

08.09 Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:1–30)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows
[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that usually should not be read. It also indicates answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visual aids found at the end of this lesson. Please credit sources for pictures.
- See “Activities” and “Handwork” for more suggestions.
- (optional) *Herein Is Love Commentary Series: Genesis, A Commentary for Children*, written by Nancy Ganz and published by Shepherd Press in 2002. Thoughts or quotations borrowed from her in the following story will be acknowledged as (*Ganz*).

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach:

- *brimstone*: the element sulfur (S); it burns with the hottest flame (blue); when burned, it gives off a suffocating odor
- *judgment*: a remarkable punishment inflicted by God (Webster's 1828 Dictionary)

Scripture—Genesis 19:1-30) (KJV)

1 And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; 2 And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night. 3 And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.

4 But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: 5 And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them. 6 And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him, 7 And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly. 8 Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof. 9 And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door. 10 But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door. 11 And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door.

12 And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: 13 For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it. 14 And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.

15 And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. 16 And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. 17 And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed. 18 And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord: 19 Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die: 20

Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live. 21 And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken. 22 Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. 23 The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.

24 Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; 25 And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

26 But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

27 And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD: 28 And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace. 29 And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.

30 And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters.

Introduction/Review:

Abraham received a visit from three men, one of whom was God [preincarnate Jesus]. How do we know this was God? [He is called LORD—*Jehovah*, the covenant-keeping God.] They came to tell Sarah directly that she would have a son within the year. God had told Abraham the baby's name was to be Isaac. What does *Isaac* mean? [Laughter.] Why was this to be the boy's name? [Because both Abraham and Sarah had laughed at the thought that they could have a baby at their ages.]

After their meal, the two angel-men headed where? [Toward Sodom, the wicked city where Lot lived, and its sister city, Gomorrah.] Why were they going there? [Because of the outcry of their sinfulness; they were going to destroy the cities.]

Abraham, in an effort to save his nephew Lot from destruction, appealed to God. What did he ask? [That God would save the cities if 50, 45, 30, 20, 10 righteous people were in Sodom.] What did God answer? [Yes, He would save Sodom if at least ten righteous people were in the city.]

We took a straw vote last week. About half of you thought God would save the city because ten righteous people would be there. Half of you disagreed. Today we will find out the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Story:

Today's story is an example of how bad things can get because of the sin of Adam and Eve in the garden.

The two angel-men who had visited Abraham went on to Sodom. They arrived at the city in the evening. Guess who was sitting at the gate of the city like a city official. Yes, it was Lot. He quickly bowed to these "men" and said, "Come and stay at my house tonight."

Lot's hospitality

"Oh, we'll just stay outside in the town square," replied the "men."

But Lot persisted. "No, you must come to my house. I'll refresh you with water and make a nice meal for you. You can leave in the morning, but you must stay at my house."

✓"Well, all right; we'll do it," replied the angel-men.

Lot was as good as his word; he prepared a nice feast to entertain his guests.

A disturbance at Lot's house

But before they all could get to bed, a commotion erupted outside Lot's house. All the men of the city, abominably wicked men, surrounded Lot's house and demanded that Lot bring out the two visitors so that the citizens could abuse the men. Louder and more and more demanding the noise and ruckus got until Lot finally stepped outside to talk to the men of the city. "Brothers, Friends," he called out.

Wait a minute! How could Lot call such wicked men "brothers" or "friends"? Well, he knew them quite well. ✓Perhaps he worked with them every day [Ganz]. With what kind of people had Lot become "friends"? Wicked men! Oh, be careful who your friends are. Stay away from wicked people.

Lot continued. "Men of Sodom, please do not do so wickedly!"

Sodom's response to Lot

"Who do you think you are?" responded the wicked Sodomites. "You came here to live among us, and now you call us wicked. Who made you a judge over us? Step aside. If you don't let us get those guys, we will hurt you!"

They were about to do violence to Lot himself, but the angel-men inside the house pulled Lot inside the house. Then they blinded all the men of the city. Their last night on earth was a night of utter darkness, but nothing compared to the darkness of hell where they were cast the next day [Ganz].

Even being blinded, these violent men groped, first toward the door of the house and eventually towards their own homes. The two angel-men in Lot's house enquired, "Do you have any relatives in this city—any sons, sons-in-law, daughters? Get them out of this place, for God has sent us to destroy the city because the cry of its wickedness has come up before the Lord."

Lot's inability to convince his sons-in-law

✓"Well, yes, I have a couple of sons-in-law.* I'll go talk to them." Lot went to their homes and urged his sons-in-law, saying, "The Lord is going to destroy this city. Come with me. Let us escape from here!"

"Ha ha!" they replied. "You sound like a lunatic, a crazy man. You must be joking. No, we won't leave this city!! ✓This is our home! Besides, we don't believe in any Jehovah God."

Lot left them, unable to convince them of impending judgment. By now, much of the night had passed. Lot, back at home, ✓perhaps packing things he wished to take with him, He loitered as if he didn't really want to leave. Didn't he believe these messengers from God?

Angels' pulling Lot's family away

Finally, as dawn approached, the angel-men urged, "Hurry up. Do you want to be destroyed with the sin of this city? You need to get going!"

Still Lot lingered. Time had run out for the angels. They grabbed Lot's hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters who were still living at home and just about dragged them out of Sodom. When they were outside the city, the angels gave stern warning: "Escape for your life; don't look behind you. Don't stay in all the plain; escape to the mountain, or you will be consumed."

Now, here is Lot, barely escaping death, being instructed by angels who know what to do. But Lot still wants his own way. He's acting as if his comfort is the focus of his life, which he is barely keeping. So he contradicts the angels: "Oh, not so, my Lord: Look now, you have shown me mercy in saving my life, but I cannot escape to the mountain, or some evil might take me, and I'll die. Look now, this city is near to run to, and it is a little one. Oh, let me escape there, (isn't it a little one?) and my soul shall live."

My patience would have given out right there if it hadn't before. I would have said, "Oh, just stay here and see what happens to you!" But that's not what these merciful messengers said. "All right. I will accept this compromise and save that city for your sake, but hurry up! I cannot do anything until you get there safely. Hurry! Escape! *Don't look back!*"

The sun was up when Lot entered the little city of Zoar, which means “Little.” This little city was probably just as wicked as Sodom. Did its size make it any better than Sodom? No! Nevertheless, God would save Lot there.

The fiery judgment

When it was morning, God rained judgment upon Sodom and other cities of the plains. This is how he did it: “Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.” What was destroyed by God? [The cities—not just Sodom but all the cities of the plain except Zoar; all the land; all the people of the cities; and all the plants of the area.] This was a fearsome judgment!

What had the angels said in their warning of Lot? [“Escape and do not look back.”] The Bible doesn't tell us why she did it. ✓Perhaps she enjoyed her beautiful home and wanted to see the city one more time. Whatever the reason, Lot's wife looked back, disobeying God's command. That was the end of her. She died and on the spot became a pillar of salt.

God had kept his word to Abraham, but He had also destroyed Sodom for not even ten righteous people lived there. Only Lot and his two daughters, however, were saved.

Abraham got up in the morning and went to the place where he and God had talked. He looked down into that formerly beautiful green valley. What he saw was smoke—“the smoke of the country went up like the smoke of a furnace.” Sodom and all the cities of the plains were destroyed, but God had saved Lot.

* “Lot calls them his sons-in-law, as they were intended, and so the words may be rendered, ‘that were about to take his daughters’; to take them for wives, and to their own houses, neither of which they had as yet done; for if these had been daughters of his married, and taken home, he would not only have spoke unto their husbands, but to them also; and would have been still more pressing upon them to arise and make their escape; of which nothing is said” (John Gill, <https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/genesis-19-14.html>).

Lessons from this lesson:

- Will you, like Abraham, command your children (when you have them) to walk in God’s ways?
- Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? YES!
- God's way is best. Don't argue with Him. [Abraham was bargaining with God for the sake of someone else; Lot was looking out for himself, not God's will [Ganz]. A part of the story I didn't tell is that Lot didn't stay in Zoar even though he had begged to go there. Rather, as God had wanted in the beginning, he ended up staying on the mountain.
- One day God will judge with fire and brimstone all the wickedness of this earth, but He will save those who have trusted Christ to be their Saviour. The Bible compares the destruction of entities with Sodom’s destruction no less than seventeen times.

Activities:

- Play dough: city; statue of a woman; suitcase or traveling bags; mountains
- Tell students about sulfur and the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah. Mention the heat and color of sulfur when being burned (see pictures and text below).
- Tell students that we are not sure where Sodom, Gomorrah and the other cities of the plains were. The usual assumption is that they lined the western side of the Dead Sea (see map below). This seems plausible because ash formations there contain sulfur. Also, Abraham would have been able to see the

area from his mountain vantage point at Hebron (Mamre). Another theory is that they were located east of the Jordan River about 14 miles northeast of the point where the Jordan empties into the Dead Sea. Archaeologists have found five cities there that had an abrupt cessation and were not rebuilt for 500-700 years. (See <http://www.tallelhammam.com/>)

- Sing stanzas 1–7 of “Abraham” found at Lesson 08.01 or the Songs page at teachingthebibletochildren.org.
- Compare Abraham’s and Lot’s approaches to God and His messengers. (Abraham pled for others and was respectful. Lot pled for selfish reasons and was demanding.)
- Have the children stand or sit with their backs to you. Tell them not to turn around and look at what you are doing. No Peeking! Then set out craft materials or snacks on a table. Talk about what neat items these are without naming them. The goal is to try to entice the children to turn around and look. After three minutes, have the students turn around and sit down. Discuss how hard or easy it was not to turn around and look. Consider Lot’s wife. Why did she look back? Was she tempted as the students were? (from an unidentifiable magazine article.)
- Review questions: (Game: If a student answers a question correctly, [s]he gets to go (run?) around the seating area once, saying, “Run away, run away; don’t look back!” If the student looks back, he may stand still like a statue for 5 seconds.)
 1. In which city did Lot live? [Sodom.]
 2. What did the two angels tell Lot to do? [Get out of Sodom.]
 3. Why did Lot and his family need to get out of Sodom? [God was going to destroy it with fire.]
 4. Why was God going to destroy Sodom with fire? [Because of its wickedness.]
 5. Besides his wife and two daughters, who else did Lot convince to leave Sodom? [No one.]
 6. How did the angels finally get Lot out of the city? [They had to take Lot and his wife by the hand and pull them away.]
 7. What happened to Lot’s wife? [She became a pillar of salt.]
 8. Why did Lot’s wife become a pillar of salt? [She disobeyed and looked back.]
 9. Name two of the cities destroyed in the fire. [Sodom and Gomorrah.]
 10. What did Abraham see the morning after the destruction? [Smoke like that from a furnace.]
- Play a game, “Pass the Salt Relay.” Have all the children form a long line (for two teams if you have enough children). At the sound of GO, the children pass a salt shaker from one to another—over the head and the next one between the legs. Continue over and under until the shaker reaches the last person in line. That person runs to the front and starts passing the salt shaker the same way. Continue the game until all the players have been at the starting of the line to pass the shaker. First team done wins. If one onw line of students plays, time them; play twice to see if the time can be beaten. Children must say, “Pass the salt, please,” as they wait for the next player to pass them the salt, over or under!
- Eat salty snacks. Remind students to think about this story and running from evil when they eat salty foods.
- Tell about the Dead Sea (see chart below). For more details check out <http://mocomi.com/dead-sea-facts/> and https://www.trails.com/facts_32499_kid-friendly-dead-sea-facts.html.
- Give each student a small amount of grinder salt in a 2”x3” zipper plastic bag (available at Wal-Mart in the crafts department.) Salt from the Dead Sea area is even better.
- (optional) Tell this joke about LOT’S WIFE: The Sunday School teacher was describing how Lot’s wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt, when little Johnny interrupted, “My Mummy looked back once, while she was DRIVING,” he announced triumphantly, “and she turned into a telephone pole!”

Memory Verse[s]:

Genesis 18:25—“Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”

Handwork:

- Paint salt pictures. For each color, mix together 1/8 cup liquid starch (see recipe below), 1/8 cup water, 2 squirts food coloring, and 1/2 cup table salt. Stir the mixture. Have students use the mixture to paint. (I would think dark paper would work best.) When it dries, the painting will crystallize. Liquid starch recipe: Boil a cup of water in a saucepan. Meanwhile mix 2 tsp. cornstarch with 3 tsp. cold water. Pour this mixture into the boiling water and wait for the liquid to clear. Cool. (from an unidentifiable magazine article).

judgment

brimstone



An ash cap over a piece of sulfur http://www.arkdiscovery.com/sodom_&_gomorrah.htm

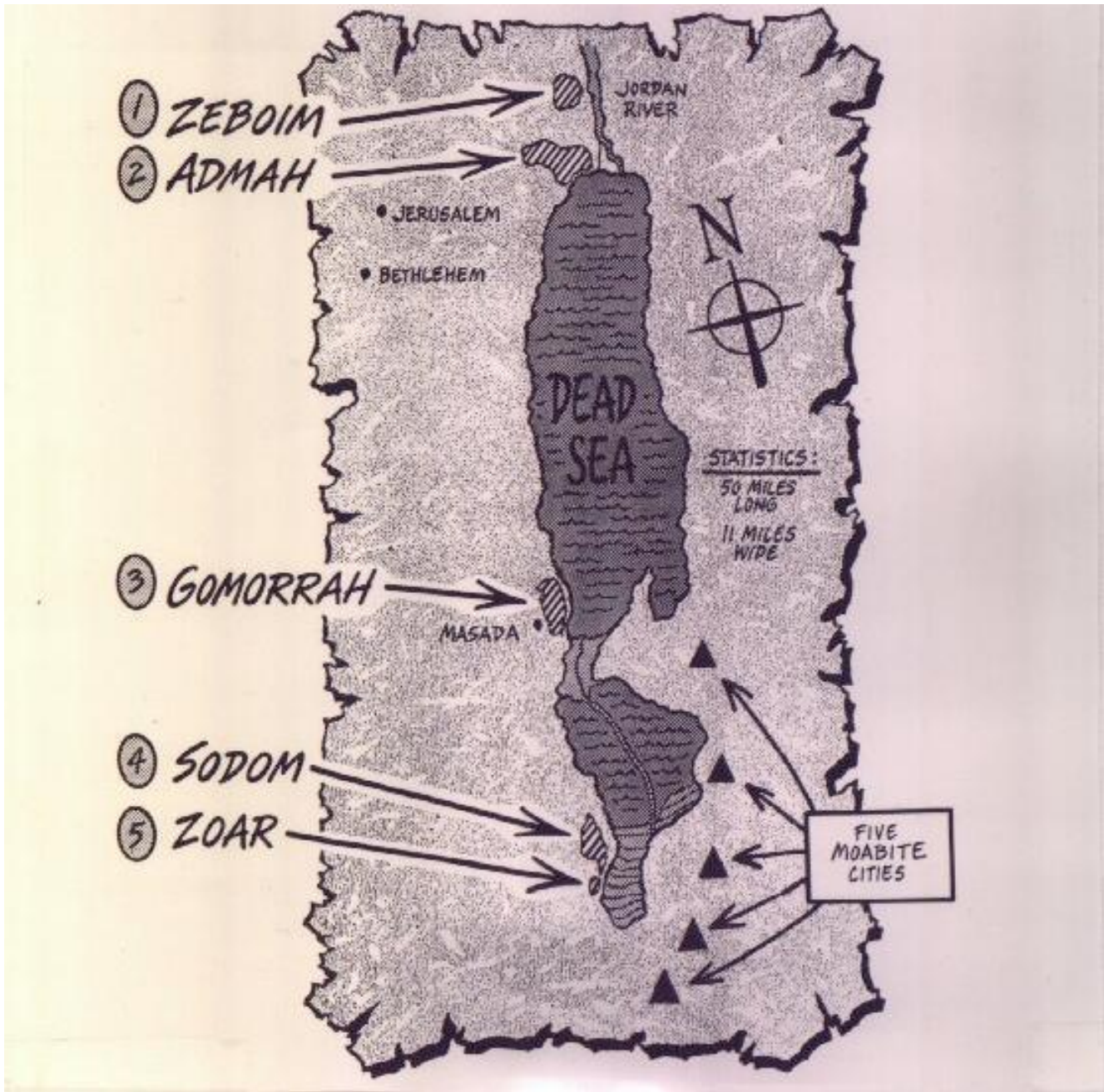
God rained down upon these cities was so hot that it burned the limestone blocks that were used in the construction of the cities. The ash there today is composed of **Calcium Sulfate and Calcium Carbonate** which are by-products of the limestone and sulfur burning.

Everything in these cities burned and turned into ash, including the buildings themselves as the Bible says that the cities were to be destroyed also. The Bible told us that God rained down "**fire** and brimstone" When God rains down fire, it is a consuming fire, just like the time of Elijah when God sent down fire to destroy the stone altar, the limestone buildings here were totally destroyed and turned into ash.

The Swedish scientist Lennart Moller . . . in 1999-2000 . . . has published the results of his tests in his new book "The Exodus Case" on pages 37-47. These tests are very complicated, and I myself am NOT a scientist -- but Lennart Moller is a very dedicated and diligent genetic scientist who works at the Medical University of Stockholm, and I am sure that his lab tests on the sulfur balls and the ash are very thorough! He says that the ash-like substance in the area consists of a mixture of limestone, dolomite and gypsum, plus a high proportion of fine-grained sulfur-- and he also found melted iron and a partially cremated skeleton in the area, all of which he documents in his book, which I quote:

"All the analysis were carried out with X-ray crystallography, liquid chromatography and atom absorption spectrophotometers by qualified geological and analytical laboratories ... The results from this analysis mean that one can explain in simple chemical terms what is most likely to have happened in this place ... CO₂ (carbon dioxide) is released from CaCO₃ (the limestone) under intensive heat (in this case burning sulfur). At the same time the sulphur (S) is oxidized to sulphur dioxide (SO₂), which reacts with water to form sulphate (SO₄²⁻). The calcium ion (Ca²⁺) can then react with the sulphur ion (SO₄²⁻) and form calcium sulphate (CaSO₄). Calcium sulphate is what we call gypsum. Analyses of the dominating mineral in this area show that it is gypsum." --Page 41

<http://pinkoski.com/sodom-a-gomorrah.html>

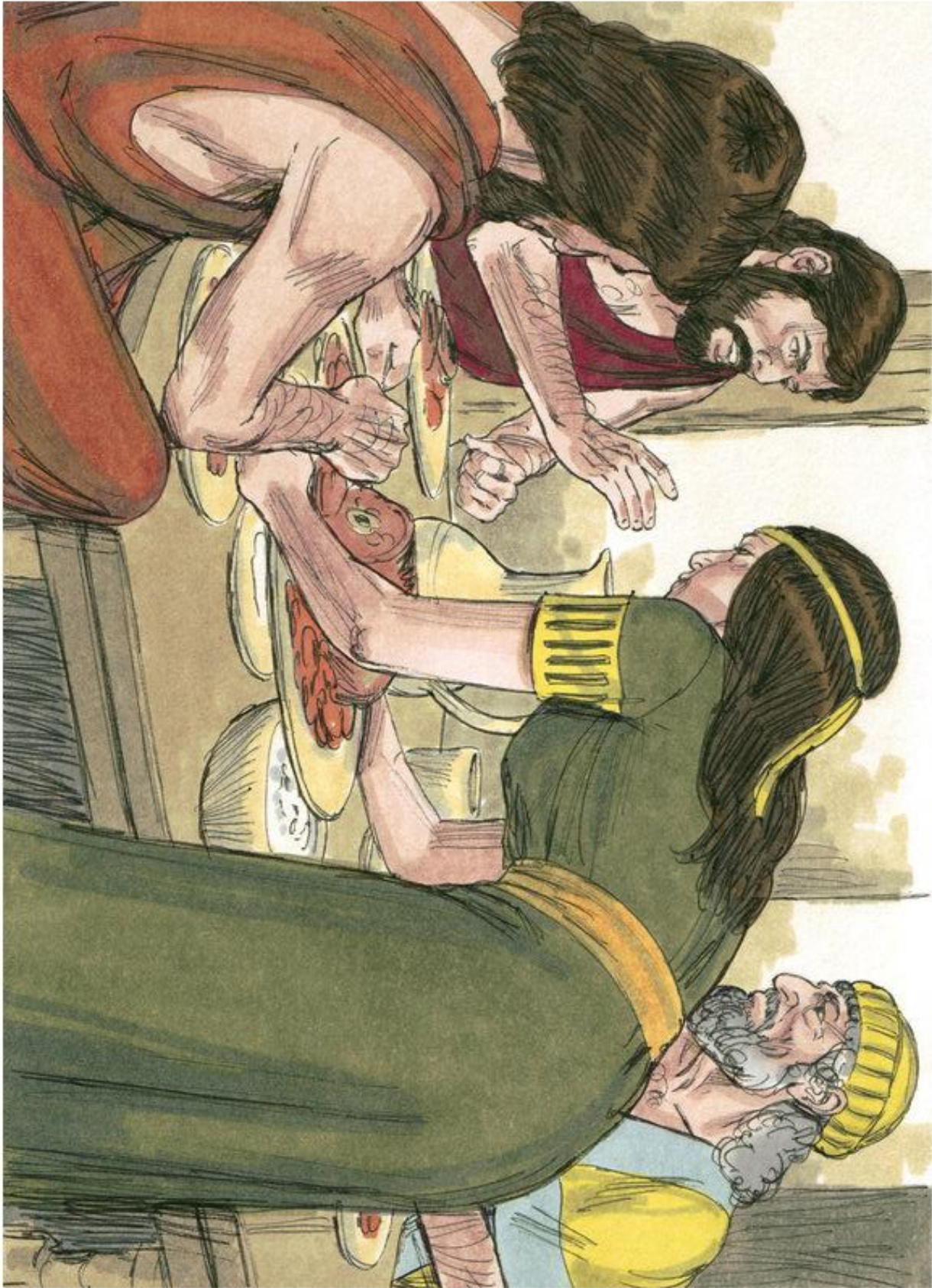


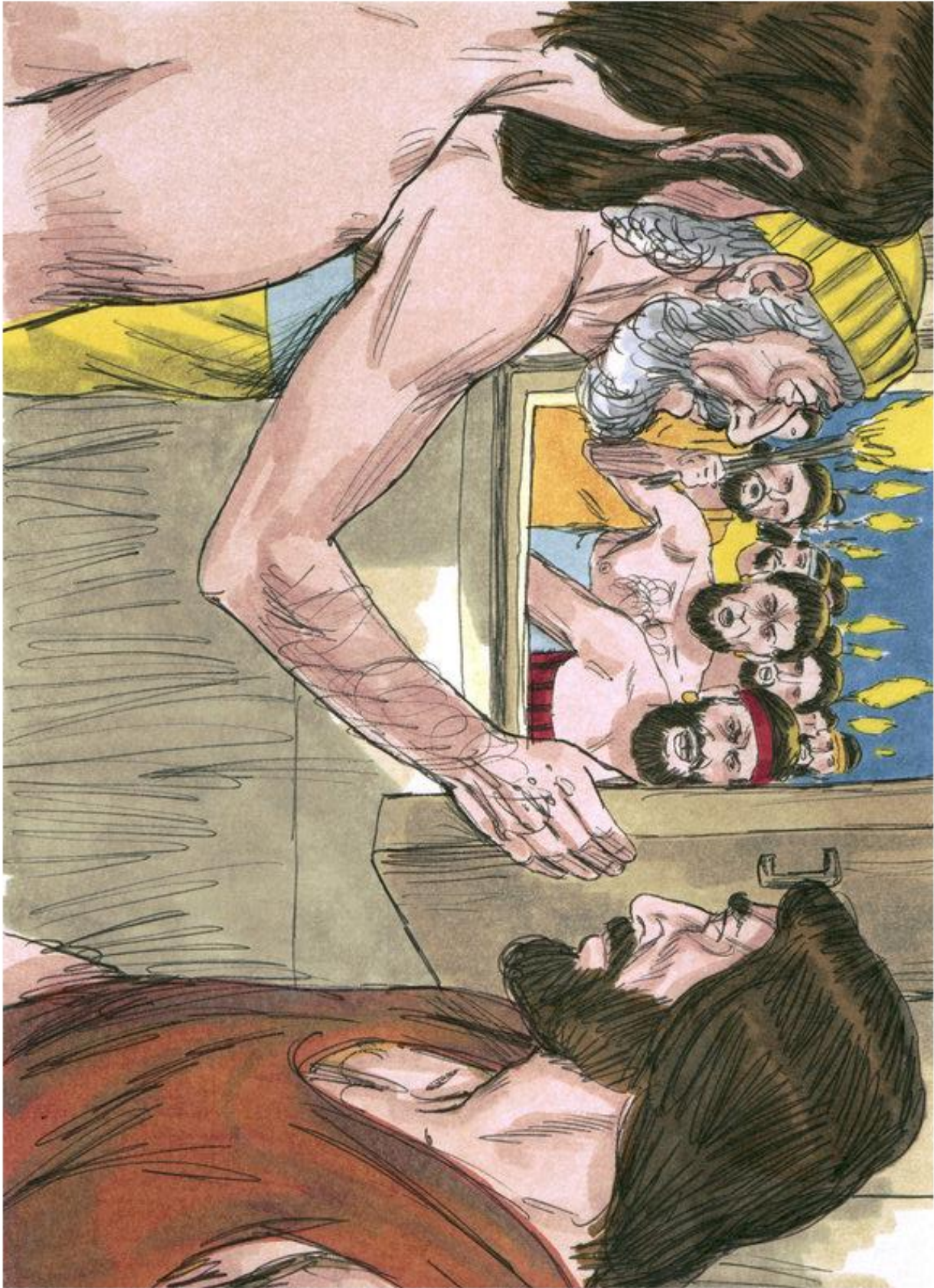
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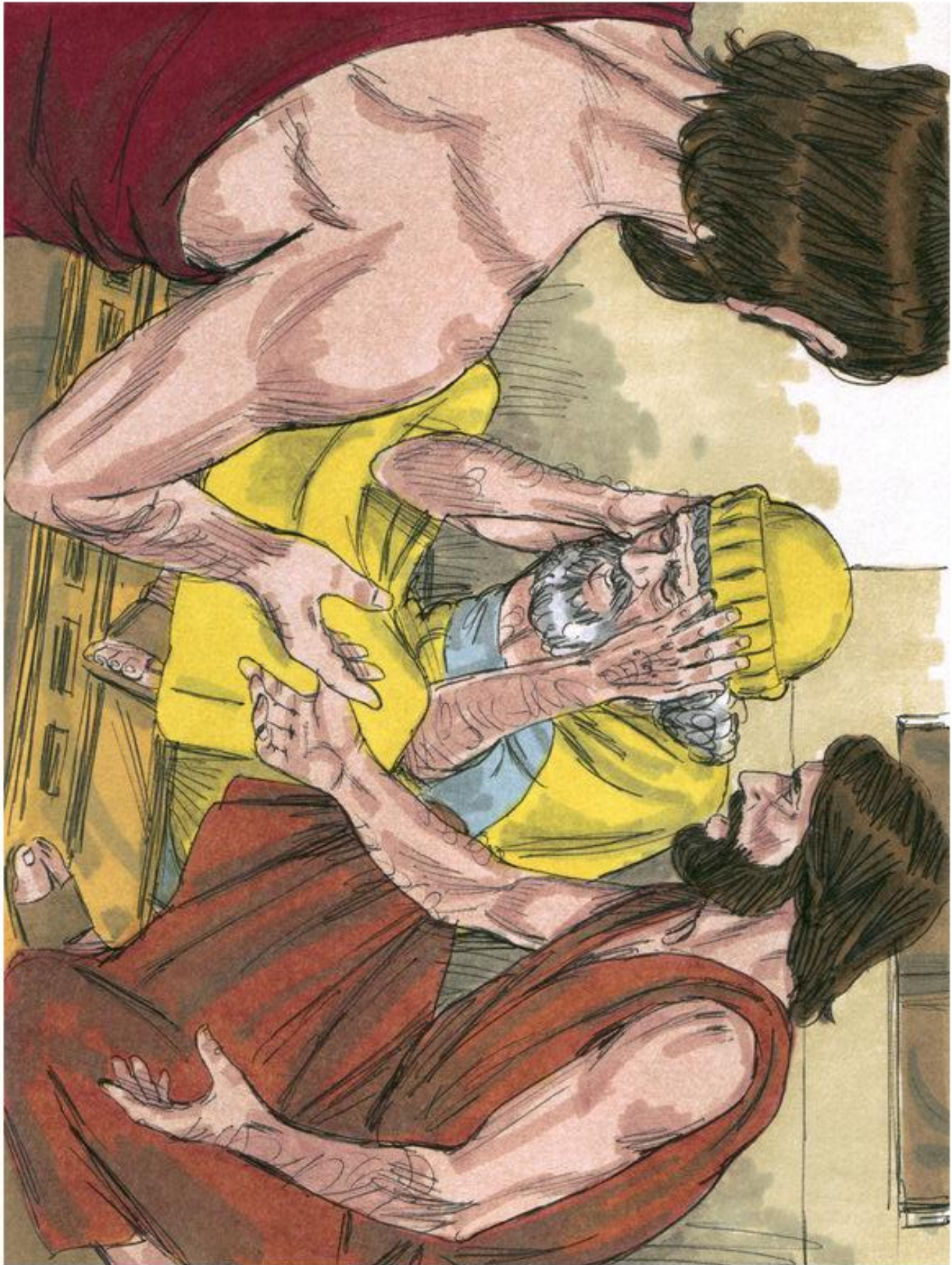
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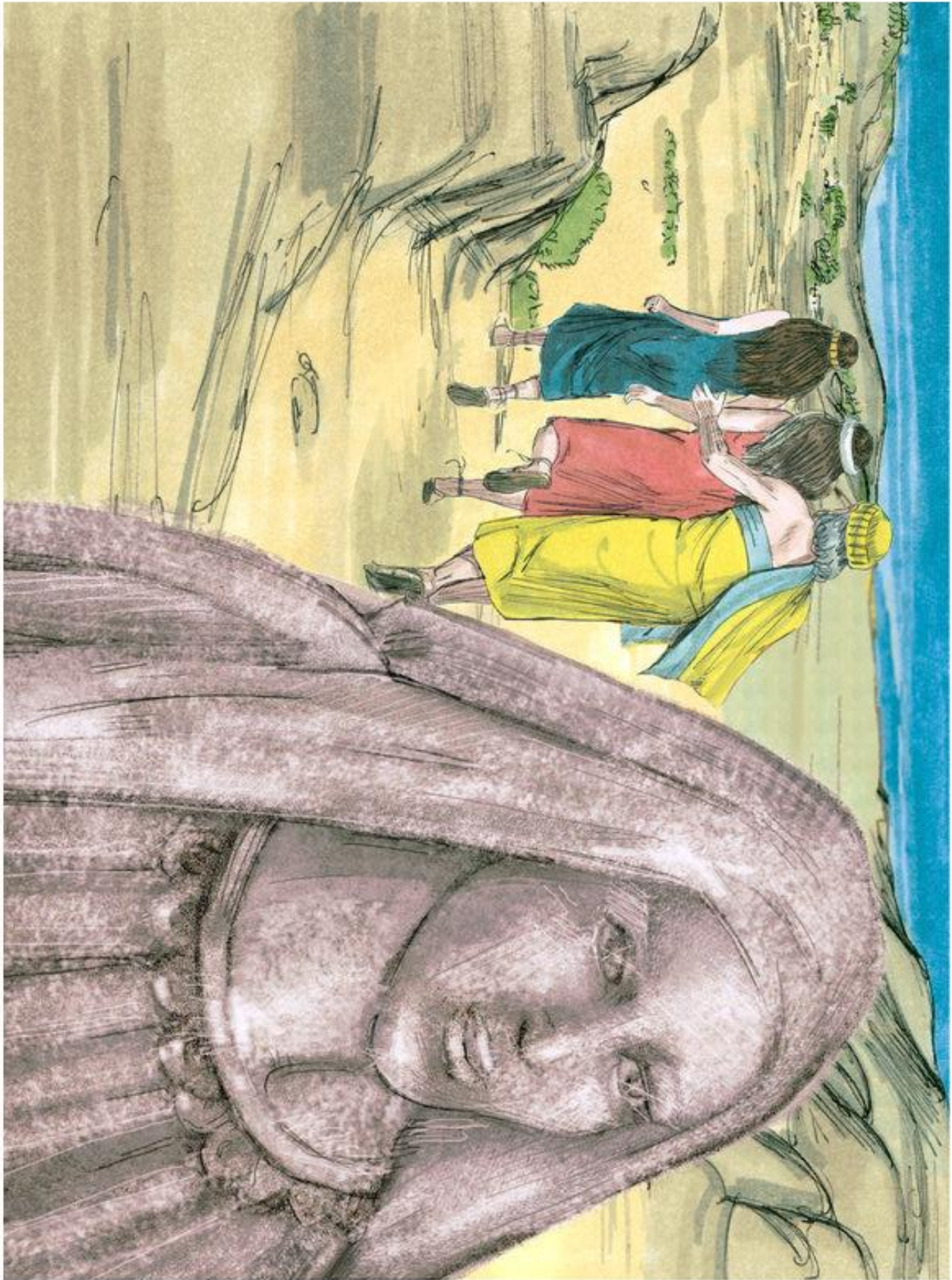
Some say the blue-colored flame shows the hottest temperature of fire.
This is a photo of sulfur (brimstone) burning.











The Dead Sea

- **Lowest place on earth—1411 feet below sea level (Lamar is 3625 above sea level)**
- **Sinks about a foot each year**
- **Seeps pebbles and blocks of asphalt**
- **Salt content is 33%—9-10 times more than any sea (makes water dense)**
- **Can float like a cork; don't swim in it**
- **Water evaporates leaving salt on rocks nearby that look like snow**
- **“Dead”—no marine life, birds, larger animals; has bacteria and fungi**
- **Water tastes extremely bitter**
- **“Stinky Lake” because of minerals**
- **Mud is like a beauty balm**
- **Deepest of all saltwater lakes (997')**