

23.11b Ezekiel's Picture Prophecies (Ezekiel 13–24)

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

[. . .] Brackets indicate a remark to the teacher that will not be read aloud; they also show answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- Veil and a strip of fabric loosely tied around a wrist for a “magic band”
- A figure of anything that would look like a small idol (optional)
- Stumbling block of any kind
- Wood from a vine
- Sour grapes
- Plastic sword
- Optional: melted ice cubes to demonstrate a solid becoming liquid and, if your water has high mineral content, to show dross—“floaties” in the water
- Calendar to use in marking today’s date

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach: Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print on colorful cardstock and cut apart.

- *stumbling block*: Literally, something that make one stumble over it. Figuratively, something that causes a person to believe false sayings. I would be a stumbling block to you if I taught you, and you believed me, that idols could hear and answer your prayers.
- *riddle*: Today we might ask, “What is black and white and read all over?” The answer is *a newspaper*. Samson asked a riddle: “Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness. What is it?” The answer was *honey found in the carcass of a lion*. A riddle is a question with an answer one doesn’t expect.
- *Sabbath*: The day God rested after creation, giving His people an example of dedicating one day each week to the worship of God. In the Old Testament, that day was Saturday; after Christ’s resurrection, the church sets aside the Lord’s Day, Sunday, as the “Christian Sabbath.”
- *dross*: Did you know that people can melt metal? Heating metal to a very high temperature, they can make it melt into a liquid just like an ice cube melts into water. However, when metal melts, the dirt in it and whatever is not pure metal will separate from the pure metal. This dirt or impurity is called dross.
- *siege*: To lay siege is to surround a city with the hope of starving it into surrender and capture.

Scripture:

Ezekiel 13–24 is too long to print here. Here is a link to the ESV: <http://esv.literalword.com/?q=Ezekiel+13>.

Introduction/Review:

Last week we learned about several picture prophecies that Ezekiel saw in visions or acted out in his life. Tell me some of them. [Four creatures with wheels in wheels; scroll eaten; map of Jerusalem drawn on a tile; Ezekiel’s lying on his left side 390 days, right side 40 days; hair burned, cut by sword, and scattered; coins thrown in streets; God’s people marked for survival and the unmarked destroyed; burning coals scattered over the city; Ezekiel lifted to Jerusalem to see false prophets and to see a true prophet die; baggage on shoulder; digging out of city.]

Where did Ezekiel live? [In Babylon.] False prophets were in both Jerusalem and Babylon. What did the false prophets prophesy? [That the exiles would soon go back to Jerusalem, that the Temple’s golden vessels would be returned soon, and that Jerusalem would not be captured.]

Story: [Teacher, if you wish to shorten this story, you could skip “Chapters” 17, 21, 22. Doing so, you may eliminate these visuals: the melted ice cubes and the sword. You may also ignore the terms *riddle* and *dross*.

The sign, >, before a chapter in the lesson helps to see which ones to include in a shortened lesson.]

Even though Ezekiel lived in Babylon, God still spoke to him about the coming capture of Jerusalem and about the false prophets in Jerusalem and in Babylon. Today we will continue “Ezekiel’s Picture Prophecies” with those found in Ezekiel 13–24.

>**Chapter 13:** We see two pictures in this chapter. (1) Ezekiel pictures the false prophets, whom he calls “foolish prophets,” as a wall built without good cement between its rocks. “[T]he whole was no other than like putting a parcel of loose stones or bricks together, and throwing some slushy stuff [ESV has “whitewash”] upon them, as, moistened sand without lime, or clay without straw.”¹ These prophets “prophesy out of their own hearts”; “follow their own spirit and have seen nothing”; say, “The Lord says,” when the Lord has not sent them; and say, “Peace,” when there is no peace.

Would God be for these prophets? [No!] Absolutely not! The wall picturing these prophets would fall down; in other words, these prophets would not return to Israel but would die in Babylon.

(2) Women were also prophesying lies. They sewed “magic bands” on their wrists and made veils for their heads. God said He would tear off the veils and magic bands [tear off these items] because these female prophets discouraged righteousness and encouraged wickedness.

>**Chapter 14:** Some older exiles, who loved their idols, came and sat down before Ezekiel as if they were seeking a word from God. This was God’s word through Ezekiel: “You hold your idols close to your hearts [do so with your pretend idol], and these make a stumbling block for yourselves. Then you seek My advice. My advice is that you repent, or you will be an example of God’s punishment.” Then God said, “Even if Noah, Daniel, and Job (great men of God) were in Jerusalem, they would be unable to save anyone but themselves when I destroy Jerusalem.”

>**Chapter 15:** The picture here is the wood of a vine. This is what God said about the vine wood: “It is good for nothing except burning. Jerusalem is good for only fire and destruction.”

>**Chapter 16:** This chapter gives us the story of a newly born baby girl abandoned by her mother and left to die. That baby pictures Jerusalem. God found that baby/Jerusalem, washed her, and gave her life. When the baby had grown to marriageable age, God clothed her in silk and linen and put jewelry of gold and silver on her. She was beautiful. But she took the gold the silver and made idols to worship. Like a woman who breaks the seventh commandment, she loved all the nations around. God said, “I will judge you, but I will bring you back.”

Chapter 17: This chapter tells a riddle: A large, wonderful eagle picks the top off a cedar tree in Lebanon, takes it to a city, and plants it. That tree grows. The eagle plants a vine that also grows. Since the vine was small and planted in moist earth, it was easy to pull up.

What is the answer to the riddle? What did all this picking and planting mean? King Zedekiah had made a covenant with the king of Babylon but had broken it. He would go to Babylon (as the eagle moved and planted the plant), but he would die there (as the eagle had pulled up the plant).

>**Chapter 18:** [Distribute one grape to each student to eat.] God said, “There used to be a saying in Israel: ‘The fathers eat grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.’” In other words, children suffer because of the parent’s deeds. “Now,” God said, “That saying is changing. Now the soul that sins shall die. I will judge according to each person’s acts. Turn away from your wicked deeds.” You are responsible for your own sins.

>**Chapter 19:** To the princes of Israel, Ezekiel said, “Your mother was a lioness who taught her cub to hunt. That cub learned to catch prey and devoured men. The nations around heard about it and captured it, taking it to Egypt.” What does this picture teach us? That Israel used to war and win against other nations, but now some of Israel’s people would be taken to Egypt.

The story continues: “The lioness trained another cub. He, too, learned to catch prey and devoured men. Nations feared him when they heard him roaring. The nations set against him on every side, spread their net,

and captured him, bringing him to the king of Babylon.” What is this prophecy? Jerusalem would be taken to Babylon.

>**Chapter 20:** Two and a half years after Ezekiel’s first picture prophecy, some elders came to Ezekiel to inquire of the Lord. Ezekiel rehearsed Israel’s history, saying the people had always done the same thing—worshiped idols instead of the one true God. “I am the Lord your God,” the Lord said. “You always loved your idols. Even while you were in Egypt, you loved them. I brought you to your own land and gave you rules and told you to live by obedience. I gave you a sign—the Sabbath—that you belong to Me. But you worked and shopped on the Sabbath and treated it like any other day. Now you will be scattered. I will punish you, but I will bring you back.”

Chapter 21: “Ezekiel,” said God, “set your face toward Jerusalem and prophesy against it. God’s message is, ‘I am against you. I will draw my sword and slash left and right.’ Now, Ezekiel, groan. [Have students groan.] Why? Because Jerusalem will suffer terrible news and destruction.”

Chapter 22: “Israel is dross,” said Ezekiel. “God will melt Israel because they have shed blood, they have stolen, they don’t regard holy things, they profane the sabbaths, they prophesy to suit the king when God has not sent them.” God said, “I looked for a man to stand in the gap but found none.”

>**Chapter 23:** Two imaginary sisters represented Israel in the north and Judah in the south. The names of those two women were Aholah (north) and Aholibah (south). They were unfaithful to God. First, Aholah (north) was taken away to Assyria because of her wickedness. Then Aholibah (Judah in the south) became even more wicked after she saw Aholah’s punishment. Now, she, too, would be punished.

>**Chapter 24:** The time was four and a half years after Ezekiel had begun preaching his picture prophecies. It was also just a little over a year before King Zedekiah would be captured by Nebuchadnezzar. God said, “Write down this day—this very day. Today the king of Babylon lays siege to Jerusalem.”

Prophecies about to be fulfilled

All the many prophecies given by Jeremiah and Ezekiel were about to be fulfilled. But Ezekiel was about to see an even more personal, devastating picture. In the morning of this day, God told Ezekiel, “I am about to take away your delight, but when I do, you must not grieve—cry and mourn.”

Who was Ezekiel’s “delight”? It was his wife. God has made marriage to be a delight to the husband and the wife. The husband is to be the wife’s delight, and the wife is to be the husband’s delight. God was about to take away Ezekiel’s wife.

Ezekiel told the people, “God says he will take away my delight, but I must not mourn.” He spoke this message from God in the morning. That very evening Ezekiel’s wife died. This sad event was a picture to the exiles that they would receive bad news about God’s judgment on Jerusalem but should not weep because it was God’s judgment.

God’s faithful warnings

Do you think God warned His people enough that they would soon be punished? I certainly do. We have spent two whole lessons telling about at least twenty-four different ways that Ezekiel warned God’s disobedient people. Jeremiah, too, had been warning ✓ more than thirty-five years in Jerusalem. It was hard work telling people a discouraging message—they would go into captivity. It has not been easy for me to teach this discouraging message, nor, probably, has it been easy for you to hear about judgment.

Nevertheless, it is God’s message to us today also, for we live in a very wicked time when innocent blood is shed, when people disregard the Lord’s Day, and when many worship anything but the one, true God. One day, God will judge the wicked of our world as well.

¹[Ezekiel 13:10 - Bible Verse Meaning and Commentary \(biblestudytools.com\)](http://biblestudytools.com)

Lessons from This Lesson:

- We see Jesus:

The word *Sabbath* means rest. Believers may rest in Jesus, for He said, “I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:29).

- Pay attention to what the Bible says. Obey, and live. Living for Jesus may seem foolish to you or to your friends. It is not foolish. Obey God, for He knows what is right for you.

Activities:

- Play dough: stumbling block; vine; grapes; wall; sword
- Snack: grapes (some sour, if possible)
- Pretend to stumble on a stumbling block. This might be a fun activity, but remind students that true stumbling can be very injurious.
- Review questions: (Game: Print the clipart of grapes found at the end of this lesson. Back with flannel or paper towel. Cut out 6 of the grapes but put them back in place with the others on a flannel board. A correct answer allows a student to remove (“eat”) a grape.)
 1. Fill in the blank. The false prophets said, “Peace,” but there was no _____. [Peace.]
 2. Older exiles acted as if they wanted to hear God’s word, but they held on to what? [Idols.]
 3. God compared Israel to an abandoned baby girl whom He took in and helped until she was ready to be married. What did this woman do with the gold and silver God had given her? [Made idols.]
 4. Even though the lioness taught her cubs (Israel) to hunt (capture other nations), what would happen to the lioness/Israel? [The lioness/Israel would be captured and taken to Egypt and Babylon.]
 5. The two sisters, Aholah and Aholibah, represented whom? [Israel, the northern tribes, and Judah, the southern tribe.]
 6. Finish the thought. As Ezekiel was not to mourn when his wife died, so the exiles should not mourn when they heard the bad news that _____. [God was bringing judgment on Jerusalem.]

Memory Verse[s]: ESV

- Psalm 1 (The KJV has visuals at [psalm 1 - Bing images](#) words only, and [Tree & Psalm 1 - Openclipart](#) with a tree in the picture. The ESV has one at [\(840\) Pinterest](#) with a lamp and a Bible in the picture.)

1 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;

2 but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.

In all that he does, he prospers.

4 The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

6 for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Handwork: Color a lion found at the end of this lesson. Tape a net from a fruit or vegetable bag to the back of the page. Pull the net to the front of the page and drape over the lion to show its being captured.

stumbling block

riddle

Sabbath

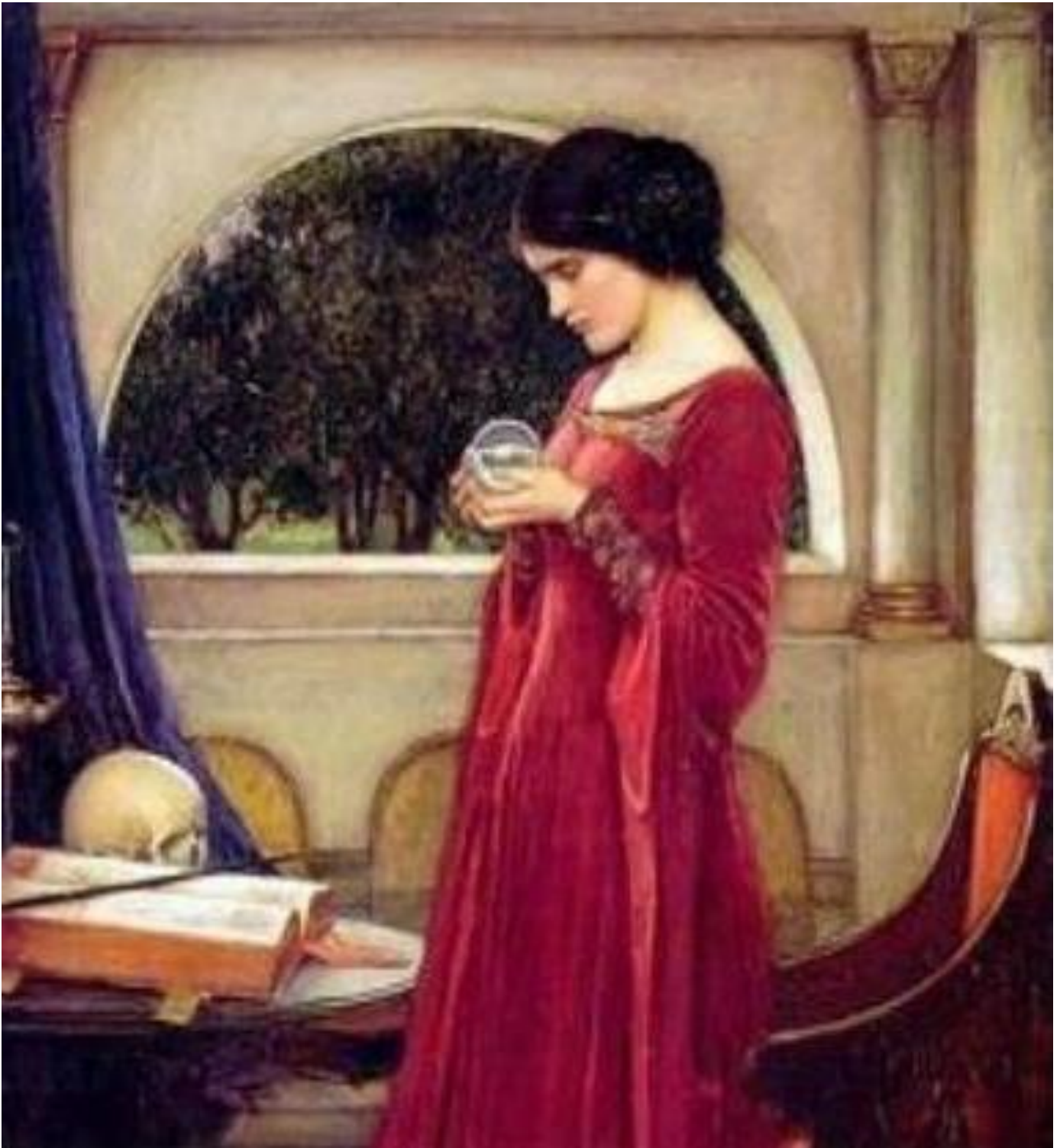
dross

siege

Ezekiel 13:10



*Because, even
because they have
seduced my
people, saying,
Peace; and there
was no peace; and
one built up a
wall, and, so,
others daubed it
with untempered
mortar:*

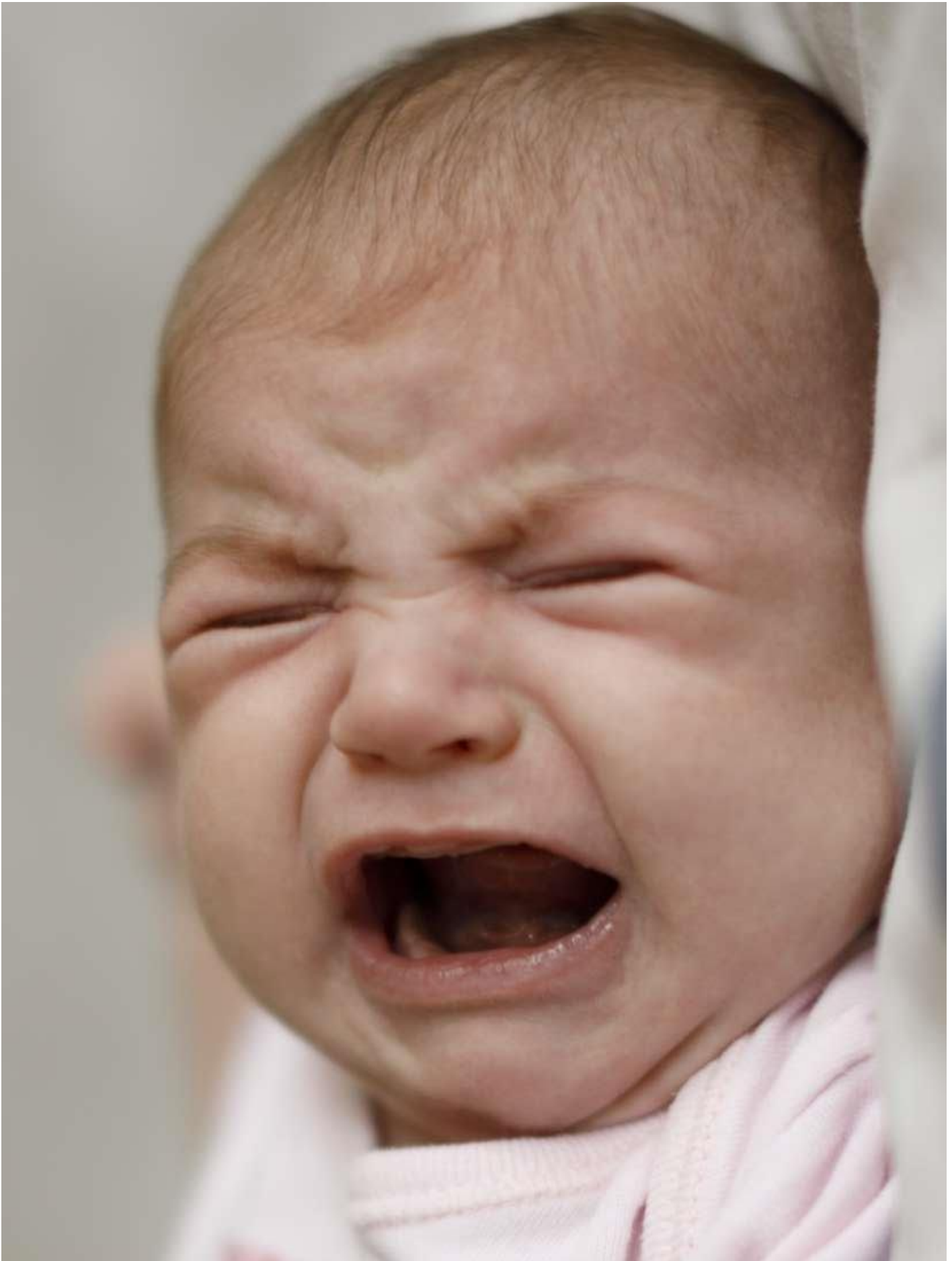


[ezekiel 13 women's magic bands and veils - Search Images \(bing.com\)](#)





Chapter 15



**“He plucked off
the topmost of
its young twigs
and brought it
to a land of
merchants...”**





"A great eagle . . . came unto Lebanon, and took the highest branch of the cedar."—*Ezek. xvii. 3.*

No more shall you say,
"The fathers eat sour grapes, and the
children's teeth are set on edge" ...

The soul who sins will die.

Ezekiel 18









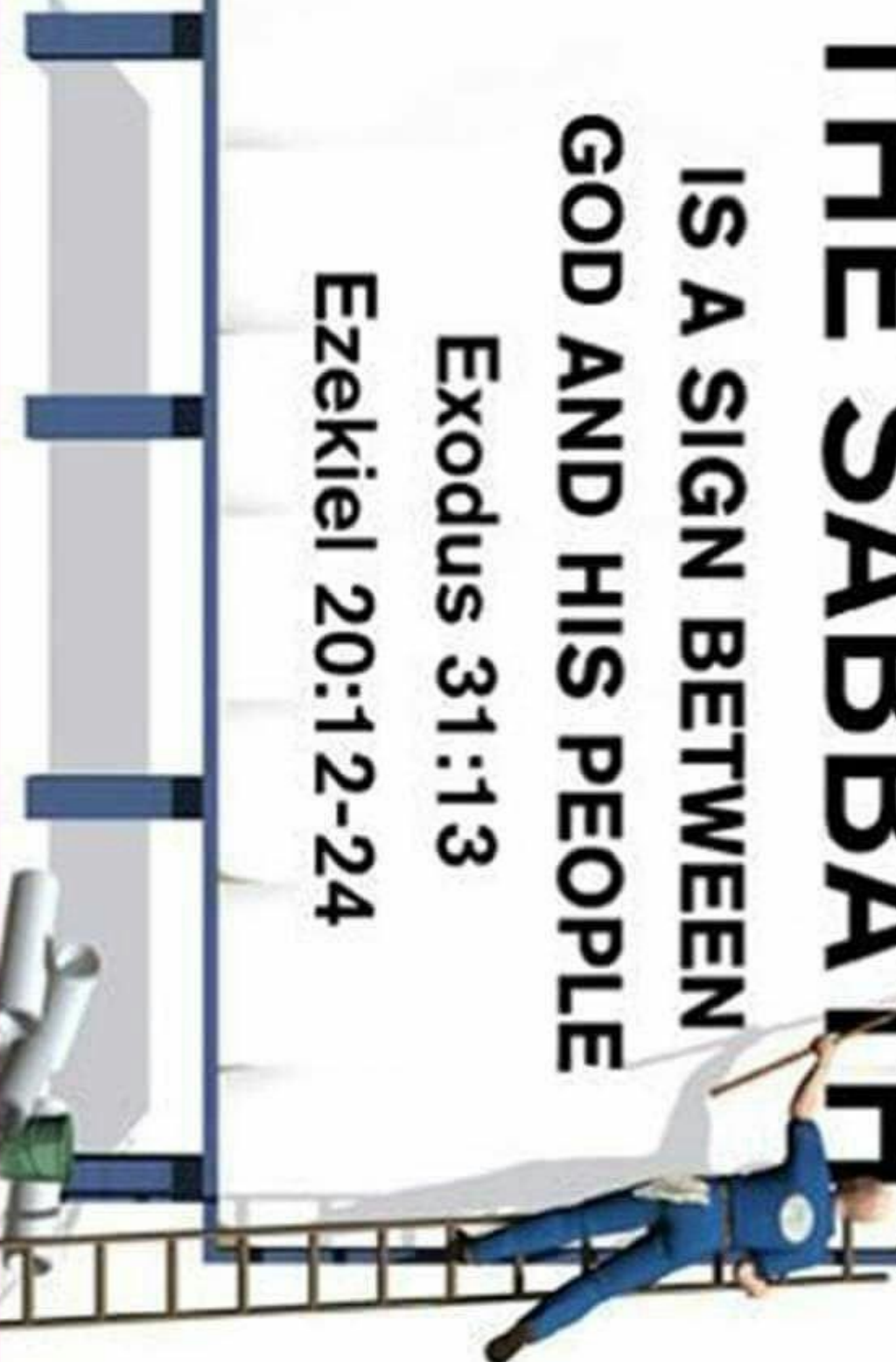
“ I will not be enquired of by you.” — *Ezek. xx. 3.*

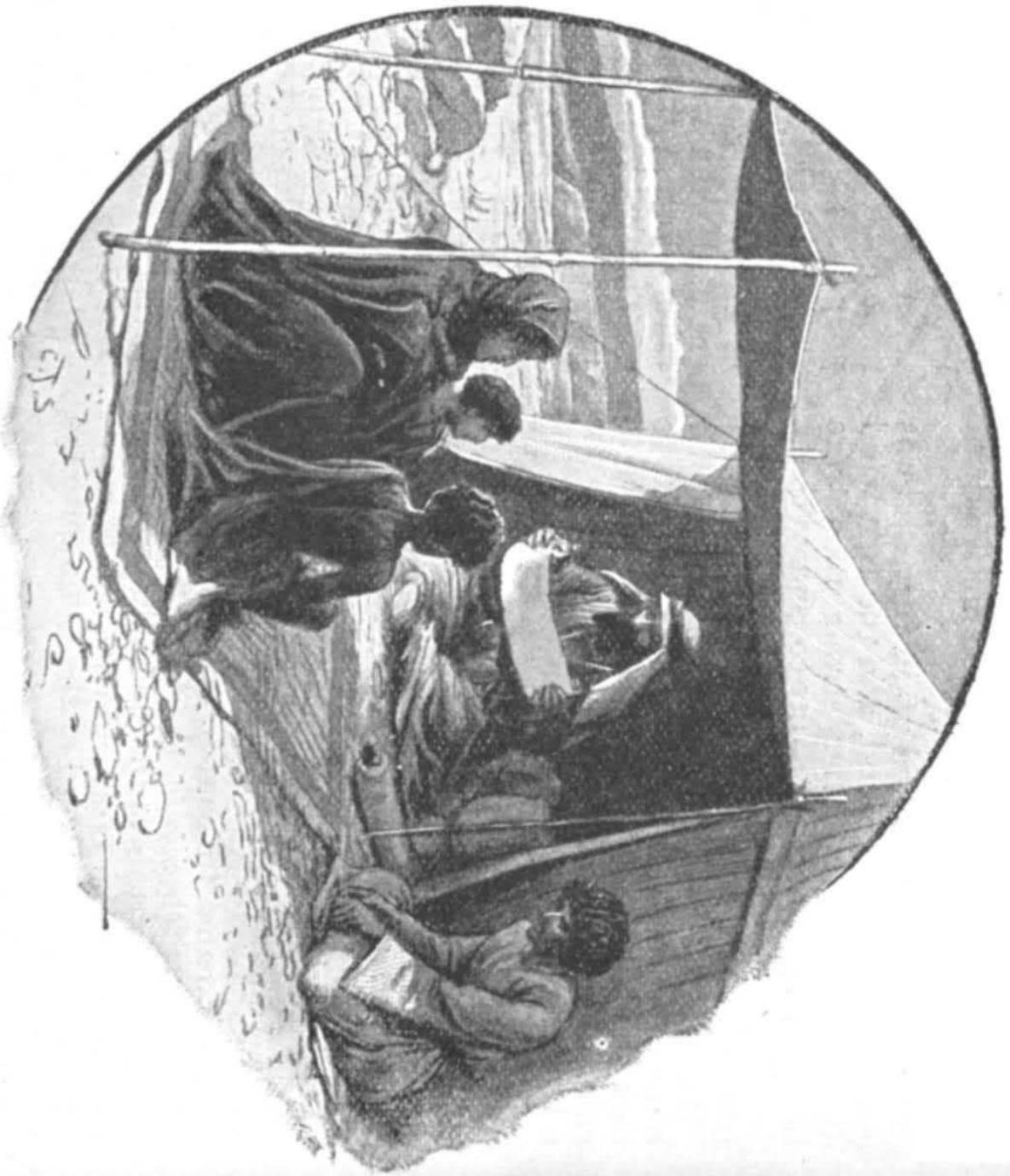
THE SABBATH

IS A SIGN BETWEEN
GOD AND HIS PEOPLE

Exodus 31:13

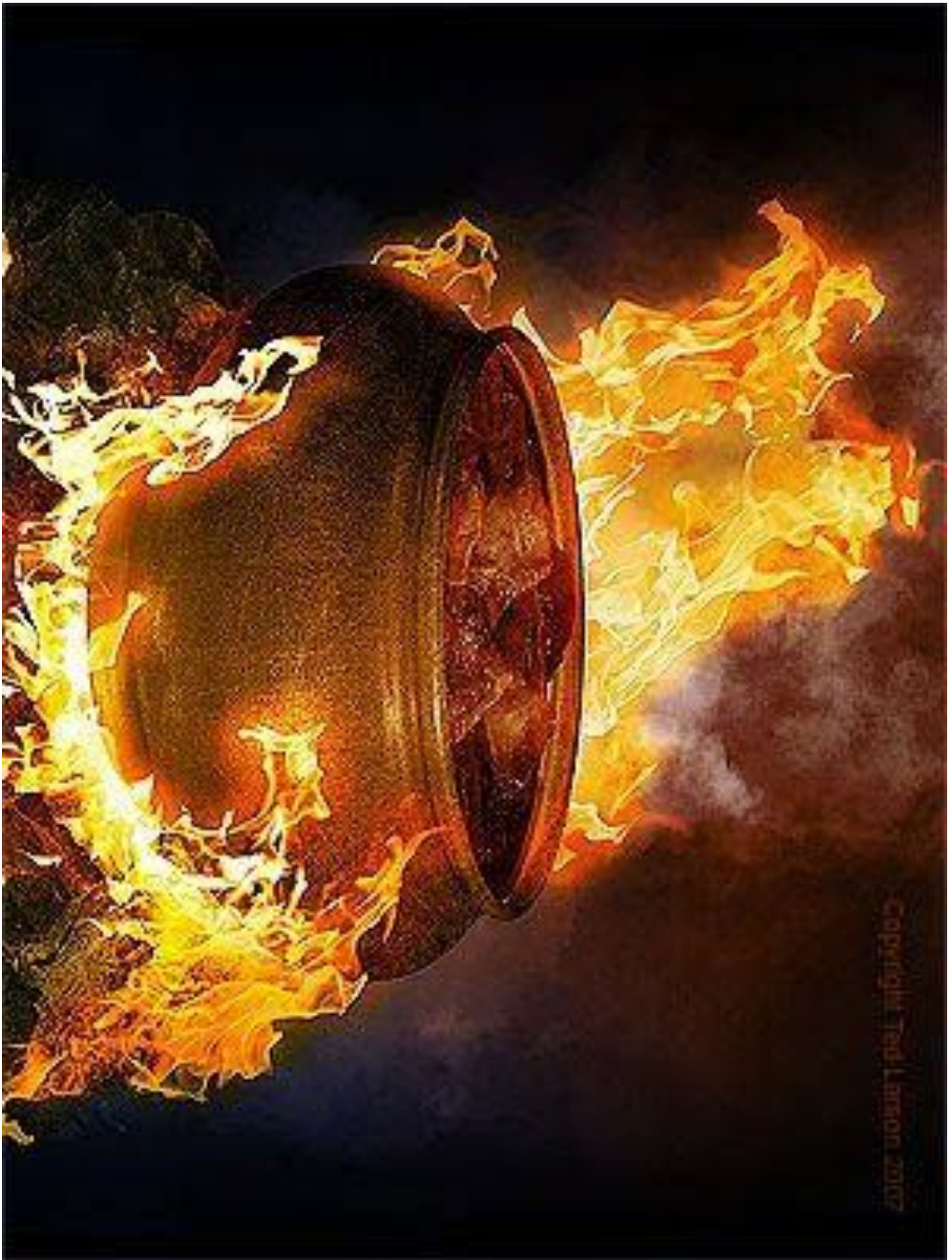
Ezekiel 20:12-24





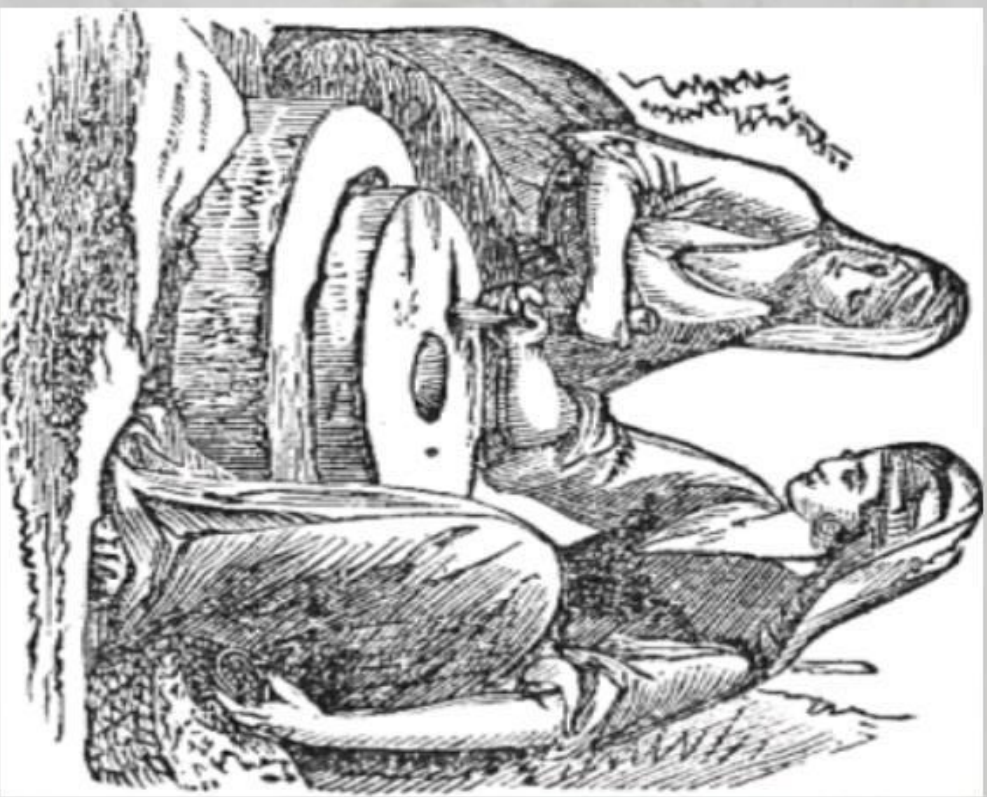
"And hallow my sabbaths."—*Ezek. xx. 20.*

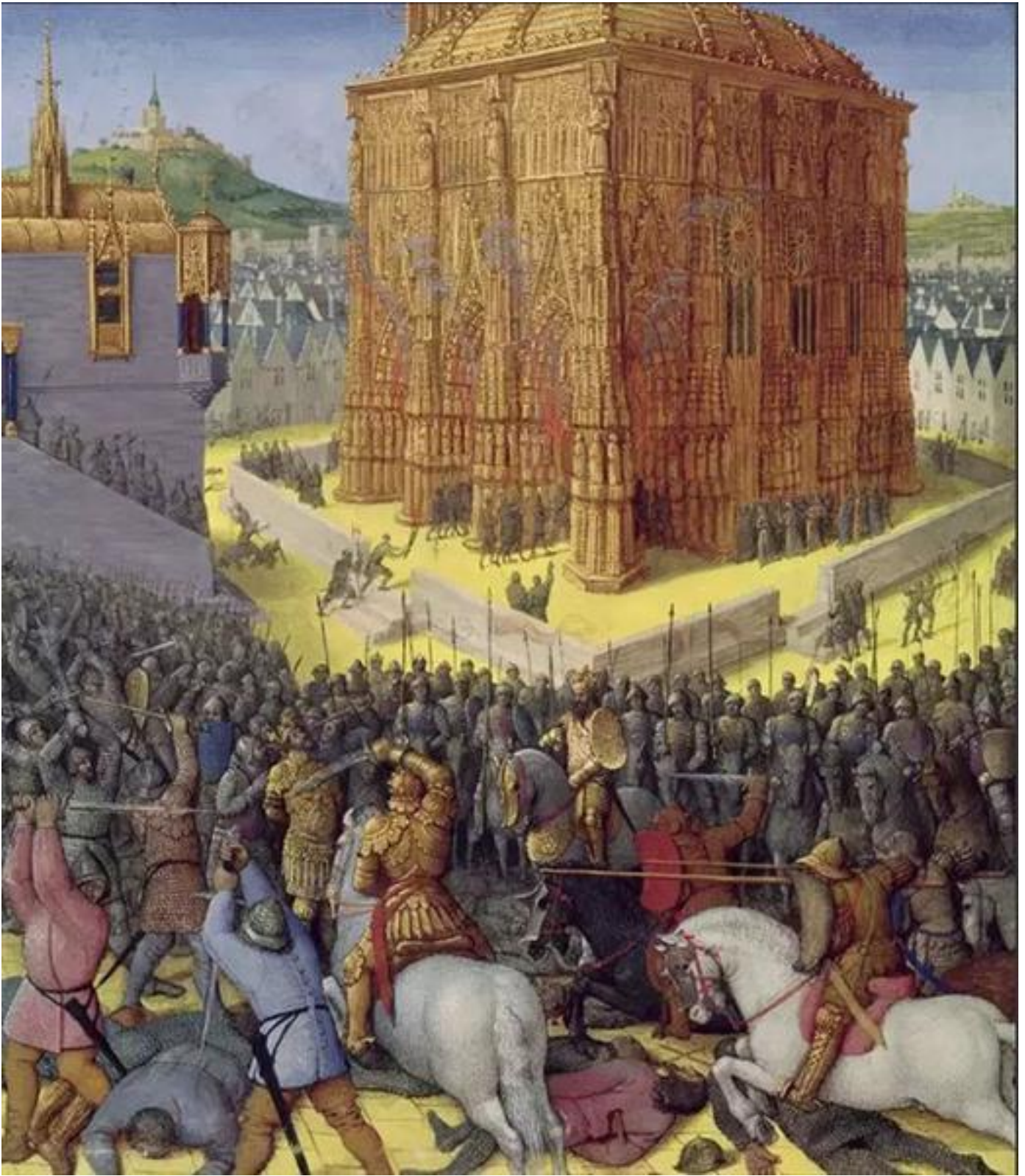




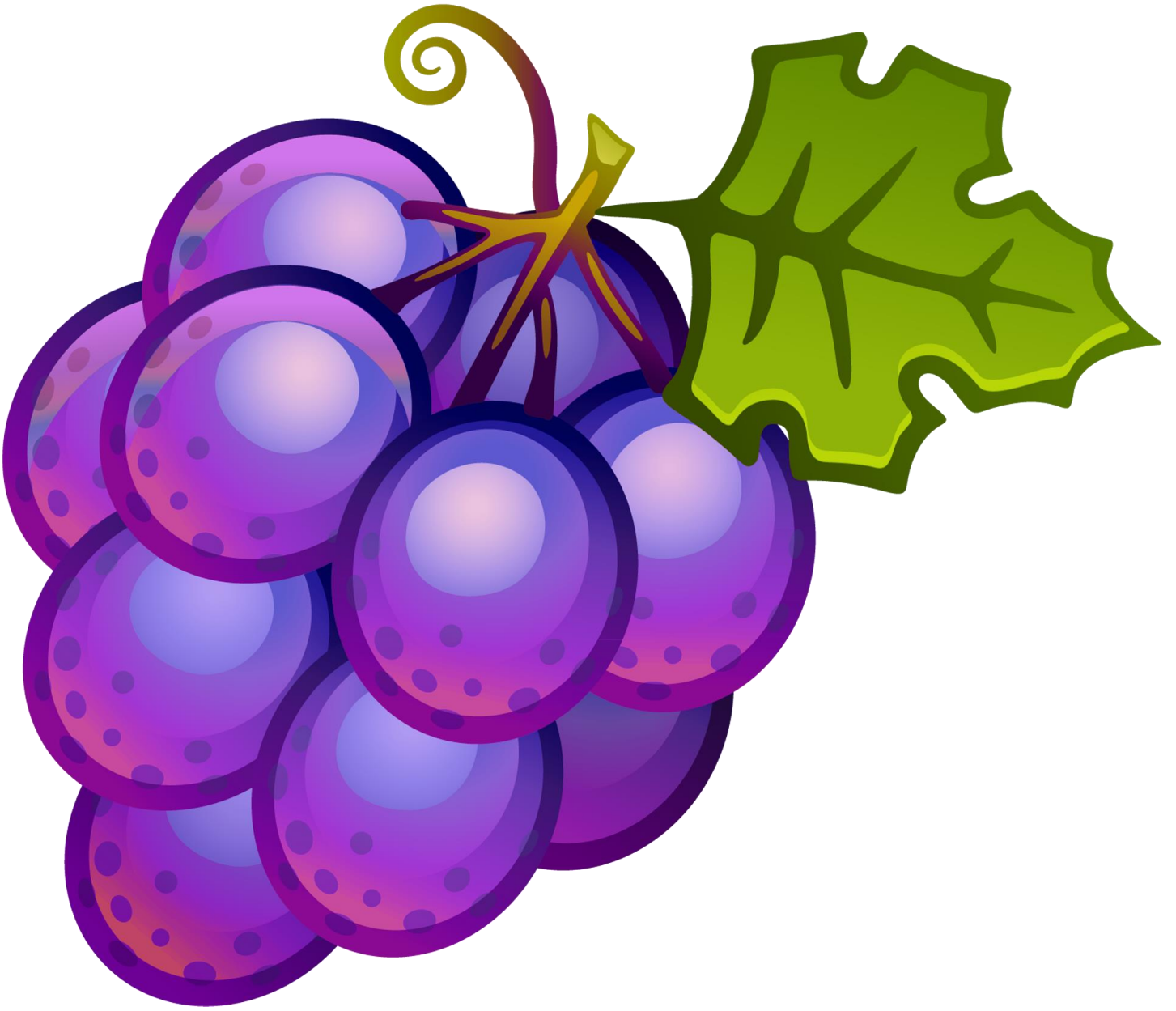
Ezekiel 23:4

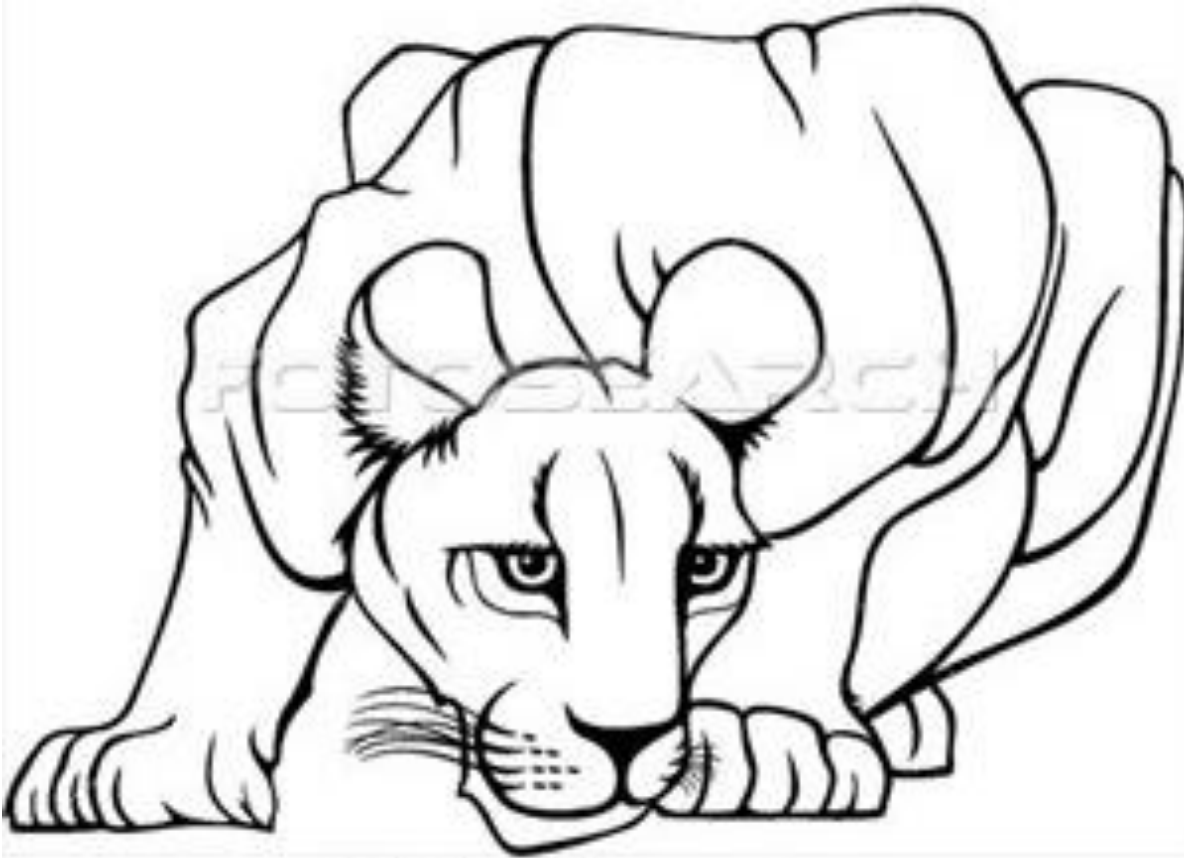
And the names of them were Ahiofah the elder, and Aholibah her sister; and they were mine, and they bare sons and daughters. Thus were their names; Samaria is Ahiofah, and Jerusalem Aholibah.





[ezekiel 24 writing down day of siege - Search Images \(bing.com\)](#)





Jerusalem
would be
captured as
a lion is
captured.

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ch.com



Jerusalem
would be
captured as
a lion is
captured.

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