

17.13 David in Wilderness of Ziph (1 Samuel 23:19–29; Psalms 54; 17)

✓ “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.

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)

1 Samuel 23:19 Then the Ziphites went up to Saul at Gibeah, saying, “Is not David hiding among us in the strongholds at Horesh, on the hill of Hachilah, which is south of Jeshimon? 20 Now come down, O king, according to all your heart’s desire to come down, and our part shall be to surrender him into the king’s hand.” 21 And Saul said, “May you be blessed by the Lord, for you have had compassion on me. 22 Go, make yet more sure. Know and see the place where his foot is, and who has seen him there, for it is told me that he is very cunning. 23 See therefore and take note of all the lurking places where he hides, and come back to me with sure information. Then I will go with you. And if he is in the land, I will search him out among all the thousands of Judah.” 24 And they arose and went to Ziph ahead of Saul.

Now David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the Arabah to the south of Jeshimon. 25 And Saul and his men went to seek him. And David was told, so he went down to the rock and lived in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard that, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon. 26 Saul went on one side of the mountain, and David and his men on the other side of the mountain. And David was hurrying to get away from Saul. As Saul and his men were closing in on David and his men to capture them, 27 a messenger came to Saul, saying, “Hurry and come, for the Philistines have made a raid against the land.” 28 So Saul returned from pursuing after David and went against the Philistines. Therefore that place was called the Rock of Escape. 29 And David went up from there and lived in the strongholds of Engedi.

To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Maskil of David, when the Ziphites went and told Saul, “Is not David hiding among us?”

Psalm 54:1 O God, save me by your name, and vindicate me by your might. 2 O God, hear my prayer; give ear to the words of my mouth.

3 For strangers have risen against me; ruthless men seek my life; they do not set God before themselves. Selah

4 Behold, God is my helper; the Lord is the upholder of my life. 5 He will return the evil to my enemies; in your faithfulness put an end to them.

6 With a freewill offering I will sacrifice to you; I will give thanks to your name, O Lord, for it is good. 7 For he has delivered me from every trouble, and my eye has looked in triumph on my enemies.

Introduction/Review:

David had to keep on the run because Saul, the king, was hunting him every day. In a short time, David had fled from eight different places [show locations]: Gibeah (his house); Ramah (Samuel’s prophet school); Gibeah (where Jonathan gave him warning); Nob (the tabernacle); Gath in Philistia; the Cave of Adullam (where he had 400 men); the Forest of Hareth; Keilah (where he slew Philistines but its rescued people would have betrayed him). He now had 600 men (about equal to the number of all the students, elementary through high school, in Lamar, Colorado), and they had to leave Keilah. David went southeast about thirteen

miles (similar in distance from Lamar to Wiley, Colorado) from Keilah to a wild place named Ziph.

Story:

Ziphites snitch

The people of Ziph ✓were loyal to Saul and therefore thought they needed to be against David. They traveled all the way from Ziph to Gibeah [locate] to talk to Saul. “David is hiding in the strong places in the woods on a hill that is south of such-and-such a city. Now, O King, come down if you want to, or we will find him for you and bring him to you.”

Saul answered, “May God bless you, for you have shown love to me. Go, please, and seek some more information on where David is and who has seen him, for I’ve been told that he is very crafty. So go and find *all* the places where he hides. When you know for certain where he is, let me know, and I’ll go with you. I’ll search for him throughout all the thousands of places to hide in Judah!”

David relocates

While Saul hesitated to go, David got the news that Saul would be coming for him. ✓Saul’s delay gave David time to change his location.

The Ziphites went back to Ziph, and Saul followed them later. In the meantime, David had gone six miles south to another wild place called Maon.

Saul nearly captures

Someone told Saul exactly where David was hiding—in a rocky place—and Saul followed him there. As David went into the mountain to get away, he was on one side of the mountain, but Saul’s men were on the other side and getting closer and closer, ✓even coming from both sides. It looked as if David was surrounded! He was trying hard to get away, but surely Saul was going to capture him this time!

Saul leaves

Then, at just the right moment, a messenger came to Saul. “Hurry and come, for Philistines have invaded the land!” warned the messenger.

✓“Foiled again!” thought Saul. ✓“I think I was close to catching David, but I’d better go after those Philistines.”

So Saul left that place, stopped chasing David for a time, and went away to war against the Philistines.

God rescues

Whew! David was saved again by God. The rock where the chase took place got a special name—Selahammahlekoth—“SEE lah HAM mah LY koth,” which means Rock of Division or Rock of Escape, because it divided Saul from David and David escaped from Saul.

David moved again, this time toward the Dead Sea to the strongholds of Engedi, where he lived.

David wrote Psalm 54 at this time, saying in part, “God is my helper . . . I will praise your name, O Lord; for it is good. For he has delivered me out of all trouble” (vv. 4, 6, 7).

Lessons from This Lesson:

- We see Jesus:

As David narrowly escaped death at the hands of Saul, so Jesus narrowly escaped death at the hands of the people of his hometown. On a hill outside the town of Nazareth, people were about to throw Jesus over a cliff when God delivered Him. “Passing through their midst, he went away” (Luke 4:29, 30).

Activities:

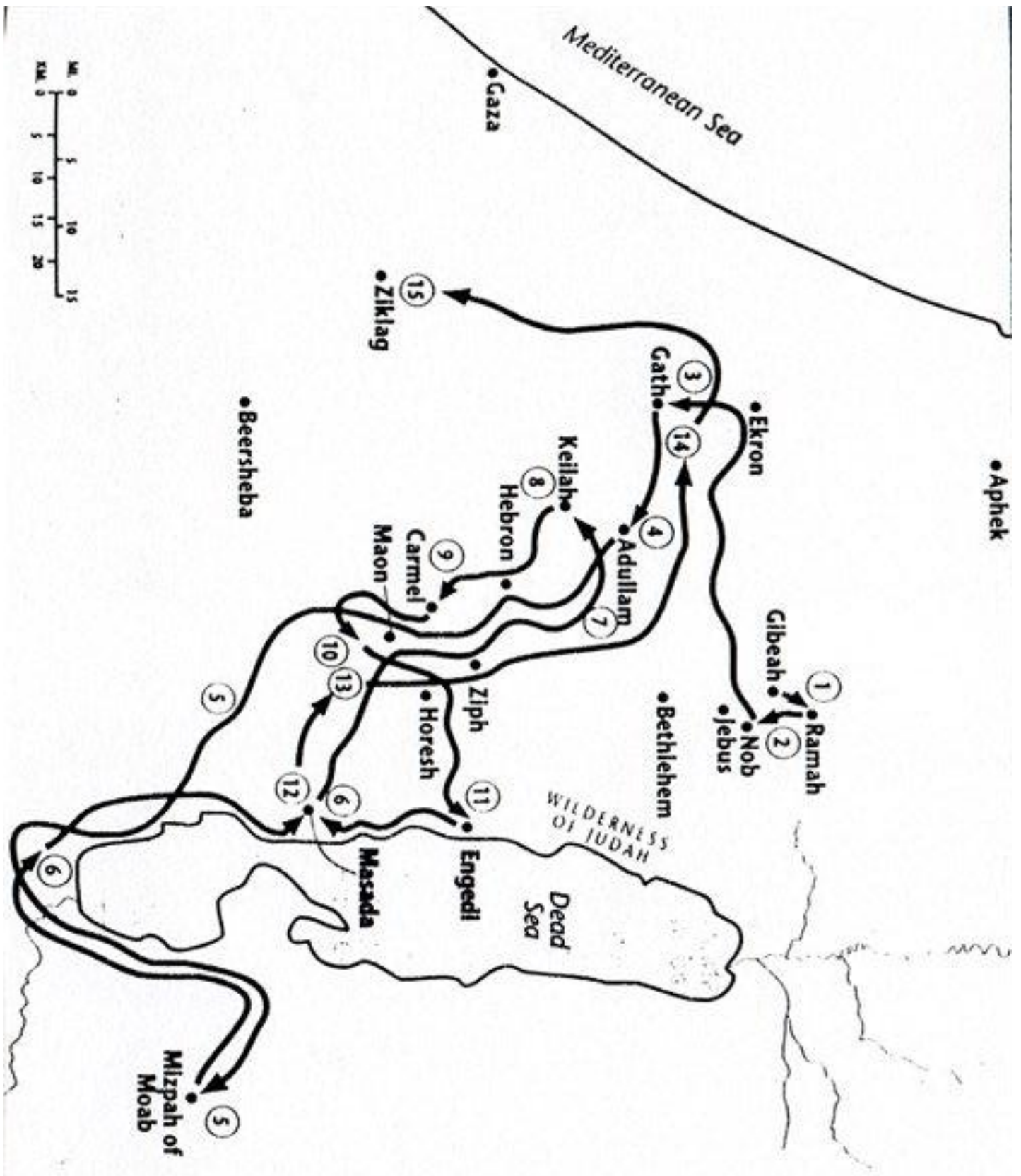
- Play dough: a large rock
- Snack: Trail mix
- Have students review the story using Dixie[®] cups or plastic soldiers or wooden people for the men and a large rock, a pile of fabric, or an upturned basket for the mountain. One cup or soldier will represent David and his 600 men; 5 cups or soldiers will represent Saul and his 3000 men.
- Read Psalm 54.
- Review questions: (Game: “Duck, Duck, Goose.” With students seated in a circle, the one who answers a question correctly may be “David” and go around the outside of the circle no more than once before tapping “Saul,” who will chase once around the circle but not catch “David” before [s]he sits in “Saul’s” former place. “Saul” also will find a place to be seated.)
 1. The people of what city went to Saul to inform him of David’s whereabouts? [Ziph.]
 2. Why didn’t Saul immediately go back with the Ziphites to find David? [He wanted them to be more exact about David’s location; God gave time for David to change locations.]
 3. Fill in the blanks (with the same word). Saul went on one side of the _____, and David and his men on the other side of the _____. [Mountain or large stone.]
 4. What was about to happen to David? [Saul was about to capture him and his men.]
 5. At that time, what stopped Saul from pursuing David? [He got a message that Philistines had invaded the land and left to fight them.]
 6. The rock where this event took place had a long name. What was the meaning of the name? [The Rock of Division or the Rock of Escape.]

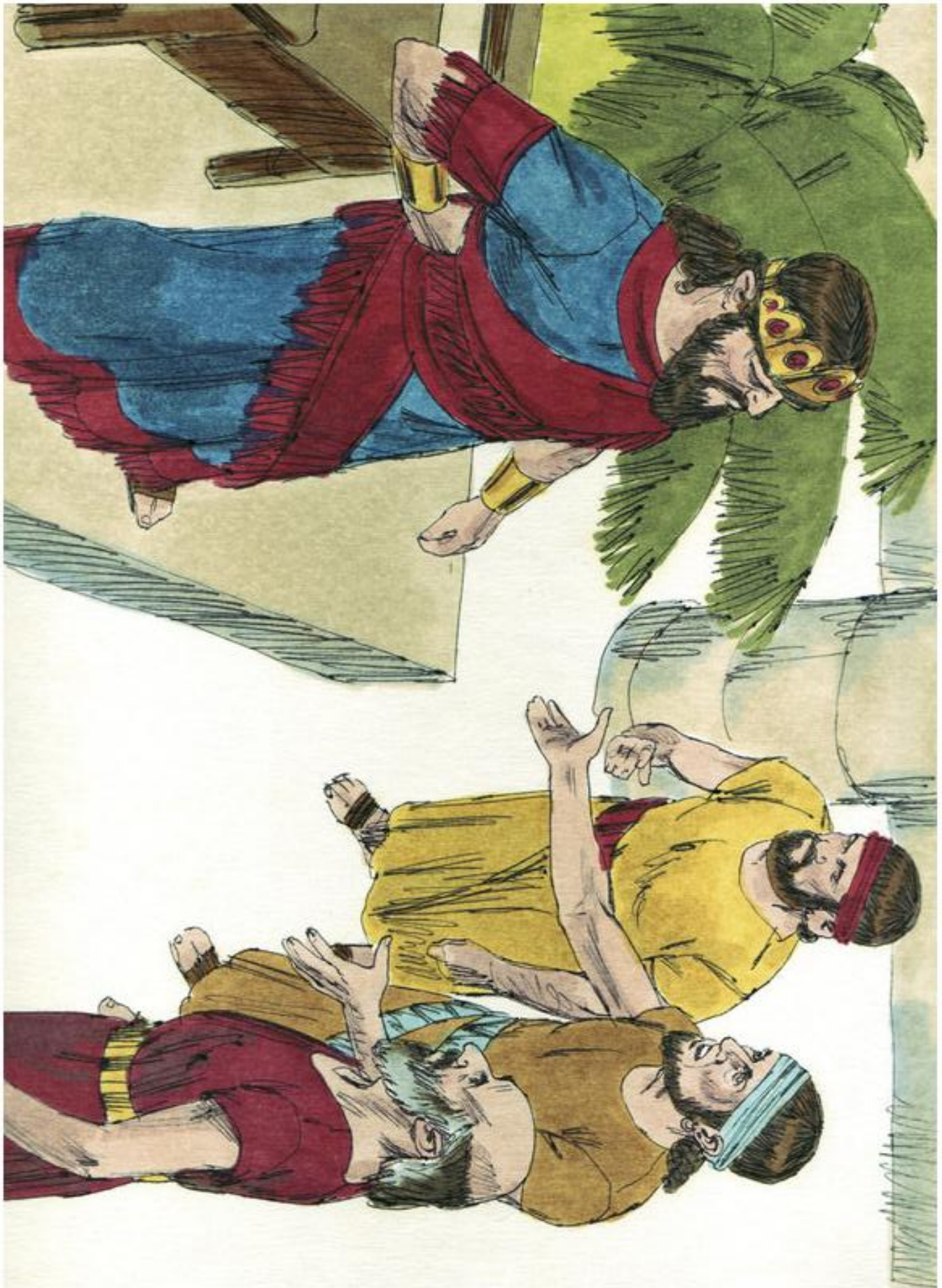
Memory Verse[s]:

- Psalm 23:1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. 3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. 5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

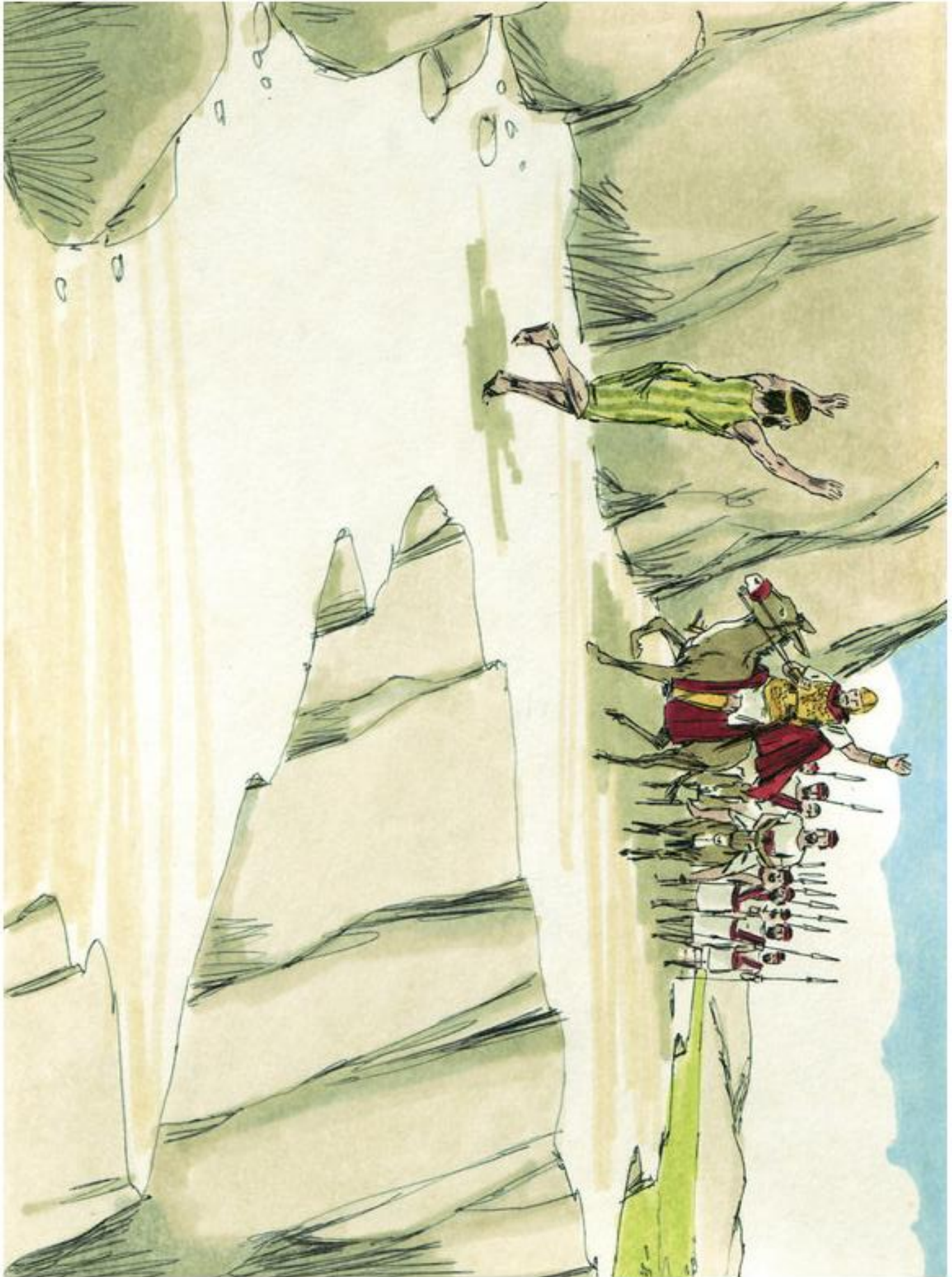
Handwork:

- Students may draw a picture of a mountain with soldiers on one side chasing soldiers on the other side.











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The Strongholds of Engedi (BiblePlaces on Twitter: "“And David went up from there and lived in the strongholds of En Gedi” (1 Sam 23:29). <http://t.co/D78JrtQtiJ>" / [Twitter](#))