

20.03 Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:1–46)

✓ “*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.

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.

- *household manager*: a job like what Joseph had in Potiphar’s house
- *Baal*: a male false god
- *Asherah*: a female false god

Scripture: (ESV)

1 Kings 18:1 After many days the word of the Lord came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, “Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain upon the earth.” 2 So Elijah went to show himself to Ahab. Now the famine was severe in Samaria. 3 And Ahab called Obadiah, who was over the household. (Now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly, 4 and when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord, Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave and fed them with bread and water.) 5 And Ahab said to Obadiah, “Go through the land to all the springs of water and to all the valleys. Perhaps we may find grass and save the horses and mules alive, and not lose some of the animals.” 6 So they divided the land between them to pass through it. Ahab went in one direction by himself, and Obadiah went in another direction by himself.

7 And as Obadiah was on the way, behold, Elijah met him. And Obadiah recognized him and fell on his face and said, “Is it you, my lord Elijah?” 8 And he answered him, “It is I. Go, tell your lord, ‘Behold, Elijah is here.’” 9 And he said, “How have I sinned, that you would give your servant into the hand of Ahab, to kill me? 10 As the Lord your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my lord has not sent to seek you. And when they would say, ‘He is not here,’ he would take an oath of the kingdom or nation, that they had not found you. 11 And now you say, ‘Go, tell your lord, Behold, Elijah is here.’ 12 And as soon as I have gone from you, the Spirit of the Lord will carry you I know not where. And so, when I come and tell Ahab and he cannot find you, he will kill me, although I your servant have feared the Lord from my youth. 13 Has it not been told my lord what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the Lord, how I hid a hundred men of the Lord’s prophets by fifties in a cave and fed them with bread and water? 14 And now you say, ‘Go, tell your lord, Behold, Elijah is here’; and he will kill me.” 15 And Elijah said, “As the Lord of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself to him today.” 16 So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him. And Ahab went to meet Elijah.

17 When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, “Is it you, you troubler of Israel?” 18 And he answered, “I have not troubled Israel, but you have, and your father’s house, because you have abandoned the commandments of the Lord and followed the Baals. 19 Now therefore send and gather all Israel to me at Mount Carmel, and the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table.”

20 So Ahab sent to all the people of Israel and gathered the prophets together at Mount Carmel. 21 And Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.” And the people did not answer him a word. 22 Then Elijah said to the people, “I, even I only, am left a prophet of the Lord, but Baal’s prophets are 450 men. 23 Let two bulls be given to us, and let them choose one bull for themselves and cut it in pieces and lay it on the wood, but put no fire to it. And I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood and put no fire to it. 24 And you call upon the name of your god, and I will call upon the name of the Lord, and the God who answers by fire, he is God.” And all the people answered, “It is well spoken.” 25 Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “Choose for

yourselves one bull and prepare it first, for you are many, and call upon the name of your god, but put no fire to it.” 26 And they took the bull that was given them, and they prepared it and called upon the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, “O Baal, answer us!” But there was no voice, and no one answered. And they limped around the altar that they had made. 27 And at noon Elijah mocked them, saying, “Cry aloud, for he is a god. Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened.” 28 And they cried aloud and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them. 29 And as midday passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation, but there was no voice. No one answered; no one paid attention.

30 Then Elijah said to all the people, “Come near to me.” And all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that had been thrown down. 31 Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord came, saying, “Israel shall be your name,” 32 and with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord. And he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two seahs of seed. 33 And he put the wood in order and cut the bull in pieces and laid it on the wood. And he said, “Fill four jars with water and pour it on the burnt offering and on the wood.” 34 And he said, “Do it a second time.” And they did it a second time. And he said, “Do it a third time.” And they did it a third time. 35 And the water ran around the altar and filled the trench also with water.

36 And at the time of the offering of the oblation, Elijah the prophet came near and said, “O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word. 37 Answer me, O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back.” 38 Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. 39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, “The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God.” 40 And Elijah said to them, “Seize the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape.” And they seized them. And Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon and slaughtered them there.

41 And Elijah said to Ahab, “Go up, eat and drink, for there is a sound of the rushing of rain.” 42 So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Mount Carmel. And he bowed himself down on the earth and put his face between his knees. 43 And he said to his servant, “Go up now, look toward the sea.” And he went up and looked and said, “There is nothing.” And he said, “Go again,” seven times. 44 And at the seventh time he said, “Behold, a little cloud like a man’s hand is rising from the sea.” And he said, “Go up, say to Ahab, ‘Prepare your chariot and go down, lest the rain stop you.’” 45 And in a little while the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel. 46 And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah, and he gathered up his garment and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

Introduction/Review:

Elijah, God’s prophet, had told wicked King Ahab and Queen Jezebel that all rain and dew would cease for some years. Would it really happen? Yes. One year went by. During that year God took care of Elijah near the Brook Cherith, where he could get water and where the ravens brought him bread and meat every morning and every night.

Two years went by. The Brook Cherith dried up, but God sent Elijah to a widow whose oil and flour never ran out. Every day Elijah, the widow, and her little boy were fed.

Three years went by. Still no rain or dew. The situation was desperate! However, Elijah was still being fed by God’s miracle.

Story:

Obadiah

One day King Ahab and his household manager, Obadiah, were out looking in every valley and at every water spring to see if there was any grass anywhere so that their horses and mules could graze. Ahab went one direction, and Obadiah went another direction.

Now, during this time Jezebel was cutting off—killing/slaying—all the prophets of the Lord that she could find while she fed 450 priests of Baal and 400 priests of the false god Asherah. What were the Lord's prophets to do? Where could they hide from Jezebel? Well, Obadiah, even though he was Ahab's chief household servant, feared the Lord greatly. This means that he did not worship Baal but the one true God. He somehow found two huge caves where he could hide the true prophets of God. He hid 50 in one cave and 50 in the other and fed all these men with bread and water. Ahab and Jezebel never found out.

It was at this time that God told Elijah, "Go show yourself to Ahab. I will now send rain upon the land." So Elijah went on his way, finding Obadiah.

You can tell how much Obadiah respected Elijah, for when they met, he fell down with his face to the ground and said, "Is it you, my *lord* Elijah?"

Elijah answered, "It is I. Go tell your lord [Ahab], 'Elijah is here.'"

Obadiah replied, "How have I sinned that you would cause King Ahab to kill me? Ahab has looked for you everywhere, even into other kingdoms. If those kingdoms said you weren't there, he would make them promise by their gods that you weren't there. Now you want me to tell Ahab that you are here in our country. As soon as I go, the Spirit of the Lord will carry you off somewhere, and when Ahab can't find you, he will slay me even though I have worshiped the true God since I was a boy. Have you not heard how I hid and fed 100 prophets in two caves when Jezebel killed the prophets? And now you say, 'Go tell Ahab, 'Elijah is here.' He will kill me.'"

Elijah answered Obadiah, "As surely as the Lord of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will definitely see him today." So Obadiah found Ahab and told him Elijah was nearby.

Ahab

Then Ahab went to meet Elijah. When he saw Elijah, he said, "Is that you, the one who causes trouble in Israel?"

Elijah answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you have because you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and have followed Baal. Now, do this. Gather all Israel to me at Mount Carmel and the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah, whom Jezebel feeds."

False prophets

Ahab did as Elijah said. A great crowd in addition to the 850 false prophets came to Mount Carmel [locate]. Elijah came close to the people and asked, "How long are you going to limp between two opinions?" You see, sometimes some of the people would serve the true God. At other times they served idols and Baal. Elijah continued, "If the Lord is God, follow Him. But if Baal is God, follow him!"

Nobody answered a word, and Elijah continued speaking. "I am the only prophet of the Lord, but Baal has 450 prophets. Bring us two bulls (male oxen), and you choose which one you will sacrifice. Prepare your altar, but don't put any fire on the altar. I will do the same with the other bull. You call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The God who answers by making fire come to the altar is the true God."

All the people nodded their heads and agreed, ✓saying, "Sounds fair enough. That's a good idea."

Elijah said, "You go first."

The prophets of Baal prepared their altar, the wood, and the sacrifice, and began calling on the name of their god: "O Baal, hear us!" All morning they called and limped around the altar, perhaps even jumping on the altar. No answer.

When the whole morning had passed and it was noon (lunchtime), Elijah started mocking them. "Cry louder. He is a god and maybe he is thinking or talking so that he can't hear you. Maybe he's chasing someone, or maybe he's on a journey. Maybe he's asleep; wake him up!"

This mockery stirred the false prophets to even louder screaming. Then, as they would sometimes do in their worship, they took their swords and knives and cut themselves so that blood gushed out of their wounds. But Baal, who is a false god and not a god at all, did not answer even though they continued their frenzied screams all afternoon.

Elijah

Finally, Elijah said to all the people, “Come near to me.” The people gathered closer while Elijah repaired an old altar of the Lord that had been torn apart. He took twelve large rocks, one for each of the tribes of all Israel, and rebuilt the altar. He put the wood in order and the sacrifice on top of the wood. Then, he did something strange: he dug a trench (a long ditch) about the width and depth of four gallons all around the altar. He ordered men to fill four buckets with water (possibly gotten from a nearby spring or from the sea) and to pour the water over the sacrifice, wood, and altar. It was done. “Do it again,” Elijah ordered. Four more buckets drenched the altar. “Do it a third time,” ordered Elijah. This time the water drenched the altar and overflowed into the trench, filling it. Who could start a fire on such a wet altar?

In the early evening, at the same time that the true priests of God down in Jerusalem [locate] were offering their evening sacrifice in the temple, Elijah prayed a simple, sincere prayer on Mount Carmel: “O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel, and that I am Thy servant, and that I have done all these things at Thy word. Answer me, O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that Thou, O Lord, art God, and that Thou hast turned their hearts back to You.”

Right then the fire of the Lord fell, coming from God out of the sky. It burned up the wood, sacrifice [pause], and even the stones and the dust. The fire “licked up” the water in the trench. All of it was burned up by the fire sent from the one true God!

The people

When the people saw this fearful event, they fell on their faces and cried, “The Lord, He is God; the Lord, He is God!”

Elijah commanded the people to catch every single one of those 850 false prophets so that they could be slain. Not one escaped. Then Elijah told Ahab. “Go get something to eat before the rushing rain begins.”

Elijah’s servant

Ahab went somewhere to eat and drink, but Elijah and his servant went to the top of Mount Carmel. There Elijah bowed to the ground with his face between his knees. I think he was continuing to pray. Then, to his servant he said, “Go check. Look toward the sea. Is there anything?”

“No,” replied the servant.

*Elijah went back to praying. Then to his servant he said, “Go look toward the sea. Do you see anything?”

“No,” replied the servant. [Teacher, repeat from the * another four times for a total of six times.]

The seventh time when the servant went to look toward the sea, he said, “I see a little cloud like a man’s hand rising out of the sea.”

Elijah said, “Go find Ahab. Tell him he’d better get in his chariot and head for the town of Jezreel [locate], for if he delays, the rain will stop him.”

In a little while the clouds grew black, the wind came up, and there was a tremendous rain. Ahab had gotten his chariot going to Jezreel, and Elijah ran in front of him all the way, a distance of about 20 miles, that’s about the distance from here to _____ [name a place about twenty miles away].

Lessons from This Lesson:

- We see Jesus:

Scripture mentions Carmel in relation to the future kingdom of God: “[T]he majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God” (Isaiah 35:2; Jeremiah 46:18). “The glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God” is Jesus Christ, who will reign in that kingdom.

Activities:

- Play dough: altar; bull; wood; water container
- Snack: Caramel Snacks; recipe is found at [Caramel Snacks - Recipe | Cooks.com](#)
- Bow as Elijah did to pray—on the ground with his head between his knees.
- Display chart found below to show how many (850) false prophets and priests gathered at Mount Carmel.
- Give a little background on Mount Carmel. A few points are that the word *karmel* means “garden-land.” Its Arabic name is Mount Mar Elias, meaning “Mount Saint Elias/Elijah.” It has “lush vegetation on the sloped hillside, and many caves on the steeper side” ([Mount Carmel - Wikipedia](#)).
- Review questions: (Game: Using the chart with 850 false priests found below, let a student draw a line through 3 rows of “false prophets” for each correct answer.)
 1. For how many years had there been no rain? [Three years.]
 2. Fill in the blank. God said to Elijah, “Go, show yourself to _____.” [Ahab]
 3. Who did Elijah find first? [Obadiah.]
 4. What had Obadiah done for God? [He had hidden 100 true prophets in two caves and had fed them with bread and water.]
 5. How many priests and false prophets of Baal and Asherah were there? [850 total—450 of Baal and 400 of Asherah.]
 6. (The person who answers this question correctly may cross out 4 rows of false prophets.) What were the prophets of Baal and Elijah to do with the bulls? [Put them on an altar and pray to their god (or, in Elijah’s case, to God). The god/God who answered with fire would be the true God.]
 7. How long did the prophets of Baal “pray” and jump around and cut themselves? [All day long.]
 8. How did Elijah “make it harder” for God to answer? [By soaking the altar and filling a trench around the altar with water.]
 9. What did God burn? [The bull, the wood, the stones, and the dust. He also licked up the water in the trench.]
 10. After God sent fire, what did He send in answer to Elijah’s seven prayers? [Rain—lots of it!]

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.

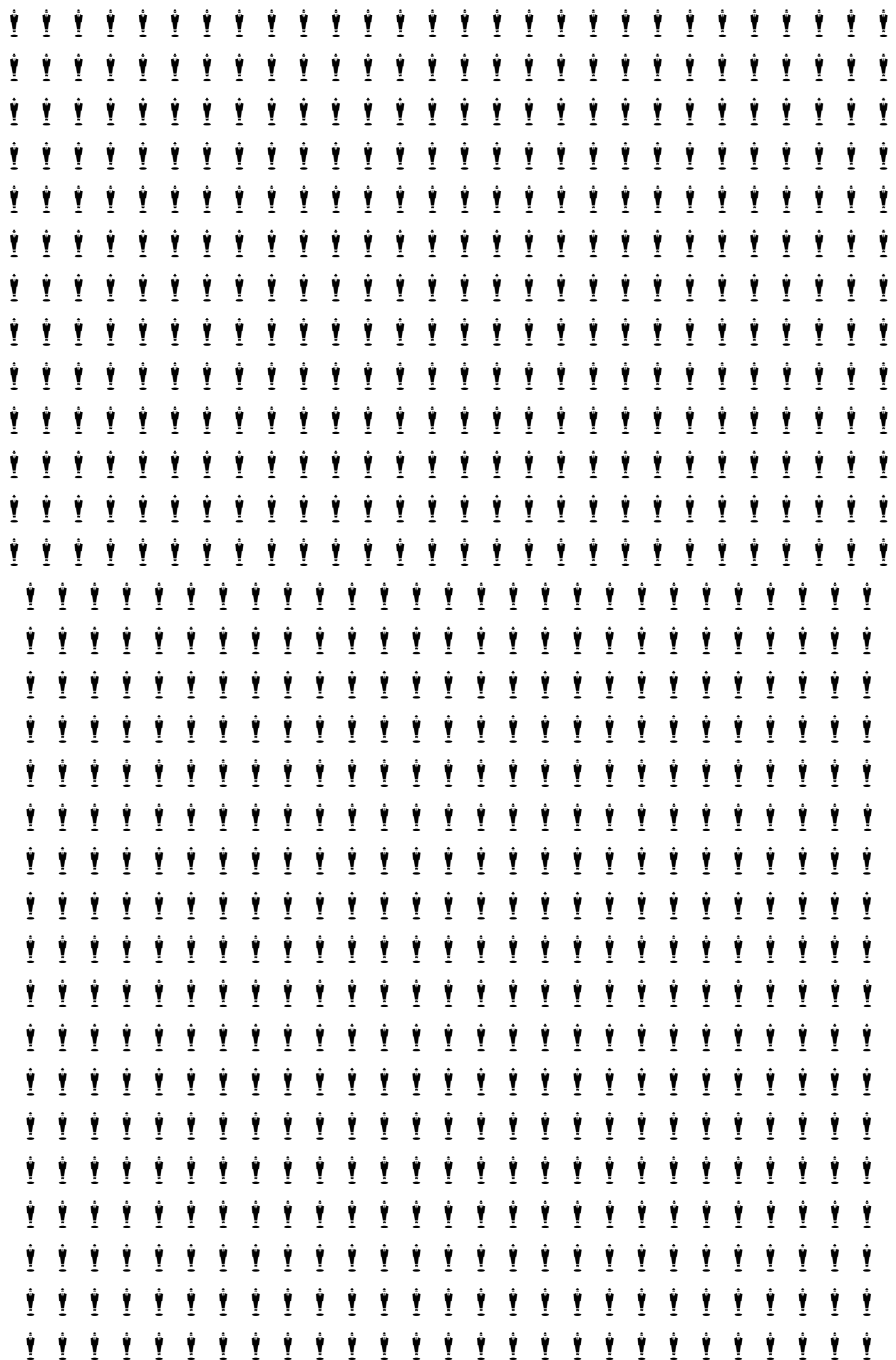
Handwork:

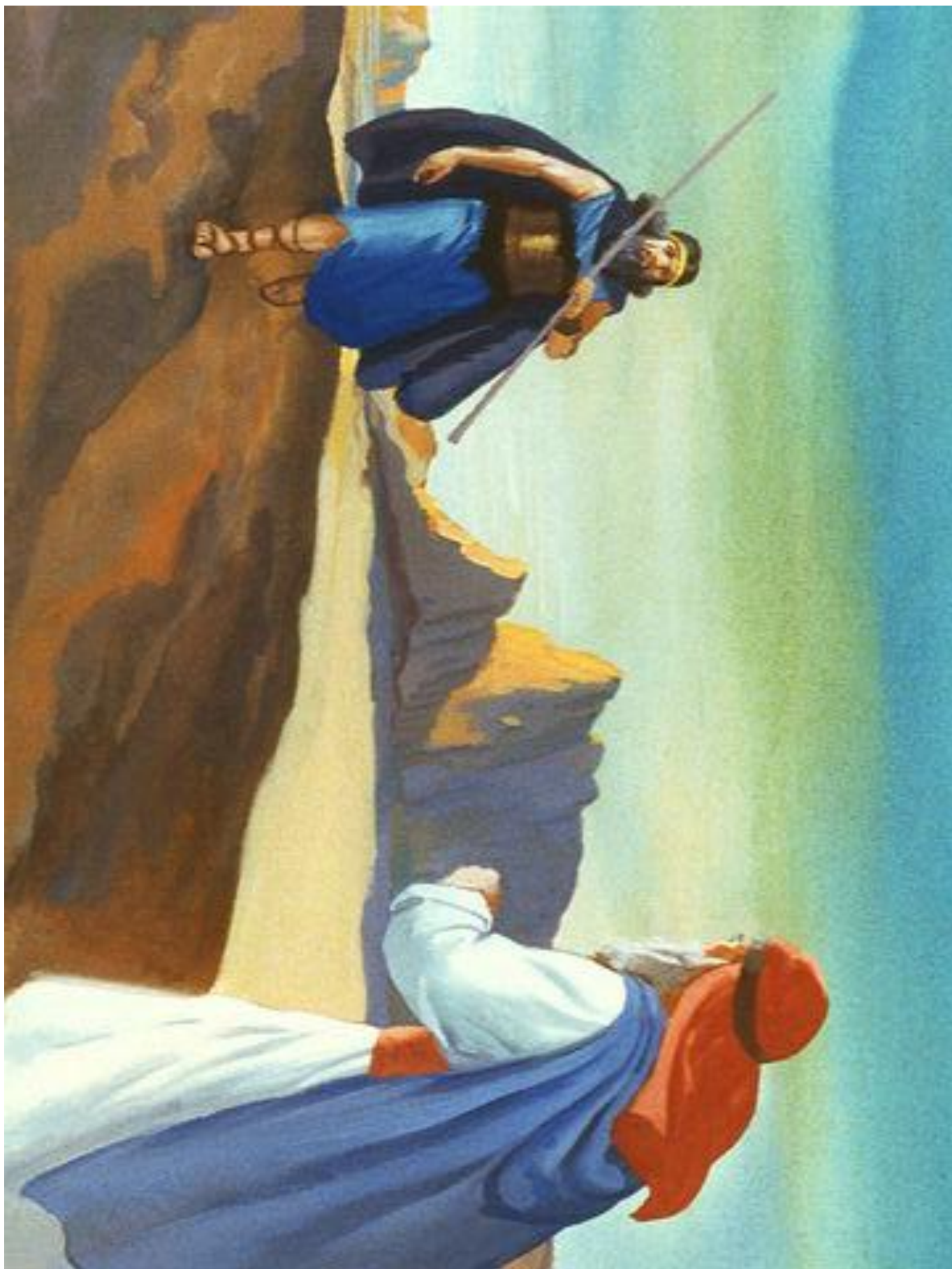
- Print and have students color the picture found at (835) Pinterest. Remember to color the water blue. Or have them color everything around the altar black to show that God burned it all.

household manager

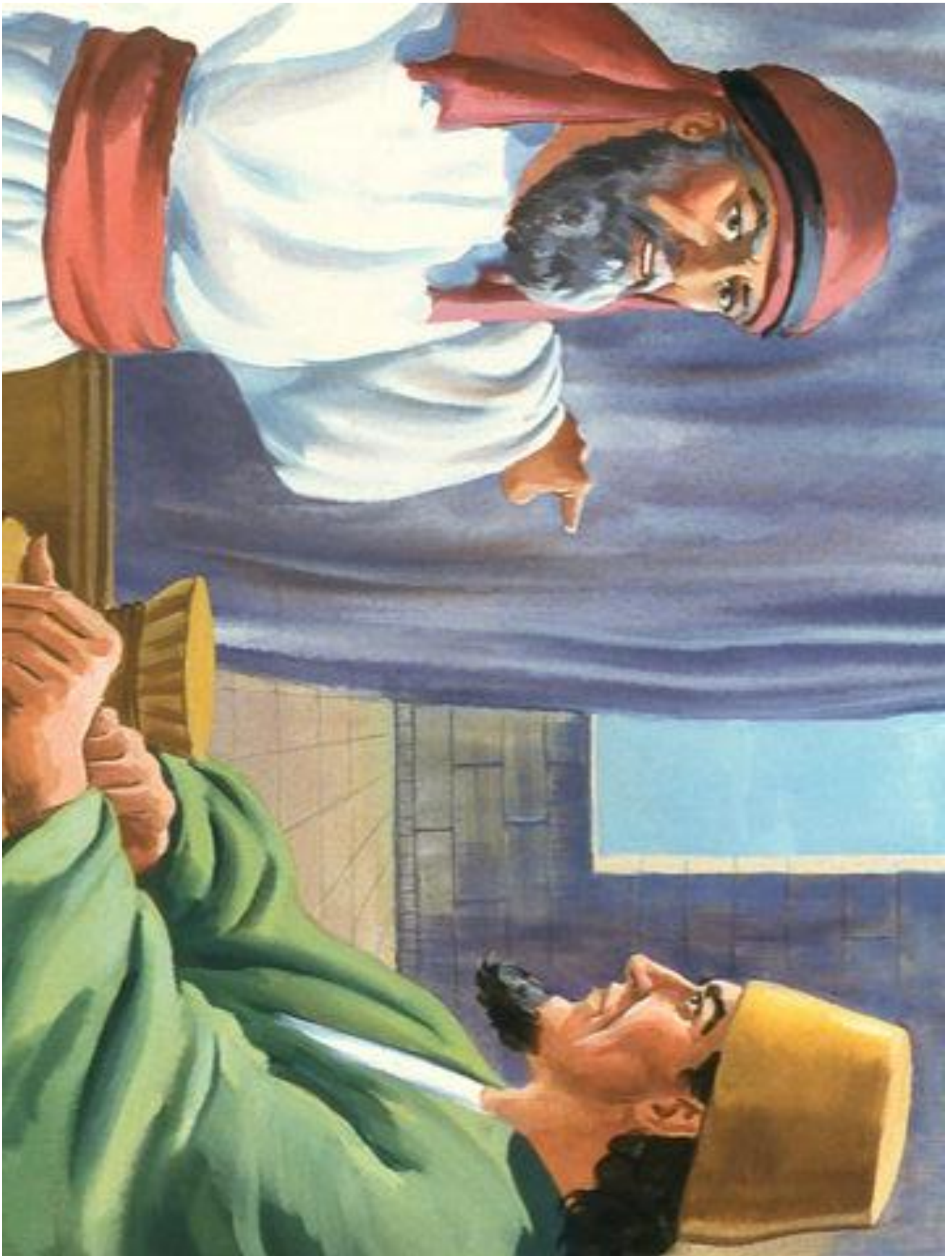
Baal

Asherah

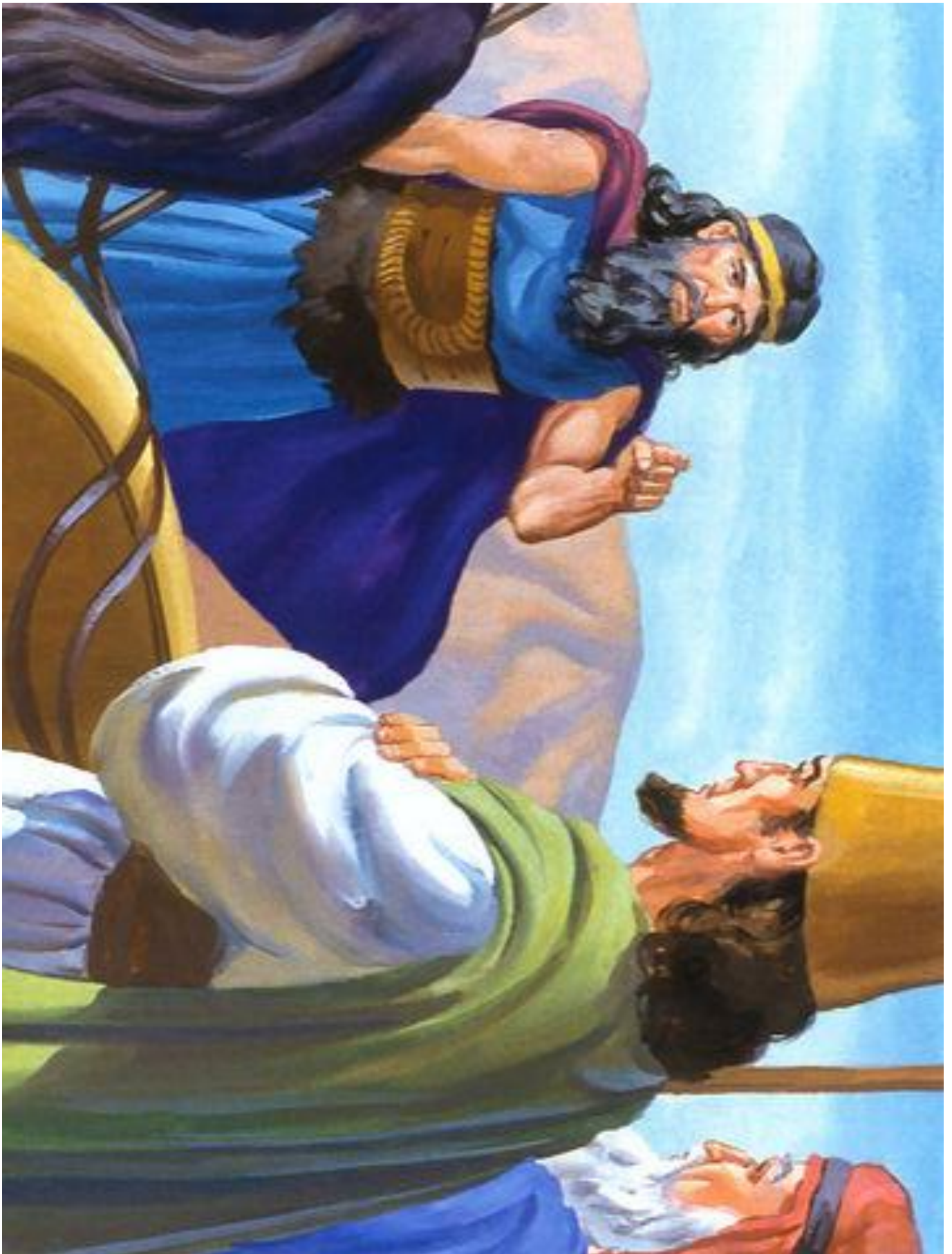




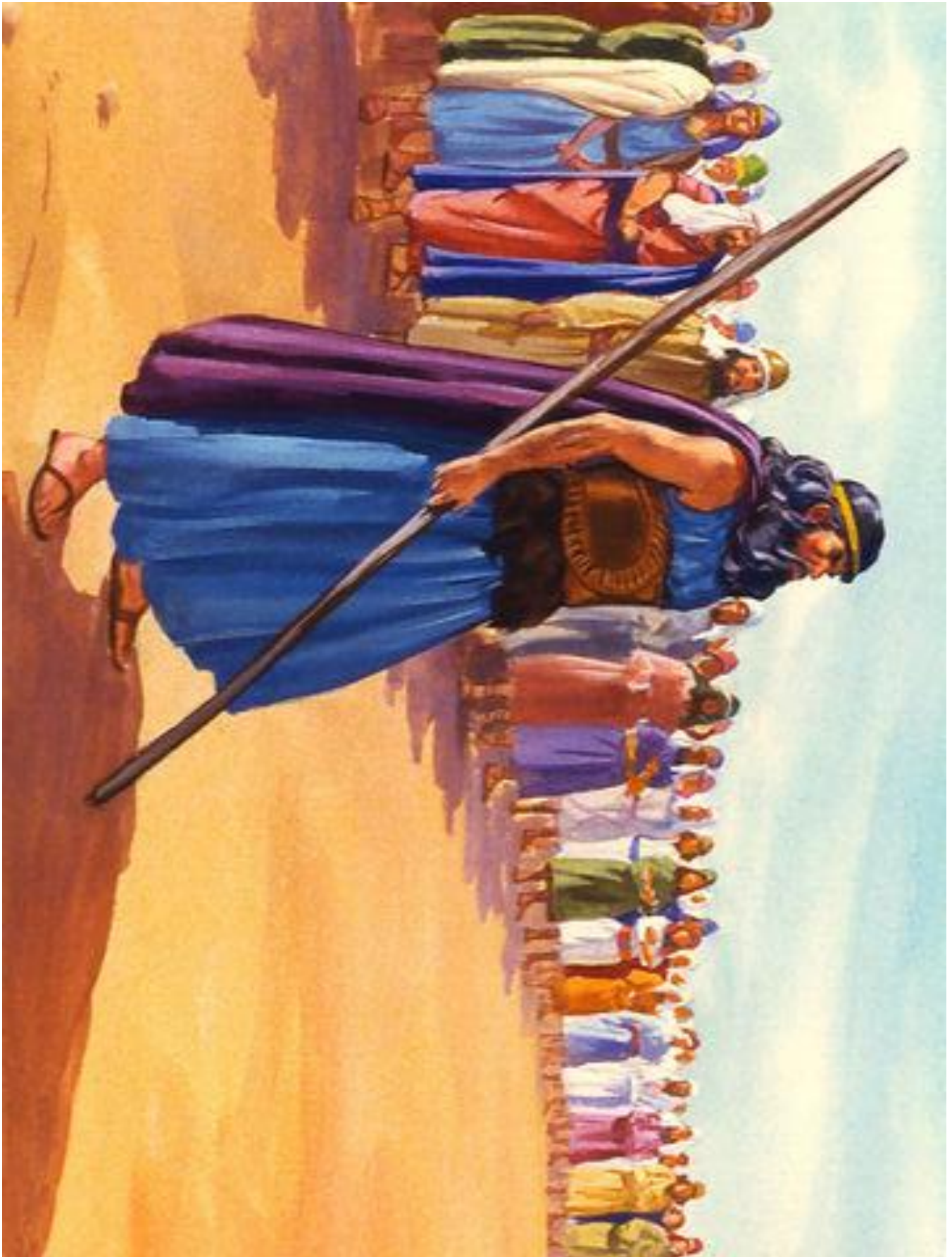
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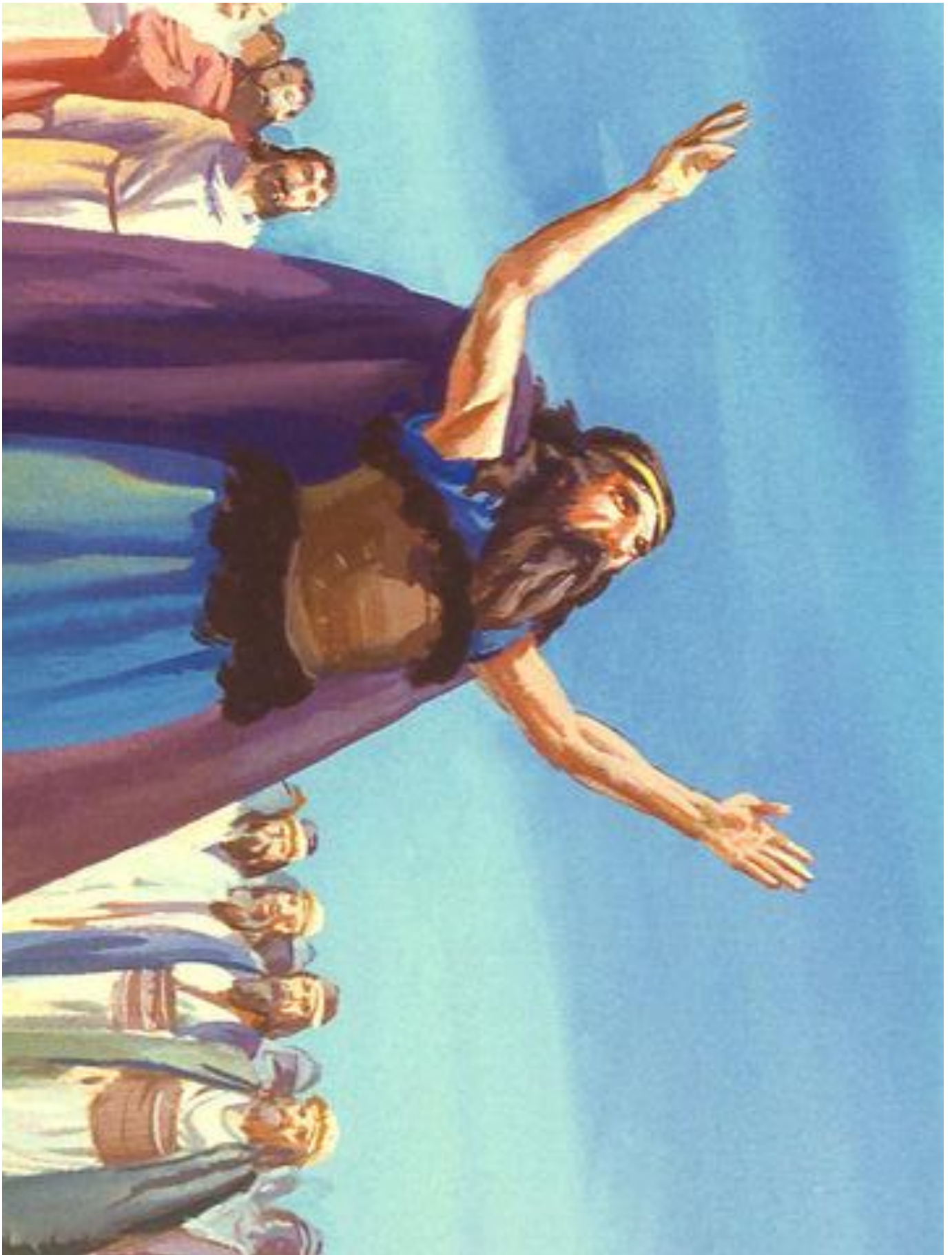
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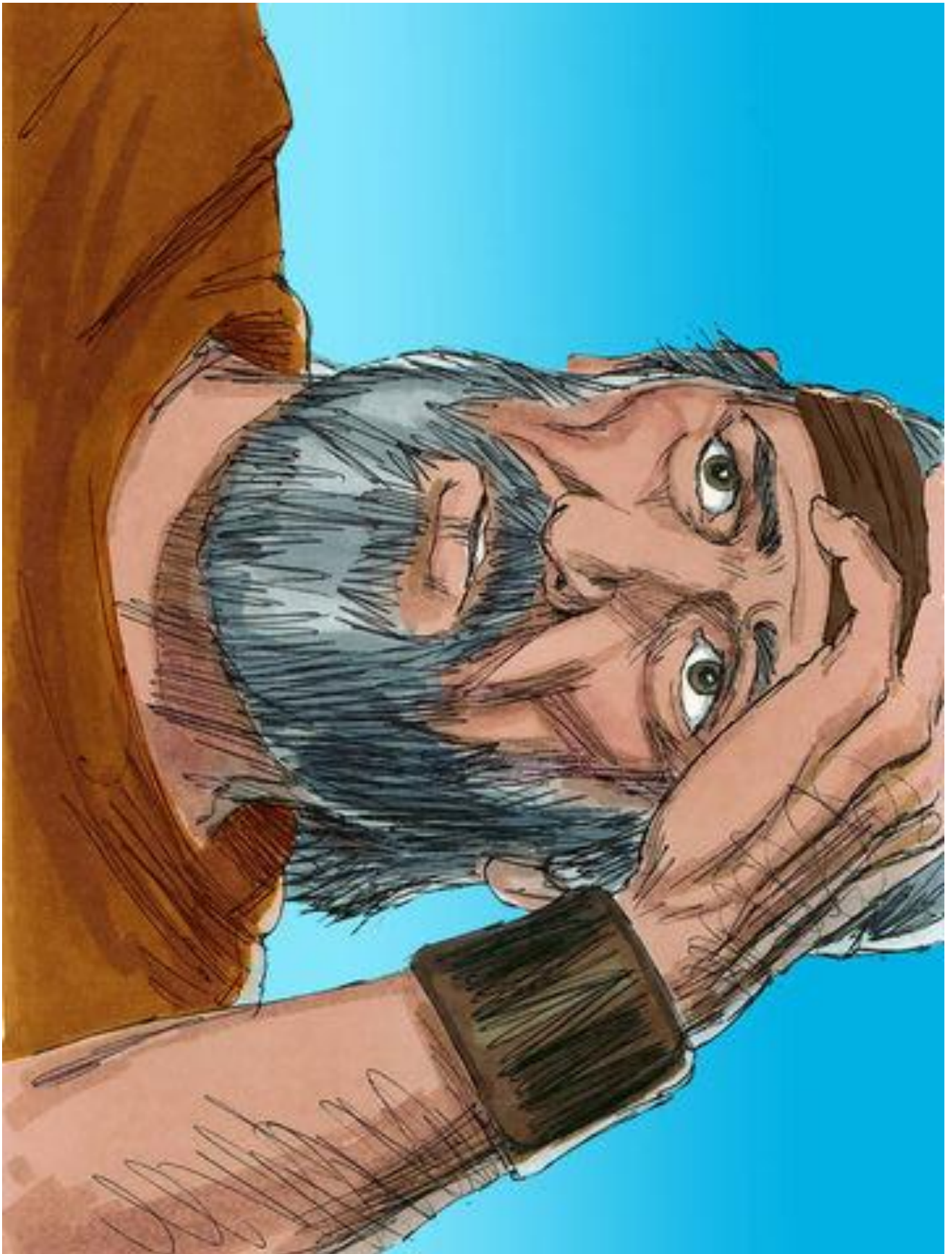
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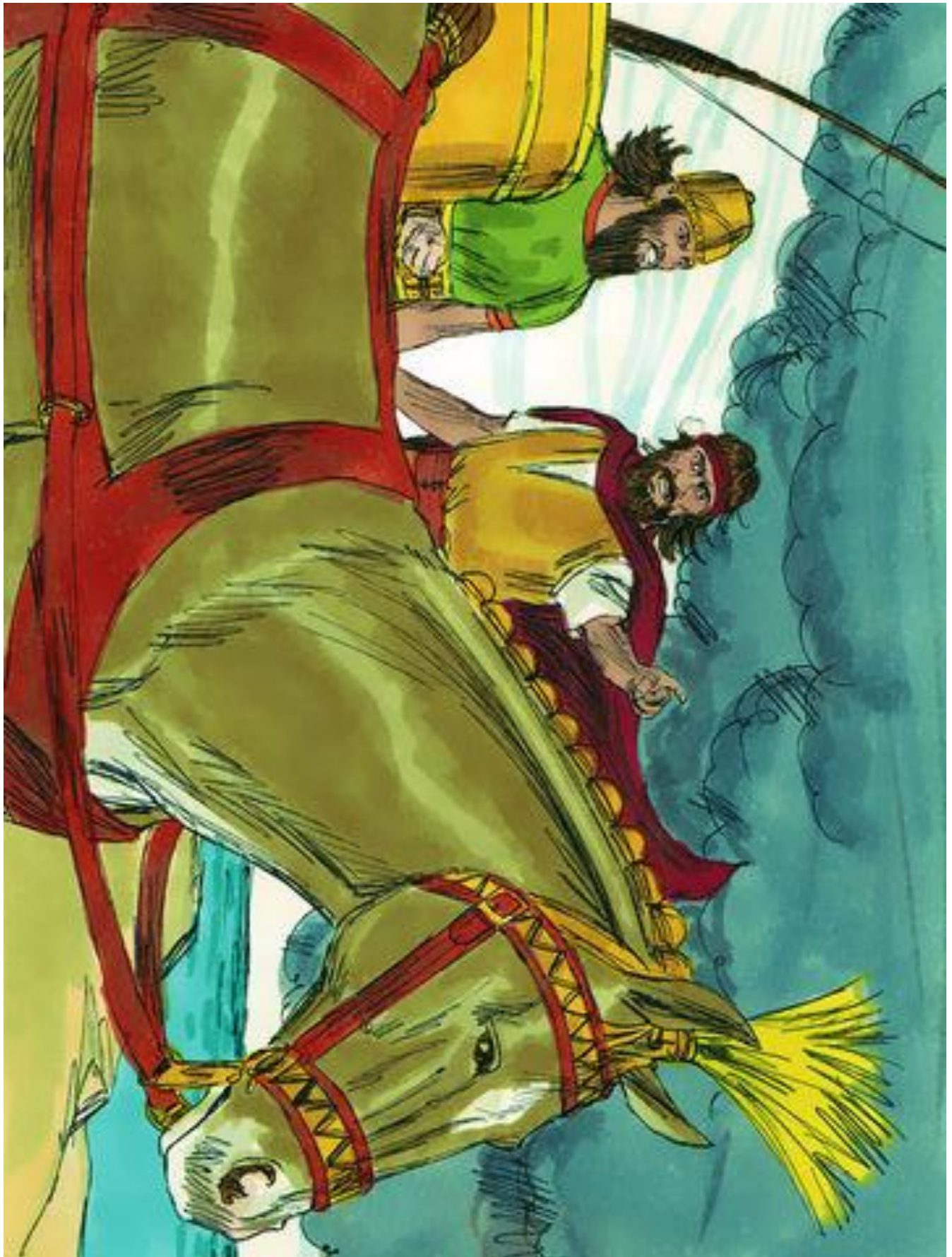
[FreeBibleimages :: Elijah prays for rain :: Elijah prays seven times for God to send rain \(1 Kings 18:41-46\)](#)



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ISRAEL

IN THE TIME OF ELIJAH





East edge of Mount Carmel – Keren Carmel (Mukhraka) – the traditional place of the victory of the prophet Elijah over the Baal prophets (BibleWalks.com)