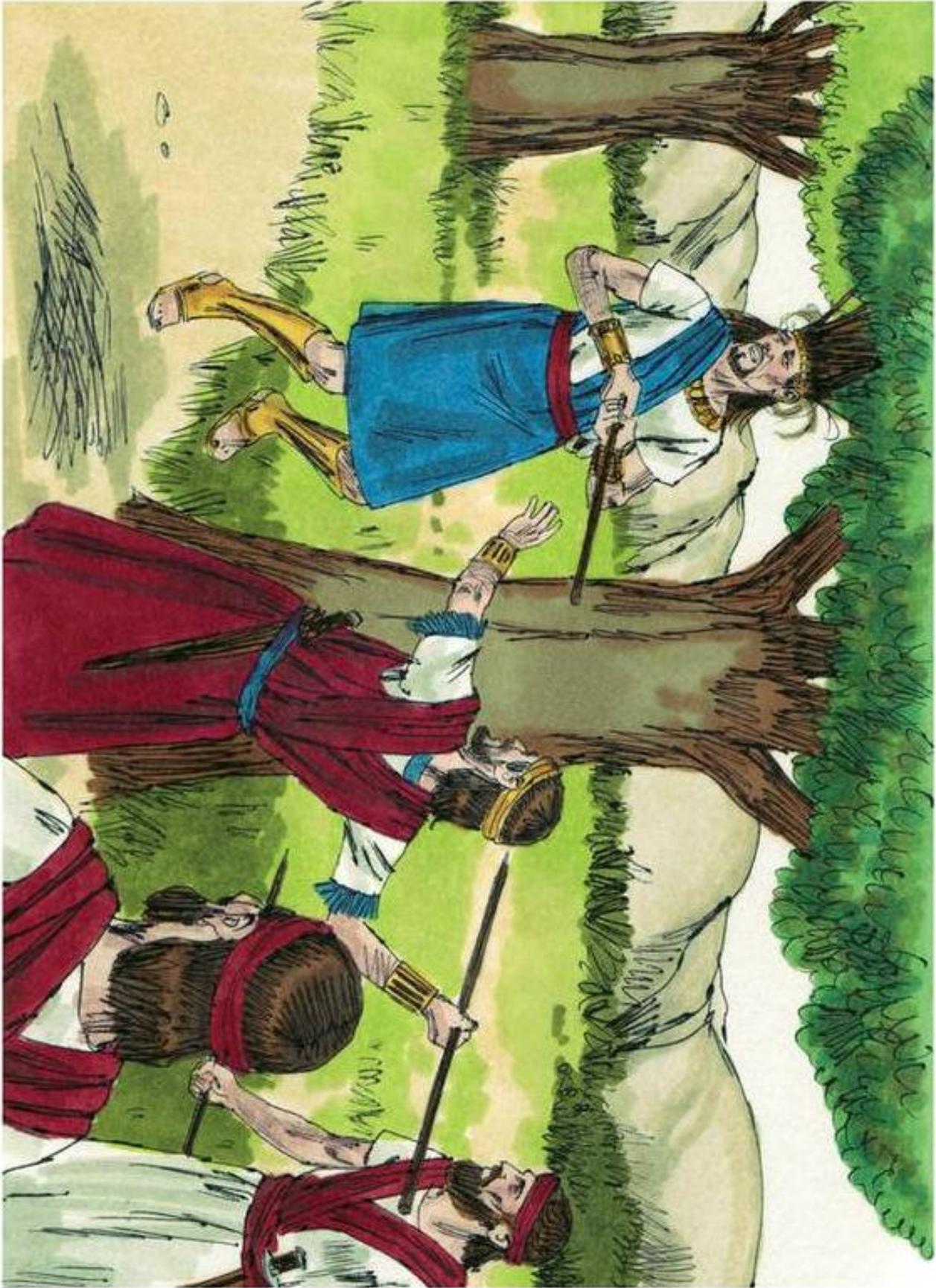




The Pool of Gibeon today ([fullsizeimage_690.jpg \(800x544\)](#) (repsandsets.org))



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Ishbosheth	David
Saul's Son	Anointed by Samuel
Northern Tribes	Judah in the South
Captain Abner	Captain Joab