

20.02 Hiel's Jericho; The Widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 16:34; 17:8–24)

✓ “*Check*” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows

Brackets [. . .] indicate a remark to the teacher that should not be read aloud, or they show 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 handful of flour in a jar and a bit of oil in a jug and another container in which to pour the flour and oil

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.

- *reign*: (homophone with *rain*); the period during which a king or queen rules
- *rain*: moisture falling in water drops from the sky
- *widow*: a woman whose husband has died

Scripture: (ESV)

1 Kings 16:34 In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation at the cost of Abiram his firstborn, and set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he spoke by Joshua the son of Nun.

17:8 Then the word of the Lord came to [Elijah], 9 “Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you.” 10 So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, “Bring me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.” 11 And as she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, “Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.” 12 And she said, “As the Lord your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. And now I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die.” 13 And Elijah said to her, “Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son. 14 For thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the Lord sends rain upon the earth.’” 15 And she went and did as Elijah said. And she and he and her household ate for many days. 16 The jar of flour was not spent, neither did the jug of oil become empty, according to the word of the Lord that he spoke by Elijah.

17 After this the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became ill. And his illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. 18 And she said to Elijah, “What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance and to cause the death of my son!” 19 And he said to her, “Give me your son.” And he took him from her arms and carried him up into the upper chamber where he lodged, and laid him on his own bed. 20 And he cried to the Lord, “O Lord my God, have you brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by killing her son?” 21 Then he stretched himself upon the child three times and cried to the Lord, “O Lord my God, let this child’s life come into him again.” 22 And the Lord listened to the voice of Elijah. And the life of the child came into him again, and he revived. 23 And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper chamber into the house and delivered him to his mother. And Elijah said, “See, your son lives.” 24 And the woman said to Elijah, “Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth.”

Introduction/Review:

How had God destroyed the city of Jericho? [He made the walls fall down.] At the time of Jericho’s destruction, Joshua had pronounced a solemn curse and a prophecy. Listen to Joshua 6:26: “Cursed before

the Lord is the man who undertakes to rebuild this city, Jericho. At the cost of his firstborn son will he lay its foundations; at the cost of his youngest will he set up its gates.”

Do you understand what God would do to the man who rebuilt Jericho? It was this: When the builder finished the foundations of the city (near the beginning of the building project), his oldest son would die. When he totally finished the city (“set up its gates”), his youngest son would die. I can’t imagine that anyone who feared God would ever try to rebuild Jericho. Who would want his children to die?

Story:

The common thing to do in Israel during the reign of wicked King Ahab was to forget about the one true God and to worship idols. So, did the people fear God? No, they worshiped golden calves and other false gods.

Hiel’s rebuilding Jericho

During the time that Ahab ruled, a man, named Hiel [pronounced “HIGH el”], who lived in Bethel, a city with a golden calf, decided to rebuild the city of Jericho. The Bible doesn’t tell us why he undertook this project, but ✓we can assume either (1) that he didn’t care about his sons, which is unlikely; or (2) that he didn’t know about God’s curse, which is unlikely; or (3) that he just defied God, perhaps saying in his heart, ✓“I don’t care what God said about Jericho. I don’t believe it anyway because I believe in Baal, not God.”

Would God do what He had said to the man who rebuilt Jericho? Could Hiel get by without his sons’ dying? Look at 1 Kings 16:34: “In Ahab’s time, Hiel rebuilt Jericho. He laid its foundations at the cost of his firstborn son Abiram.” In other words, his firstborn son died at about the same time as the foundations of the city were laid. The Bible verse continues, “And he set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub.” Who died when the city was finished?” [Segub, Hiel’s youngest son.] When God tells us not to do something, we should be very careful to obey Him, for He is the Judge.

Last week we learned about wicked King Ahab, who married Jezebel, a wicked princess and a cause of Israel’s worshiping not only idols but especially Baal, the wicked god of the people living around them.

Elijah’s pronouncement

Elijah, a great and godly man, had told King Ahab that it would not rain for years until Elijah said it would rain. Then to protect Elijah from Ahab, God hid Elijah by the Brook Cherith [pronounced “KAR ith”; locate], where he could drink water and be fed bread and meat by what animals? [Ravens.]

Why was there no rain? It was because Elijah, wanting God to awaken the people to their evil and to punish the evil of the land, had prayed it would not rain. What happens when it doesn’t rain? [Plants dry up; rivers dry up.]

After a while Elijah’s Brook Cherith dried up because of no moisture. The Lord then told Elijah, “Go right now to Zarephath of Sidon” [locate].

Elijah’s new place of provision

This Sidon area was not in Israel but way north. It was Jezebel’s homeland. How could God do that—hide Elijah in his enemy’s homeland? He uses strange means sometimes, doesn’t He?

God continued his message to Elijah: “I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food.” A widow is a lady whose husband has died. [Teacher, name a widow with whom your students are familiar.] _____ is a widow. In those days, it was usually the case that a widow had very few resources by which to live. In other words, she was poor.

Elijah went to that area of Sidon, and as he came to the city gate, he saw a widow gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, “Please, bring me a little water in a jar so that I may have a drink.” She went to get the drink, but as she was going, Elijah asked for something else: “Bring me, please, a piece of bread.”

The widow came back to Elijah and said, “As surely as the Lord your God lives, I don’t have any bread, but I have just a handful of flour in a jar and little oil in a jug. I’m gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for my son and me. This will be our last meal; we will then starve to death.”

Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said, only make me a cake of bread first, bring it to me, and then go make some for your son and you. The Lord the God of Israel says, ‘The jar of flour and the jug of oil will not be used up until the day the Lord gives rain again on the land.’”

The widow went away and did as Elijah had said. From then on, there was food every day for Elijah, for the woman, and for her son, just as God had promised.

During this time, Elijah stayed in a room on the flat roof of the house. God was caring for him as he hid from Ahab and Jezebel.

The widow’s sick son

However, one day the widow’s son became very sick, getting more and more ill until he stopped breathing and died. The widow kind of blamed Elijah for her son’s death: “What do you have against me? Did you come to remind me of my sins by killing my son?”

“Give me your son,” commanded Elijah. Then he carried the boy upstairs to his room, laid him on the bed, and cried out to the Lord, “O Lord, my God. Have you brought tragedy to this widow with whom I am staying by causing her son to die?” He stretched himself upon the dead child three times. Then he prayed, “O Lord, my God, let this boy’s life return unto him.”

The Lord heard Elijah’s cry, and the boy lived again. Elijah picked him up and carried him down from his room into the house and gave him to his mother, saying, “Look! Your son is alive.”

✓Overjoyed, the widow exclaimed, “Now I know for sure that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth!”

Even though the woman had been fed by a handful of flour and a bit of oil for many months, truly a miracle, she didn’t fully believe in the truth of Elijah’s words until God gave life to her son again.

Jesus’ powerful resurrection

This story reminds me of a time in Jesus’ life when He raised a widow’s son to life. These two boys in separate incidents eventually died permanently when they were older. However, one Man who died and was raised to life is still living. Who is that? [Jesus Christ.] He lives so that whoever believes on Him will not die in punishing fire forever but can have “the light of life” and, after the body dies, live forever with Jesus.

Lessons from This Lesson:

- We see Jesus:

[Repeated from above.] Jesus also raised a widow’s son to life. The boy Jesus raised to life and the widow’s son eventually died permanently when they were older, but one Man who was dead and raised to life and is still living. Who is that? It is Jesus Christ. He lives so that whoever believes on Him will not die in punishing fire forever but can have “the light of life” and, after the body dies, live forever with Him.

Activities:

- Play dough: Sticks; bread; a jug; a room on a flat roof
- Snack: A “cake” made from oil and flour. A purely oil-and-flour cake recipe is hard to find. Here, however, is an eggless oil-and-flour cake recipe: [Eggless Vanilla Cake Recipe | Eggless Cooking](#)
- Gather sticks from the property where your class takes place.

- Draw or make from a box a house with an upper room. (See the photo below for a rough model.)
- Review questions: (Game: Gather together 8 small sticks. A student who answers a question correctly gets a stick for the answer. If playing with teams, place sticks in either or two containers.)
 1. What is the name of the man who rebuilt Jericho? [Hiel.]
 2. What happened to Hiel's sons in fulfillment of God's prophecy about the man who rebuilt Jericho? [His firstborn died when Hiel laid the foundation of the city; his youngest son died when Hiel set up the gates of the city.]
 3. When the Brook Cherith dried up, where did God send Elijah? [To Zarephath in Sidon.]
 4. Whose home country was Sidon? [Queen Jezebel's, Elijah's enemy.]
 5. How did God feed Elijah, the widow of Zarephath, and the widow's son? [The jar of flour and jug of oil never ran out.]
 6. What happened to the widow's son? [He died.]
 7. What did elijah do by God's power to bring the boy back to life? [Took the boy to his room, stretched himself over the boy three times, and cried to the Lord to heal the boy.]
 8. What did the widow say about Elijah when her son was brought back to life? ["Now I know you are a man of God, and the word in your mouth is truth."]

Memory Verse[s]:

- Psalm 121

1 I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? 2 My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

3 He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. 4 Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

5 The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade on your right hand. 6 The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.

7 The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. 8 The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

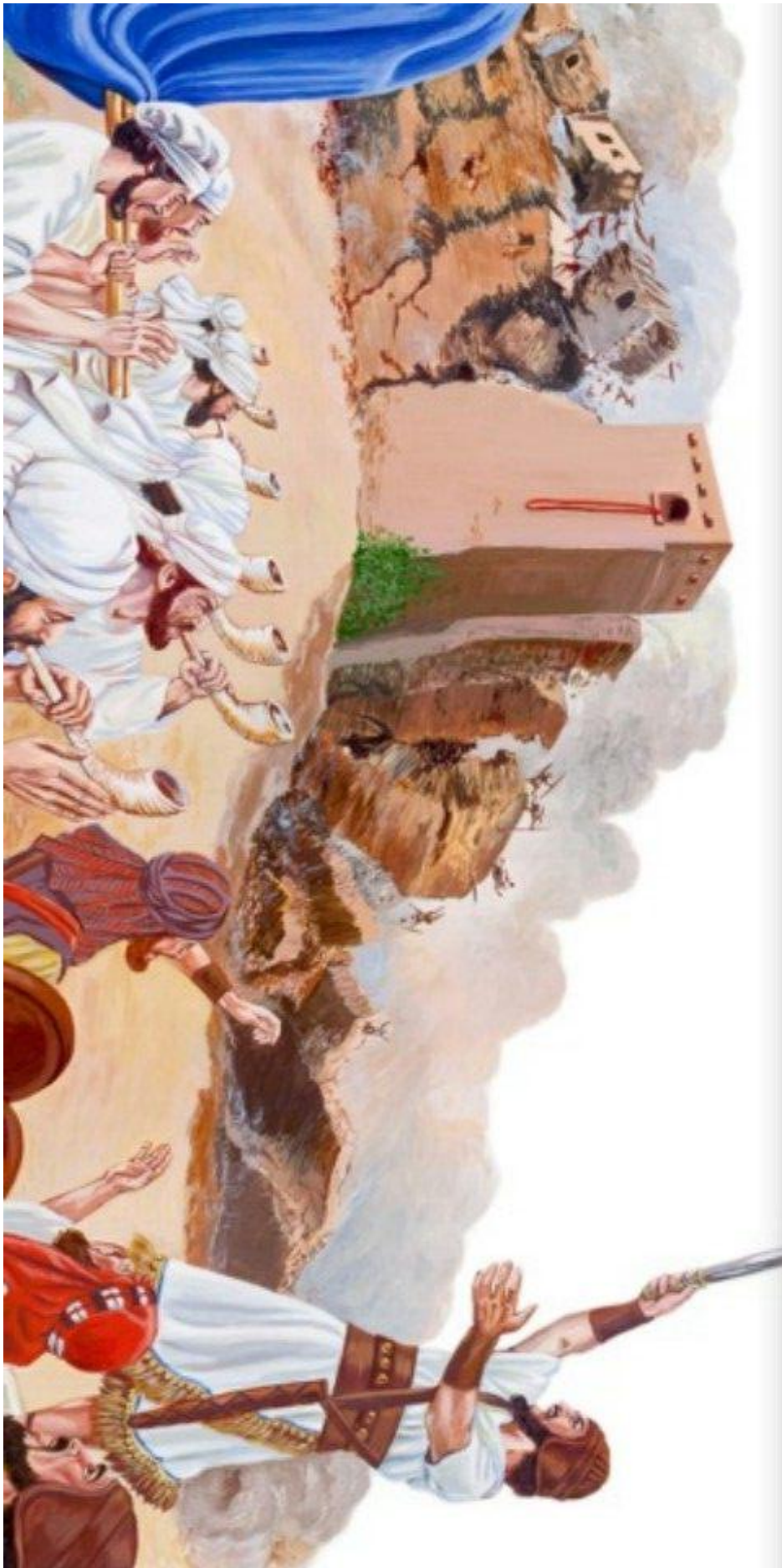
Handwork:

- Color the picture found at [Widow-in-Zarephath-02.jpg \(2550×3300\) \(abidingwordtx.org\)](http://www.abidingwordtx.org/Widow-in-Zarephath-02.jpg). Students should write, "God provided for the widow, her son, and Elijah," below the picture.

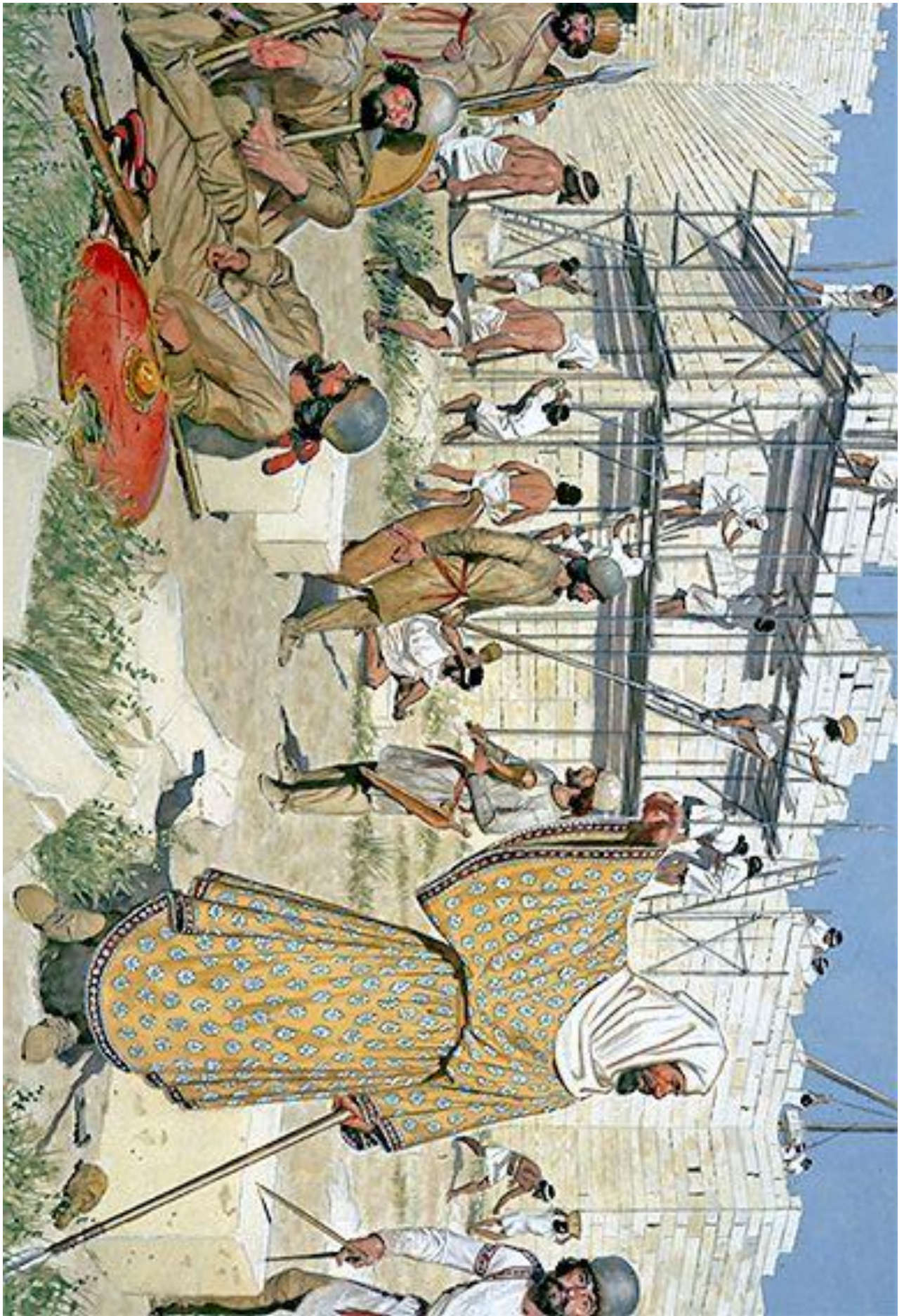
reign

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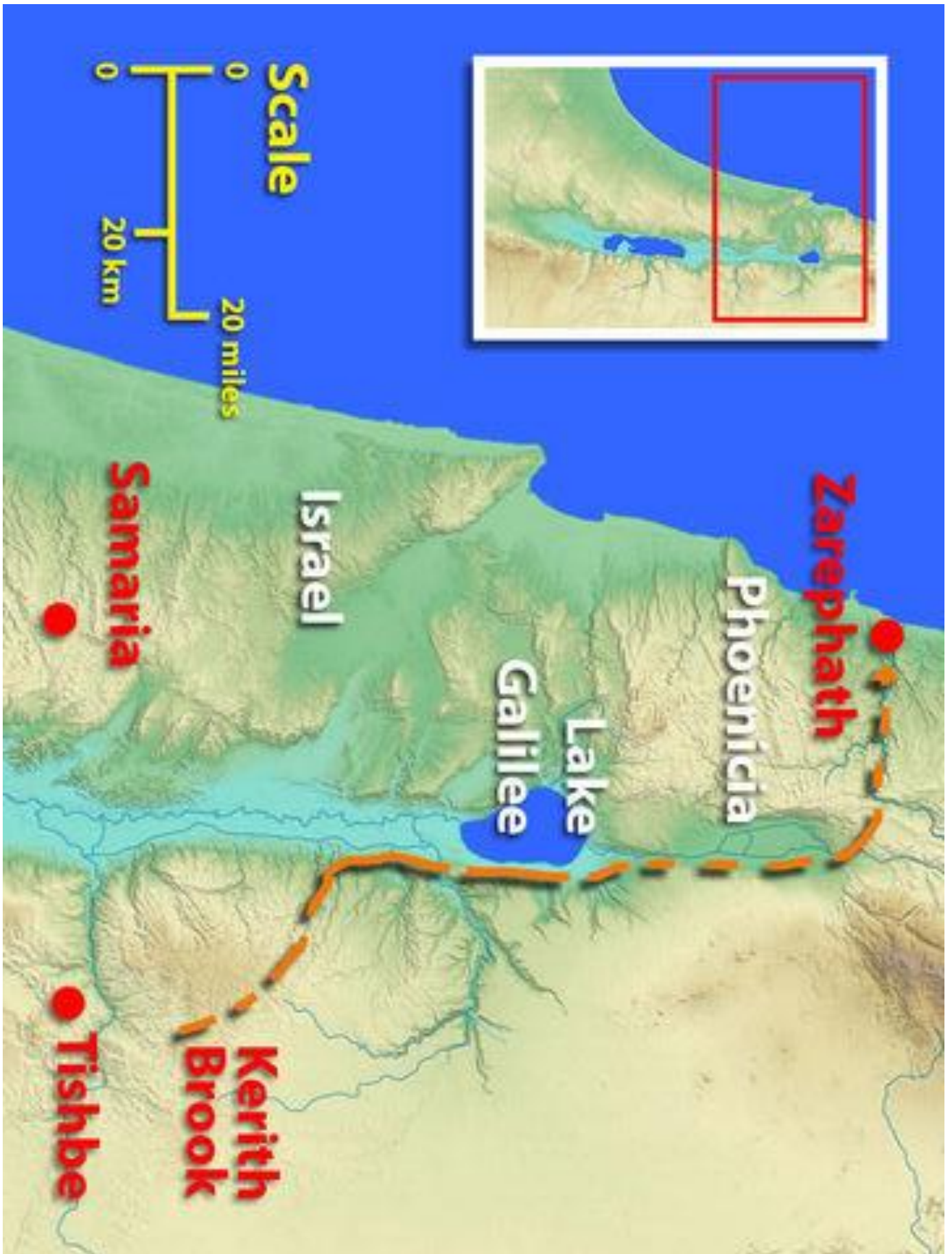
[Jericho Walls Fall Down - Bing images](#)



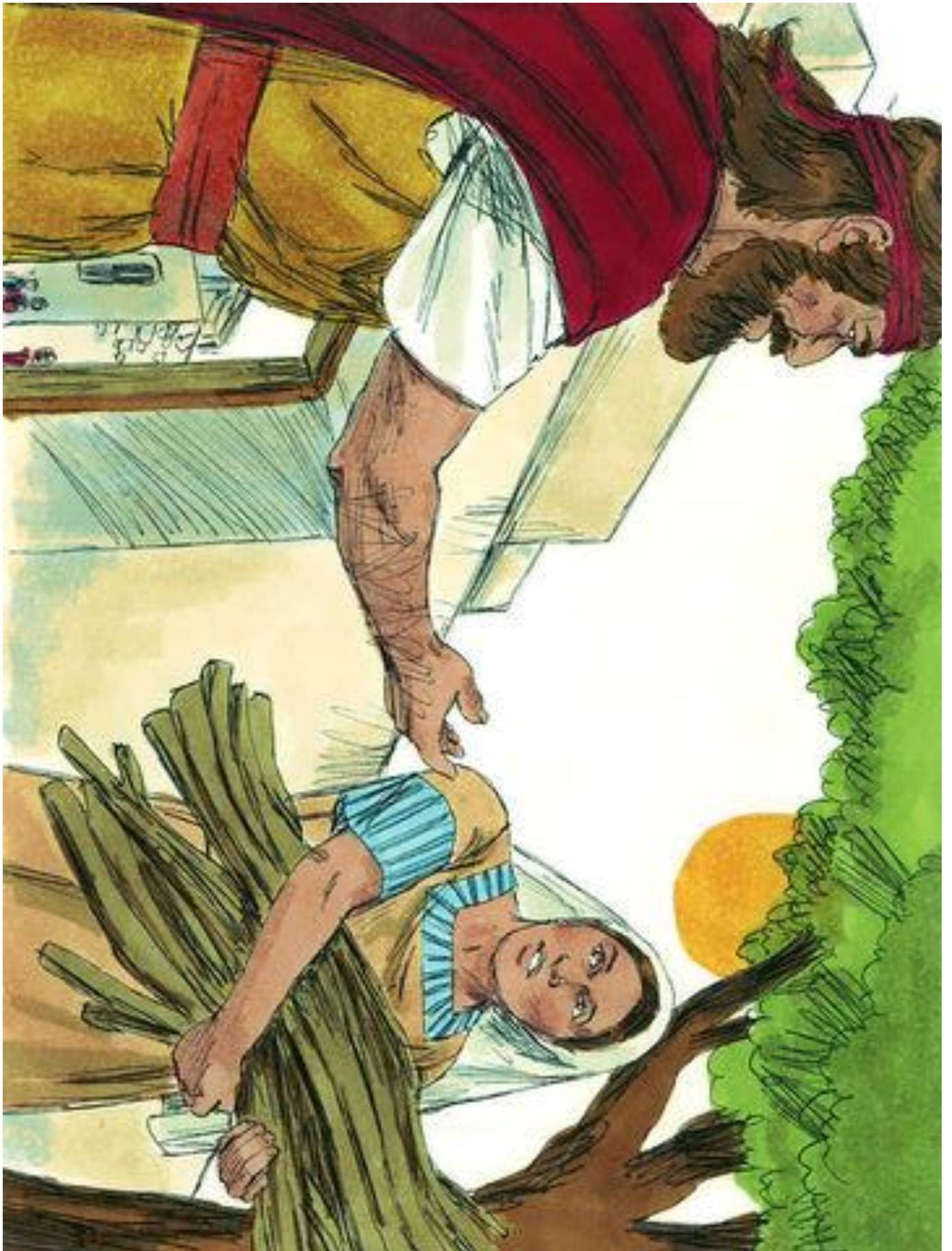
bible man building a city - Bing images



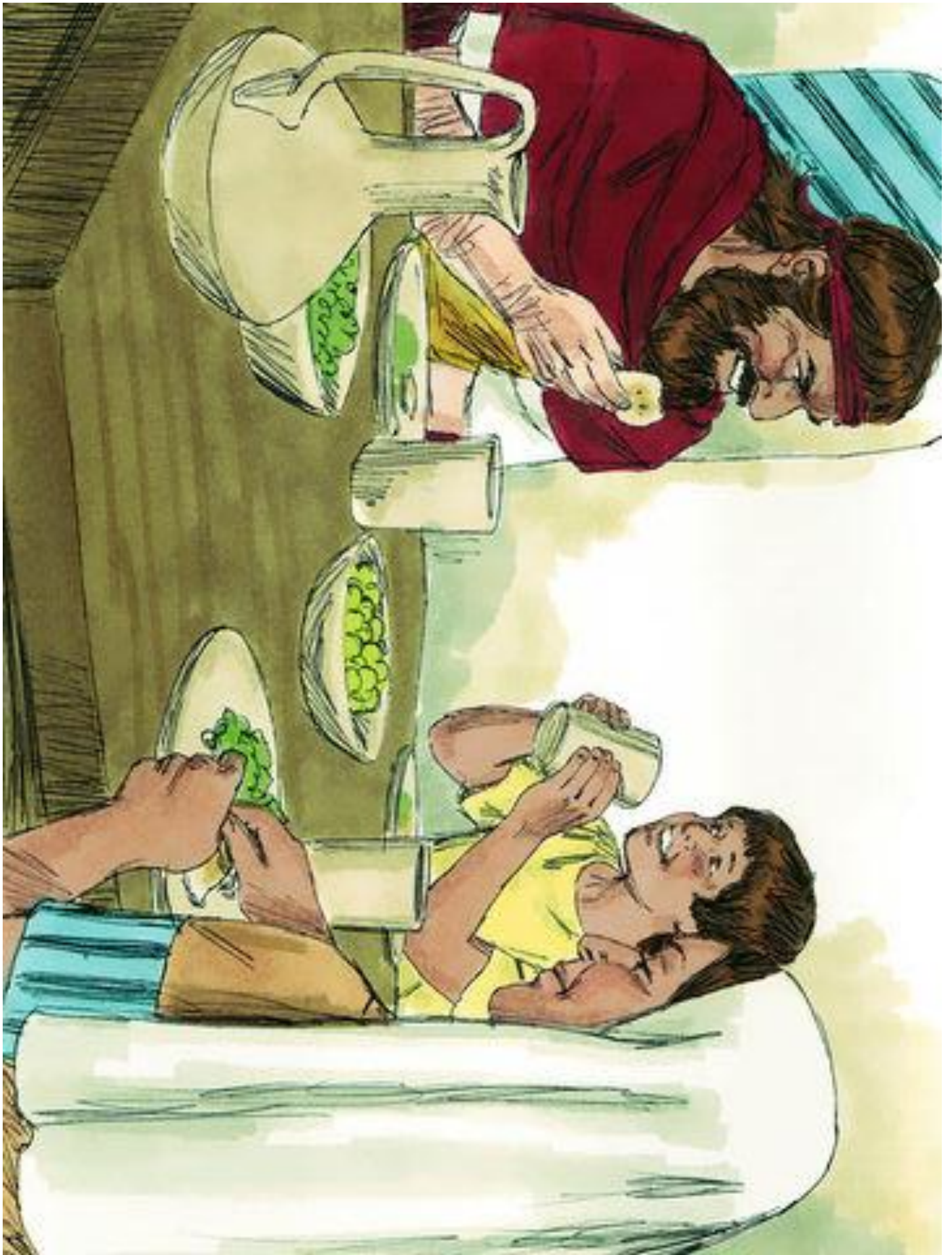
[FreeBibleimages](#) :: Ravens fed Elijah :: Ravens feed Elijah as he hides from King Ahab in the Kerith ravine (1 Kings 17:1-9)



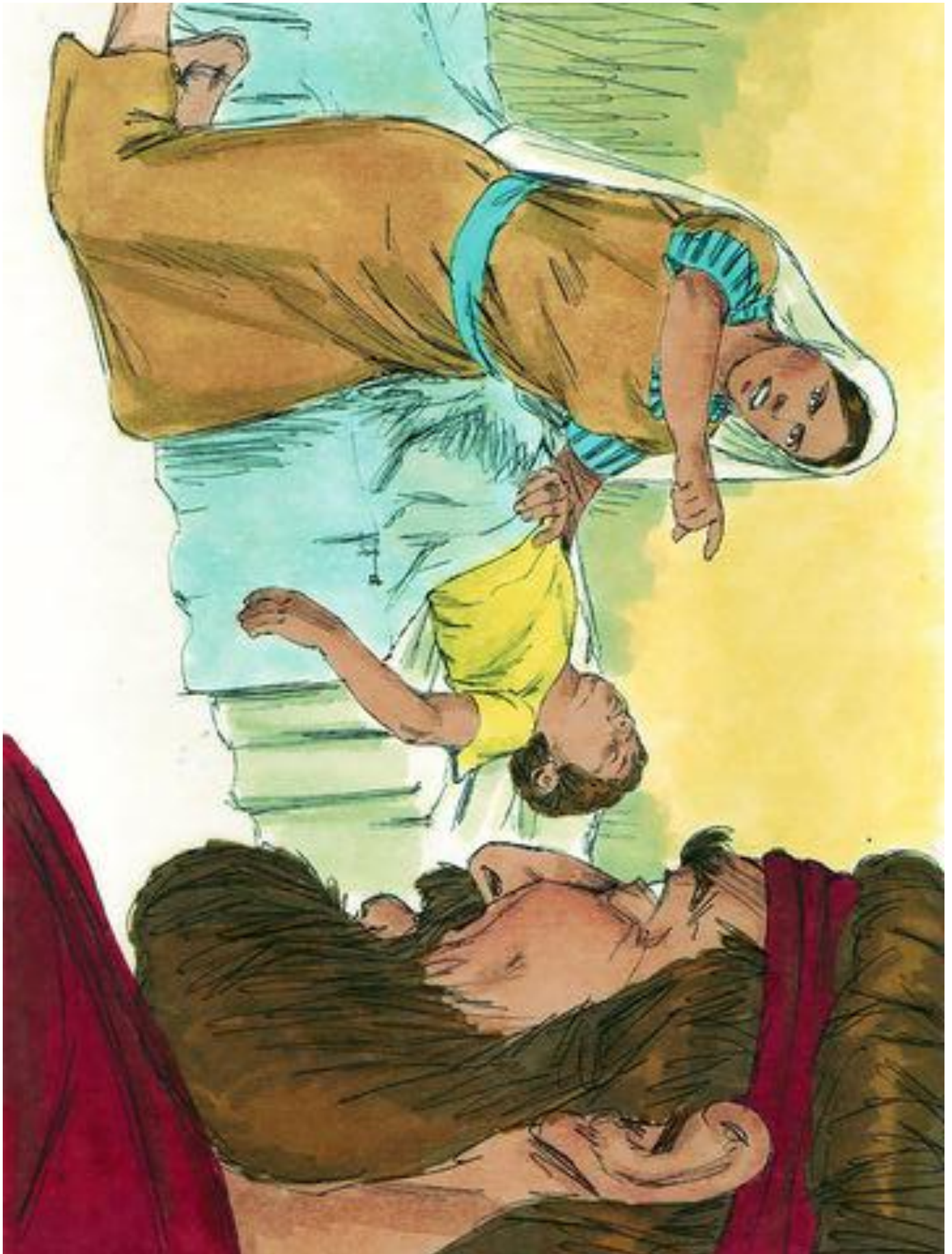
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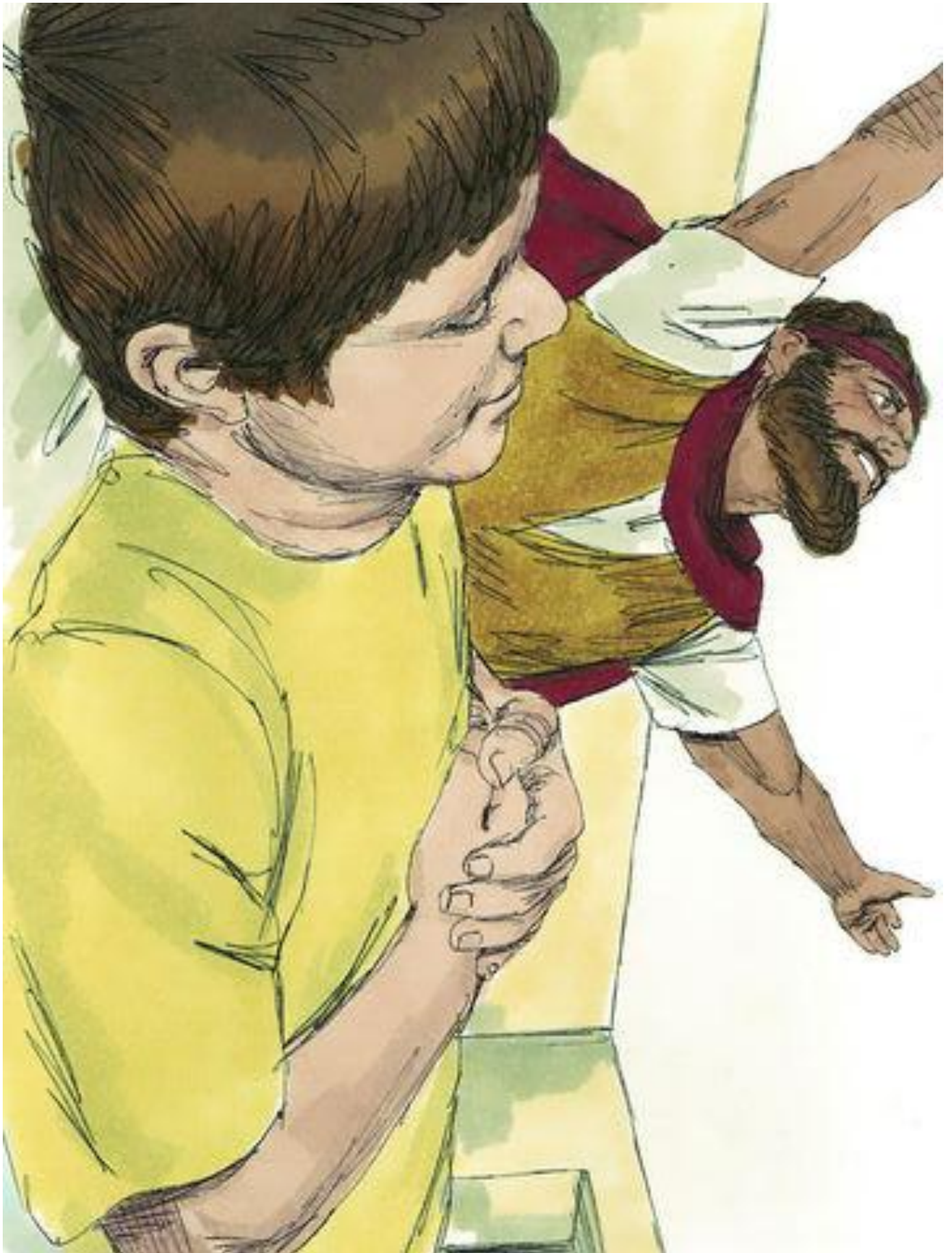
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[FreeBibleimages.org](https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustration/elijah-and-the-widow-of-zarephath) :: Elijah and the widow of Zarephath :: God provides a widow with oil and flour to feed Elijah then, when her son dies, raises him back to life (1 Kings 17:7-18:1)



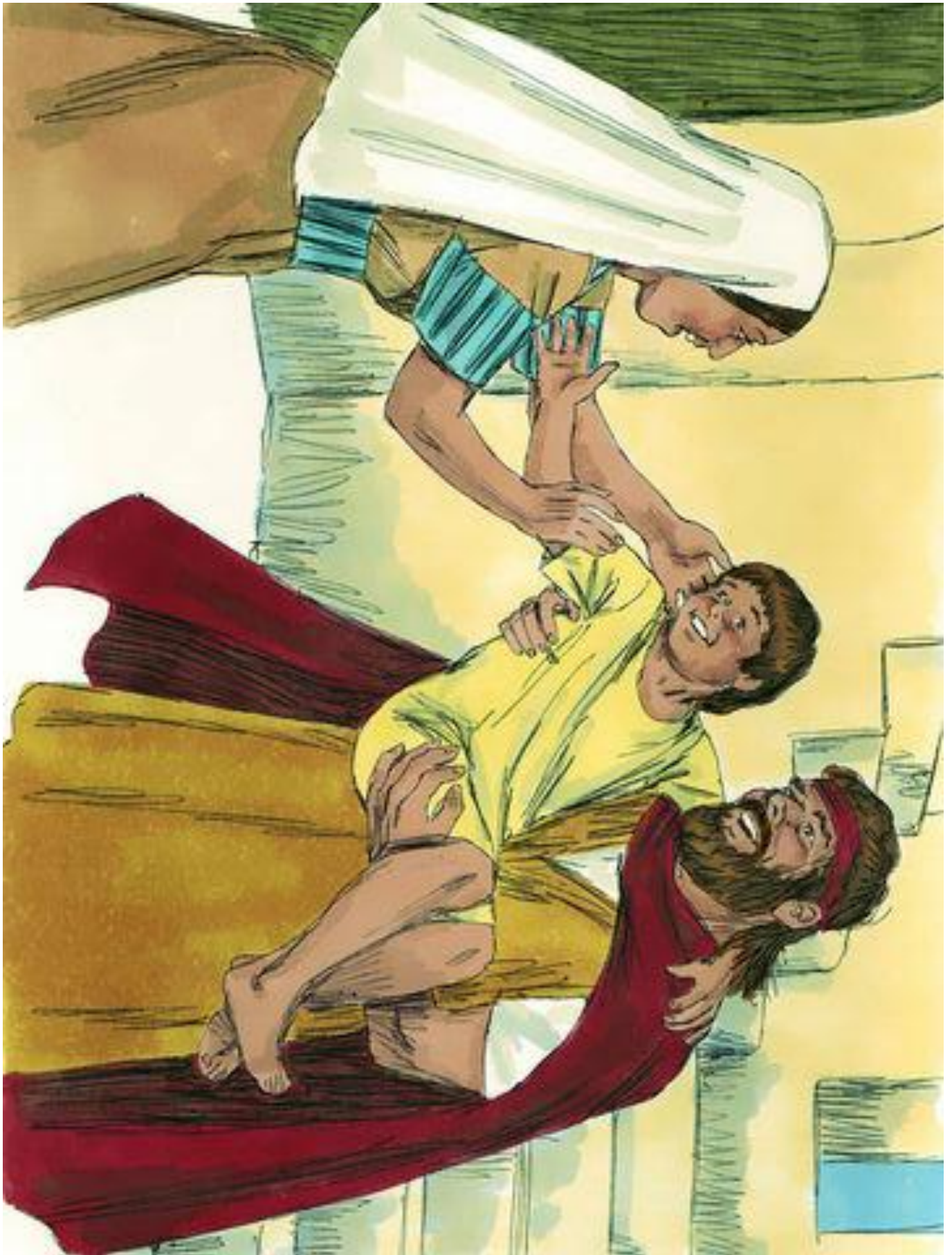
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