

20.07 Ahab and the Prophet Micaiah/Jehoshaphat⁴ ☺ (1 Kings 22:1–28; 2 Chronicles 17:1–19; 18:1–27)

In the story title above, the name on the left indicates a northern king (of Israel); the name on the right, a southern king (of Judah). The superscript numbers indicate the king's accession number, and the happy or sad faces show whether the king was good or bad.

✓ “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.

- (none for this lesson)

Scripture: (ESV)

2 Chronicles 17:1 Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his [Asa's] place and strengthened himself against Israel. 2 He placed forces in all the fortified cities of Judah and set garrisons in the land of Judah, and in the cities of Ephraim that Asa his father had captured. 3 The Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the earlier ways of his father David. He did not seek the Baals, 4 but sought the God of his father and walked in his commandments, and not according to the practices of Israel. 5 Therefore the Lord established the kingdom in his hand. And all Judah brought tribute to Jehoshaphat, and he had great riches and honor. 6 His heart was courageous in the ways of the Lord. And furthermore, he took the high places and the Asherim out of Judah.

7 In the third year of his reign he sent his officials, Ben-hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Micaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah; 8 and with them the Levites, Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah, and Tobadonijah; and with these Levites, the priests Elishama and Jehoram. 9 And they taught in Judah, having the Book of the Law of the Lord with them. They went about through all the cities of Judah and taught among the people.

10 And the fear of the Lord fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were around Judah, and they made no war against Jehoshaphat. 11 Some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents and silver for tribute, and the Arabians also brought him 7,700 rams and 7,700 goats. 12 And Jehoshaphat grew steadily greater. He built in Judah fortresses and store cities, 13 and he had large supplies in the cities of Judah. He had soldiers, mighty men of valor, in Jerusalem. 14 This was the muster of them by fathers' houses: Of Judah, the commanders of thousands: Adnah the commander, with 300,000 mighty men of valor; 15 and next to him Jehohanan the commander, with 280,000; 16 and next to him Amasiah the son of Zichri, a volunteer for the service of the Lord, with 200,000 mighty men of valor. 17 Of Benjamin: Eliada, a mighty man of valor, with 200,000 men armed with bow and shield; 18 and next to him Jehozabad with 180,000 armed for war. 19 These were in the service of the king, besides those whom the king had placed in the fortified cities throughout all Judah.

18:1 Now Jehoshaphat had great riches and honor, and he made a marriage alliance with Ahab. 2 After some years he went down to Ahab in Samaria. And Ahab killed an abundance of sheep and oxen for him and for the people who were with him, and induced him to go up against Ramoth-gilead. . . .

1 Kings 22:1 For three years Syria and Israel continued without war. 2 But in the third year Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel. 3 And the king of Israel said to his servants, “Do you know that Ramoth-gilead belongs to us, and we keep quiet and do not take it out of the hand of the king of Syria?” 4 And he said to Jehoshaphat, “Will you go with me to battle at Ramoth-gilead?” And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, “I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses.”

5 And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, “Inquire first for the word of the Lord.” 6 Then the king of

Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said to them, "Shall I go to battle against Ramoth-gilead, or shall I refrain?" And they said, "Go up, for the Lord will give it into the hand of the king." 7 But Jehoshaphat said, "Is there not here another prophet of the Lord of whom we may inquire?" 8 And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of the Lord, Micaiah the son of Imlah, but I hate him, for he never prophesies good concerning me, but evil." And Jehoshaphat said, "Let not the king say so." 9 Then the king of Israel summoned an officer and said, "Bring quickly Micaiah the son of Imlah." 10 Now the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah were sitting on their thrones, arrayed in their robes, at the threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria, and all the prophets were prophesying before them. 11 And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made for himself horns of iron and said, "Thus says the Lord, 'With these you shall push the Syrians until they are destroyed.'" 12 And all the prophets prophesied so and said, "Go up to Ramoth-gilead and triumph; the Lord will give it into the hand of the king."

13 And the messenger who went to summon Micaiah said to him, "Behold, the words of the prophets with one accord are favorable to the king. Let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak favorably." 14 But Micaiah said, "As the Lord lives, what the Lord says to me, that I will speak." 15 And when he had come to the king, the king said to him, "Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we refrain?" And he answered him, "Go up and triumph; the Lord will give it into the hand of the king." 16 But the king said to him, "How many times shall I make you swear that you speak to me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?" 17 And he said, "I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd. And the Lord said, 'These have no master; let each return to his home in peace.'" 18 And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell you that he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?" 19 And Micaiah said, "Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing beside him on his right hand and on his left; 20 and the Lord said, 'Who will entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' And one said one thing, and another said another. 21 Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord, saying, 'I will entice him.' 22 And the Lord said to him, 'By what means?' And he said, 'I will go out, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And he said, 'You are to entice him, and you shall succeed; go out and do so.' 23 Now therefore behold, the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; the Lord has declared disaster for you."

24 Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah came near and struck Micaiah on the cheek and said, "How did the Spirit of the Lord go from me to speak to you?" 25 And Micaiah said, "Behold, you shall see on that day when you go into an inner chamber to hide yourself." 26 And the king of Israel said, "Seize Micaiah, and take him back to Amon the governor of the city and to Joash the king's son, 27 and say, 'Thus says the king, Put this fellow in prison and feed him meager rations of bread and water, until I come in peace.'" 28 And Micaiah said, "If you return in peace, the Lord has not spoken by me." And he said, "Hear, all you peoples!"

Introduction/Review:

Ahab's wicked wife, Jezebel, had seen to it that Naboth, the owner of a vineyard Ahab wanted, was dead. Ahab was delighted to get the land he wanted, but God was displeased. He sent the prophet Elijah to tell him that because of his wickedness Ahab's entire family would be destroyed during his son's lifetime.

Story:

The acts of Jehoshaphat

While all this wickedness and war and woe was going on in Israel in the north, Asa's son, Jehoshaphat, was ruling in the southern kingdom, Judah. He, even more than his father, was a good king. God blessed him because he did not worship the Baals but worshiped God and did His commandments. He got rid of the idols; therefore, God gave him great riches. The nations around him gave him money and animals because they were afraid to war against him.

Another great thing he did was to send a total of sixteen princes, Levites, and priests with the book of God's law to all the cities throughout Judah in order to teach the people God's ways.

Jehoshaphat sounds like a perfect king, but he wasn't. He did a couple of things that were unwise. First, he

had his son marry Ahab and Jezebel's daughter. We'll learn more about this daughter later, but we will ask you now, do you suppose she was a God-fearing woman? It would have been truly amazing if she had been, but she wasn't because she had been reared by her idol-worshiping parents. Again, we tell you even though you are young: be careful to marry a godly person.

Another unwise thing Jehoshaphat did was to visit Ahab. Because he did, he almost lost his life. Oh, at first all was well. Ahab welcomed Jehoshaphat with a huge feast. But then Ahab suggested they go to war together in order to get back a city, Ramoth Gilead, from Syria [locate about 20 miles east of the Jordan River and south of the Sea of Galilee]. Ramoth Gilead had previously been part of Israel during Solomon's reign. In fact, it had been a city of refuge. So now Ahab asked,¹ "Do you know that Ramoth-gilead belongs to us, and we keep quiet and do not take it out of the hand of the king of Syria? Will you go with me to battle at Ramoth Gilead?"

Jehoshaphat answered, "I and my people are just like you." What!? If Jehoshaphat meant he and his people were of the same character as Ahab, he was wrong, for Ahab was wicked and Jehoshaphat was good. In that way, he was not as Ahab. However, Jehoshaphat probably meant that "he and his soldiers, foot and horse, were at [Ahab's] service."² They would go to battle against Syria with Ahab.

The counsel of the prophets

Even though he had committed himself to help Ahab, Jehoshaphat was wise enough to ask for God's guidance. "Before we go," he said, "let's ask for the word of the Lord."

"Okay," said Ahab, ✓and maybe he thought, "Which prophets shall I call for God's word? Elijah? No. I'll call my 400 prophets."

Ahab and Jehoshaphat moved to the gate of Samaria and sat on their thrones there. Then Ahab's 400 prophets supposedly gave God's word, saying, "Go to battle: the Lord will give you Ramoth Gilead."

But Jehoshaphat was not satisfied with their answer. "Can't we ask of another prophet of the Lord?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Ahab. "There is another prophet of the Lord. Micaiah is his name, but I hate him because he never prophesies good about me but evil."

"Certainly that isn't so! ✓You must be kidding," replied Jehoshaphat. Nevertheless, Ahab sent a messenger to fetch Micaiah.

Meanwhile, Zedekiah, one of the 400 false prophets, made a visual aid—some iron horns—and announced, "Thus says the Lord, 'You will push the Syrians with horns like these until the Syrians are destroyed.'"

All of the other prophets continued to say, "Go to battle at Ramoth Gilead; the Lord will give it to you, King Ahab."

The messenger fetching Micaiah prepared him, suggesting he ought to agree with all the other prophets. Micaiah answered, "What the Lord tells me to say, that I will say."

When the messenger and Micaiah arrived, Ahab asked, "Micaiah, shall we go to battle at Ramoth Gilead or not?"

Micaiah, imitating the other prophets, answered, "Go up and win; the Lord will give it to you."

But Ahab knew he wasn't speaking God's word. He said, "How many times have I told you to speak nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?"

"Okay," said Micaiah. "I saw Israel scattered on the mountains as sheep without a shepherd."

Now, who would be like a shepherd to Israel but the king, Ahab. "No shepherd"? What would that mean? It meant that Ahab would no longer be king; he would die in this battle. Micaiah continued, "These sheep have no master; they can go home."

Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, “Didn’t I tell you he wouldn’t prophesy good about me, but evil?”

But Micaiah was not finished. “Hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne with all his angelic armies near. The Lord said, ‘Who will persuade Ahab to go to Ramoth Gilead so that he may die there?’ And the angels said one thing or another. Then a spirit came before the Lord, saying, ‘I will persuade him.’ ‘How?’ asked the Lord. ‘By making all his prophets lie.’ ‘Go,’ said the Lord. ‘You will succeed.’ Now listen, Ahab. The Lord has made all your prophets lie. The Lord has spoken evil about you.”

At that announcement, Zedekiah, the prophet with iron horns, came to Micaiah and slapped him on the cheek. “How did the Spirit of the Lord go from me to speak to you?” he demanded.

Micaiah answered, “You’ll find out on that day when you try to hide yourself in an inner chamber.”

✓Angry, Ahab commanded, “Seize Micaiah! Put him in prison and feed him with hardly any bread and water until I come back in peace.”

Micaiah answered, “If you return in peace, the Lord has not spoken by me. Listen to what I say, everyone!”

Who was right—Micaiah, or the 400 prophets? Micaiah, of course. What would Ahab do—stay home or go to war? He will go to war. Why? Because God said he would. What would happen to him? We will find out in our next lesson.

What about Jehoshaphat? He really got himself into a dangerous predicament, didn’t he? His trouble began when he went to visit Ahab.

If we are to live for God, sometimes we have to separate ourselves from evil people who would influence us to do wrong. This wasn’t easy for Jehoshaphat. He wanted to be friendly, but friendliness with Ahab was not a good idea.

¹This first question was asked of Ahab’s servants; the second, of Jehoshaphat.

²John Gill at [1 Kings 22:4 - Meaning and Commentary on Bible Verse \(biblestudytools.com\)](http://www.biblestudytools.com/1-kings/22/4-meaning-and-commentary-on-bible-verse.html)

Lessons from This Lesson:

- We see Jesus:
Micaiah was put in prison for announcing the true words God gave him. Jesus Christ was crucified for claiming to be God, for being the true God, and for speaking God’s truth. Both were “persecuted” for doing right.
- There are times when we should not be friendly; that is, we should not be friendly with the enemies of God.

Activities:

- Play dough: iron horns
- Snack: chunks of roasted lamb or beef (what Ahab fed Jehoshaphat)
- Make horns out of tin foil; push with them.
- Review the story of Naboth; let students hold pictures to go with the story
- Review questions: (Game: Before teaching this lesson, make a paper chain with ten links. A student who answers a question correctly may tear off one of the chain links to represent Micaiah’s shortened term in prison when Ahab would not come home from battle in peace.)
 1. Tell one thing Jehoshaphat did and one thing he did not do that are evidences that he was a good king. [He worshiped God, kept His commandments, got rid of idols, but did not worship the Baals.]

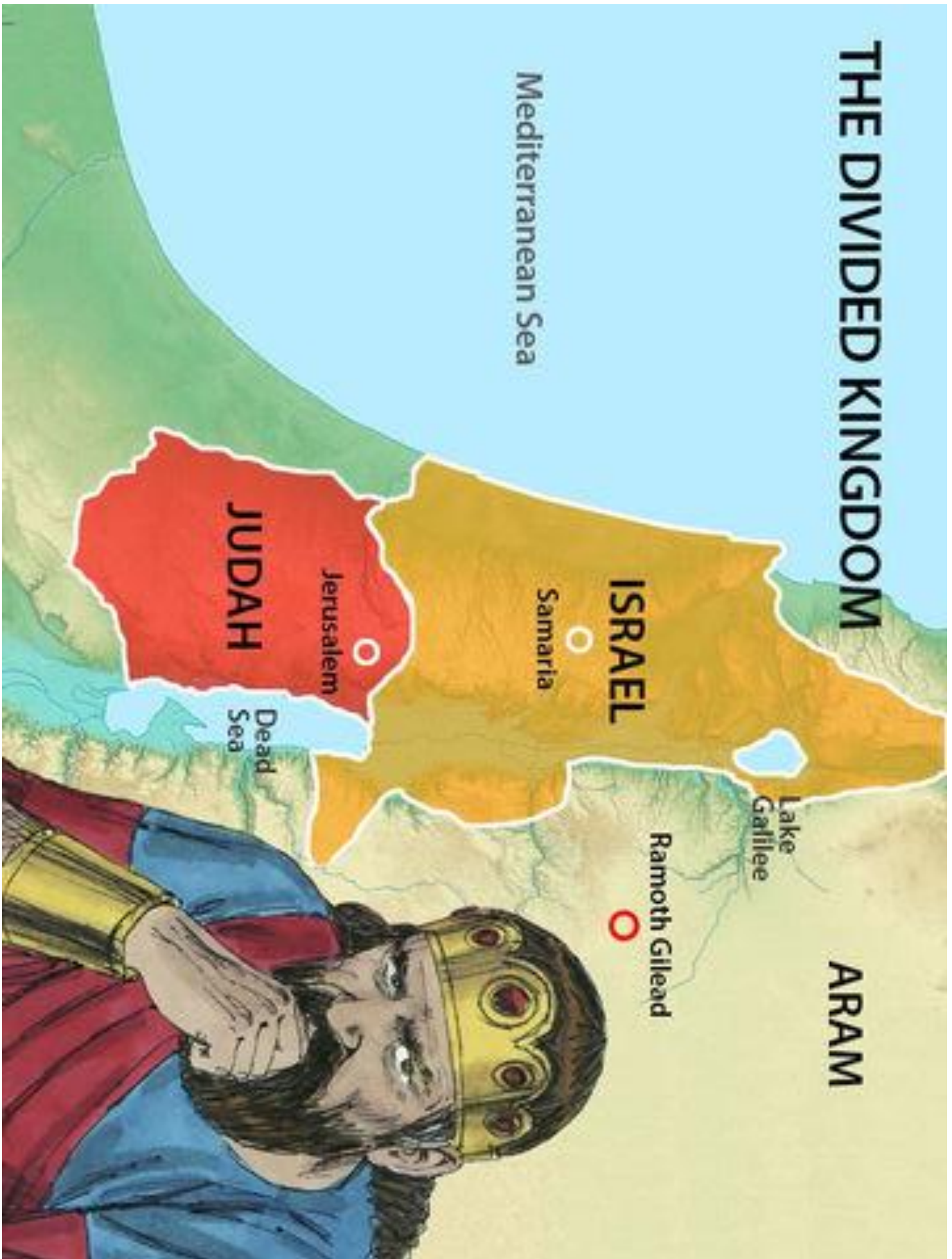
2. What did the sixteen men Jehoshaphat sent throughout Judah do? [Taught the people the Word of God.]
3. What was one unwise thing Jehoshaphat did? [Had his son marry a daughter of Ahab; visited Ahab.]
4. When Ahab asked Jehoshaphat to join him in battle against Syria, how did Jehoshaphat answer? ["I am as you are,"—or "I'll be glad to help you."]
5. However, what did Jehoshaphat ask be done before going to battle? ["Inquire first for the word of the Lord."]
6. What did Ahab's prophets say? ["Go ahead, and you will succeed."]
7. What was the name of the true prophet of God? [Micaiah.]
8. What did he say would happen to Ahab? [He would die.]
9. What did the false prophet Zedekiah did to Micaiah? [Slapped his face.]
10. Ahab sentenced Micaiah to what? [Prison and meager rations.]

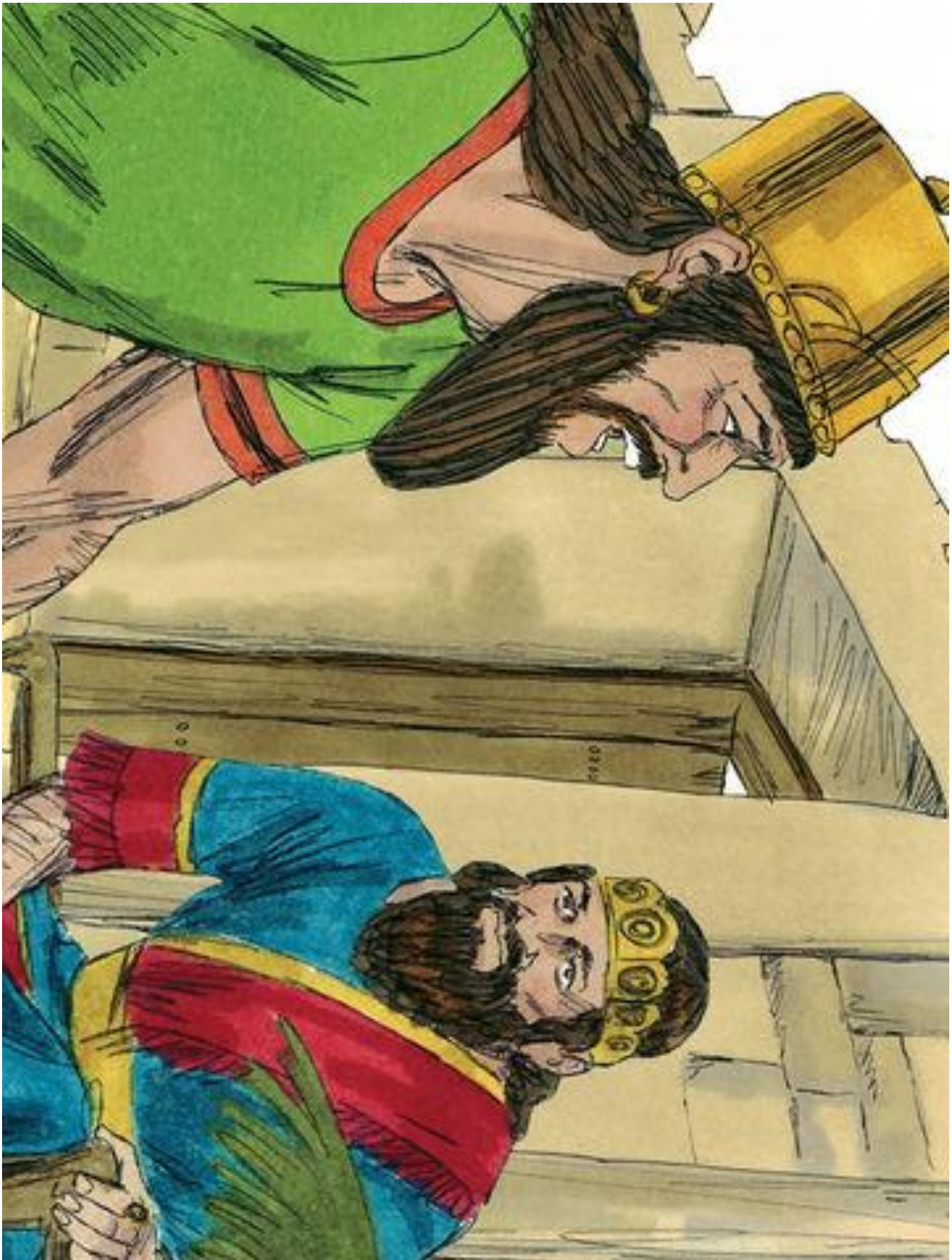
Memory Verse[s]: (ESV)

- 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.

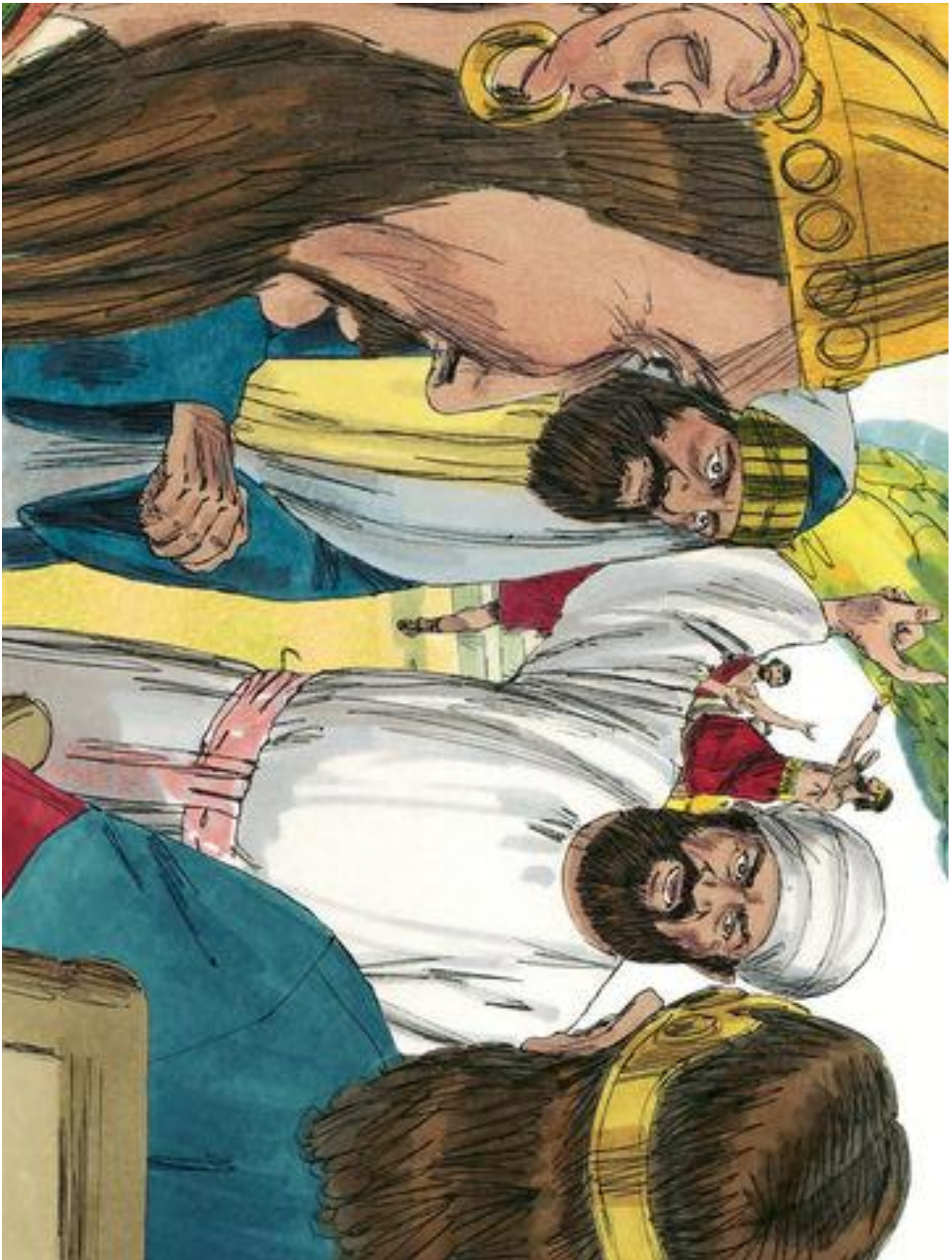
Handwork:

- At the web site, [OTF-08-41-Jehoshaphat \(secureservercdn.net\)](http://OTF-08-41-Jehoshaphat(secureservercdn.net)), print page 6. Have students trace the lines to "The Lord was with Jehoshaphat" and fill in the letters with color.

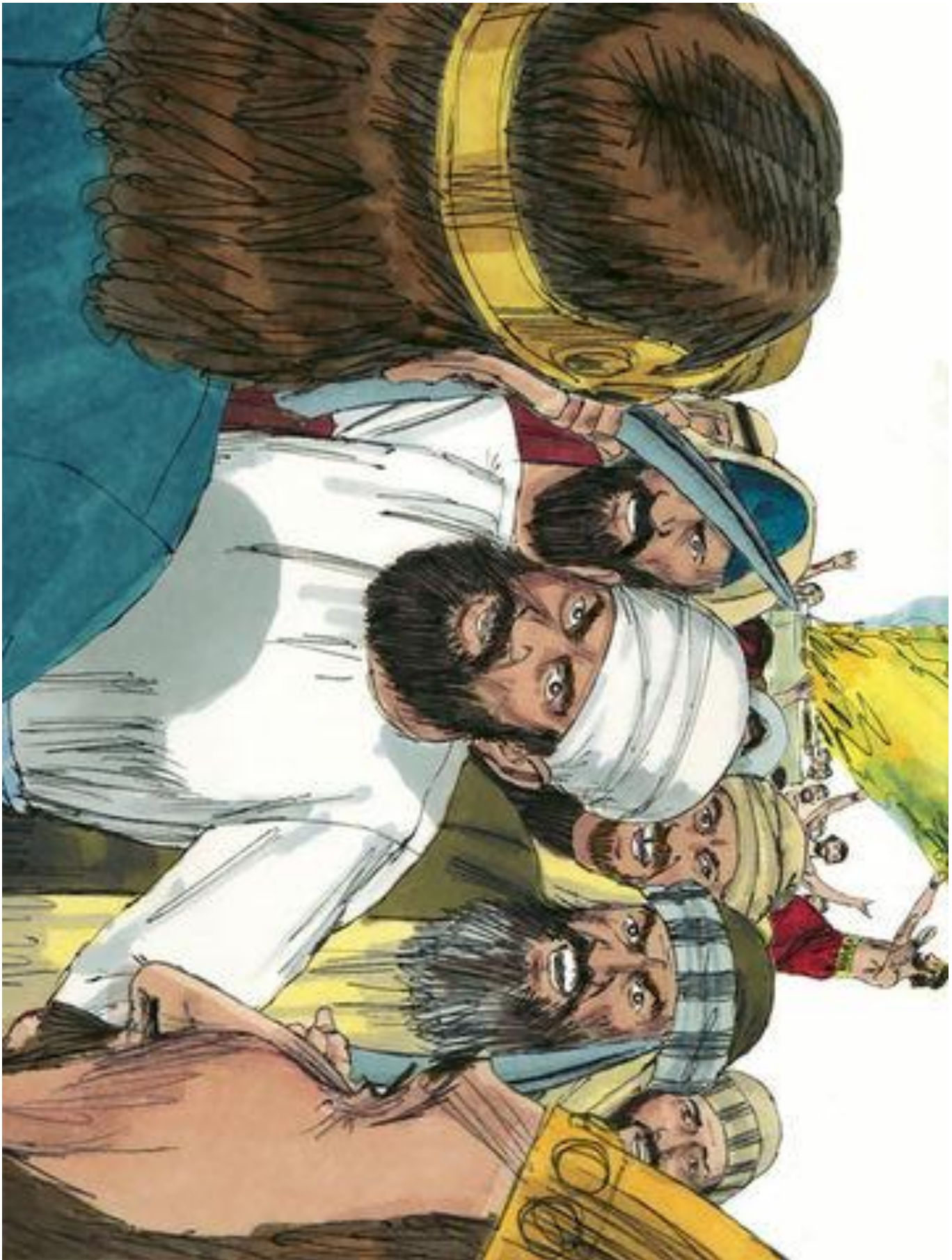




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