

Lesson 9: Gideon

Judges 6-8

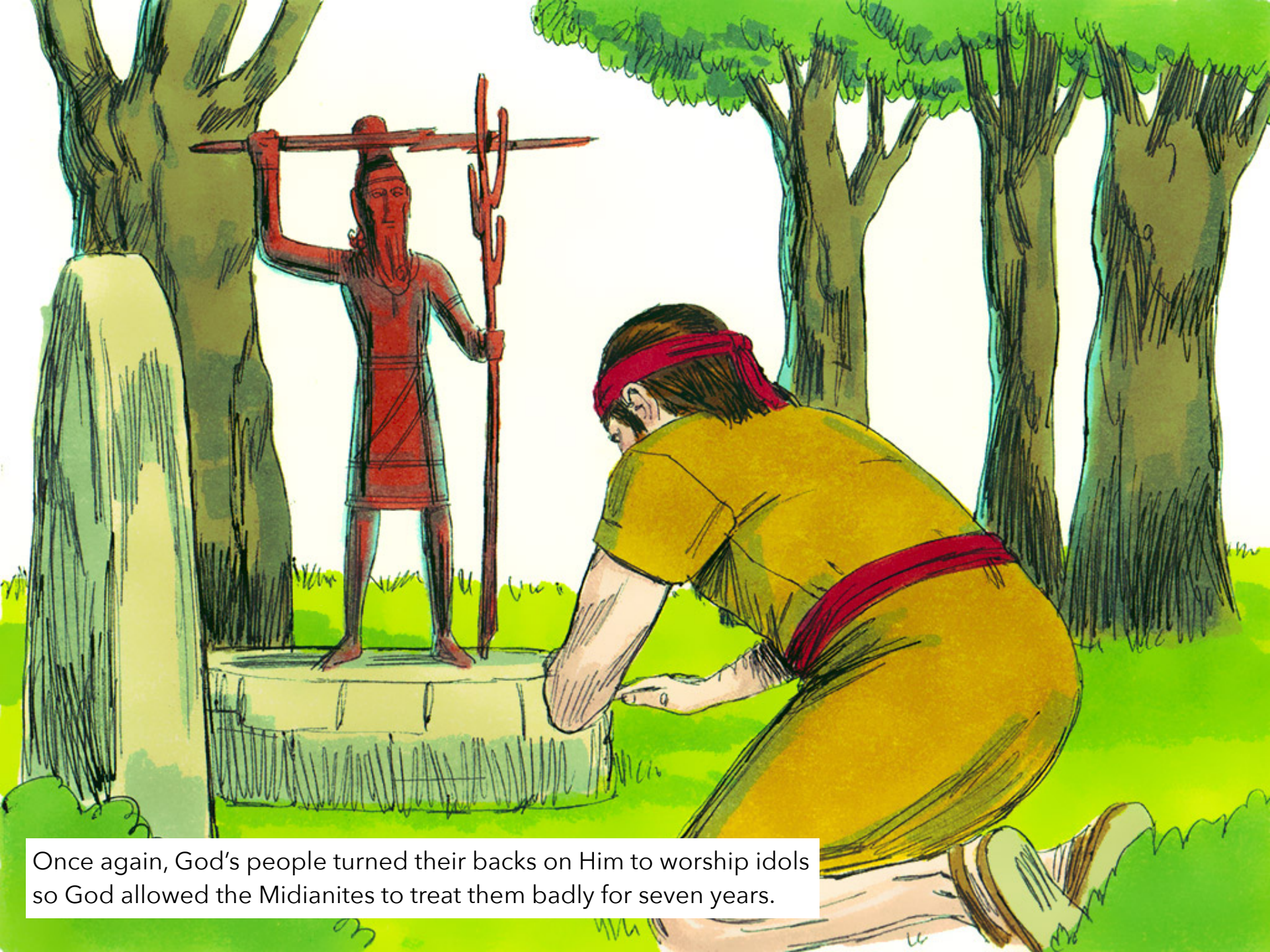
4th and 5th Grade Class

Jordan Park church of Christ



Judges 6:1-40

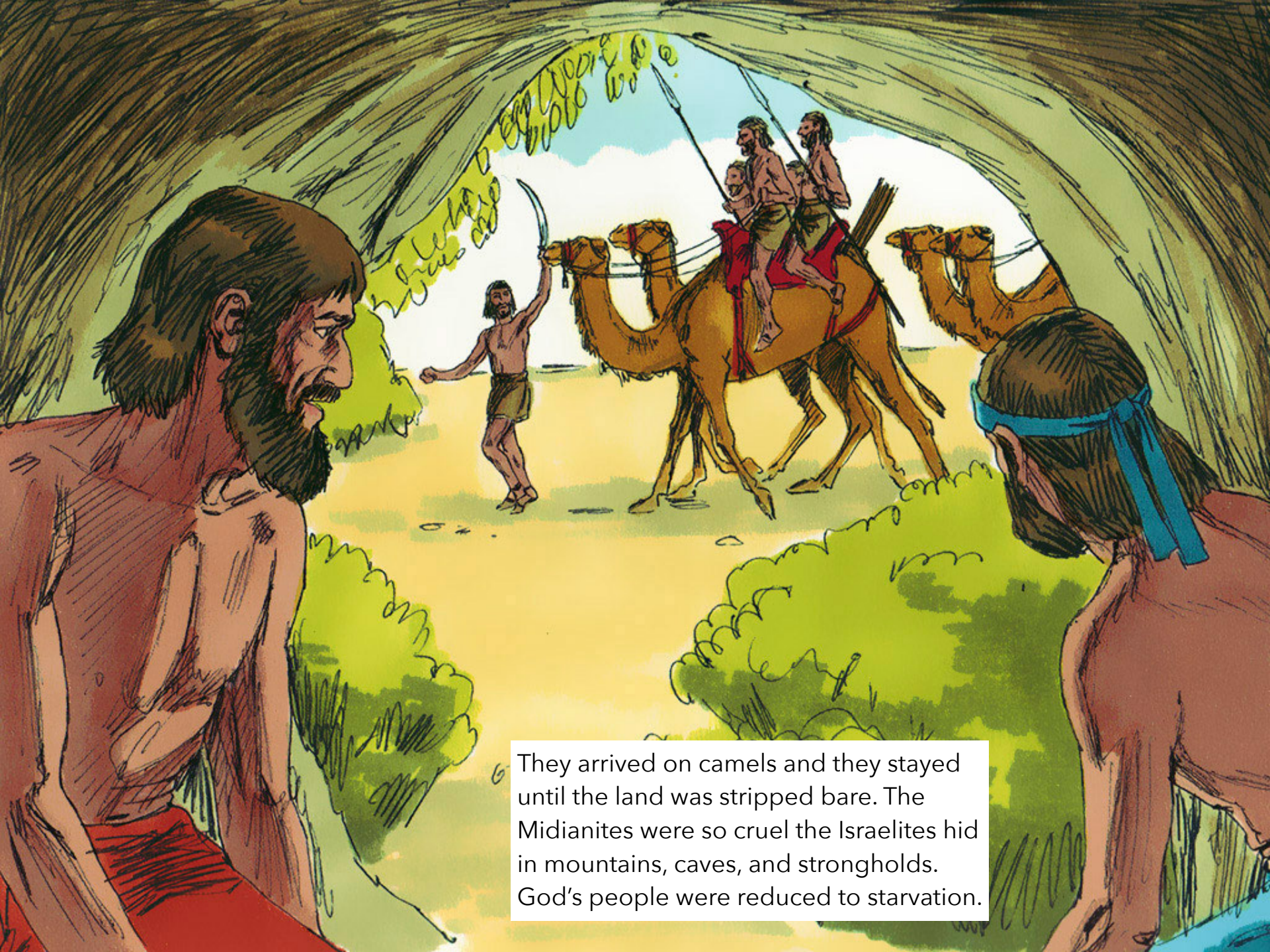
GOD RAISES UP GIDEON



Once again, God's people turned their backs on Him to worship idols so God allowed the Midianites to treat them badly for seven years.



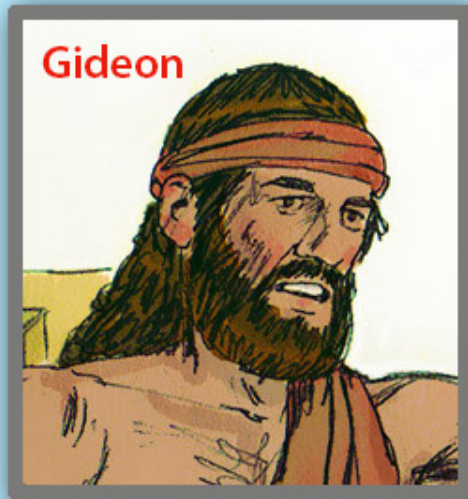
Whenever the Israelites were ready to harvest, marauders from Midian, Amalek and the people of the east would attack Israel and destroy their crops.



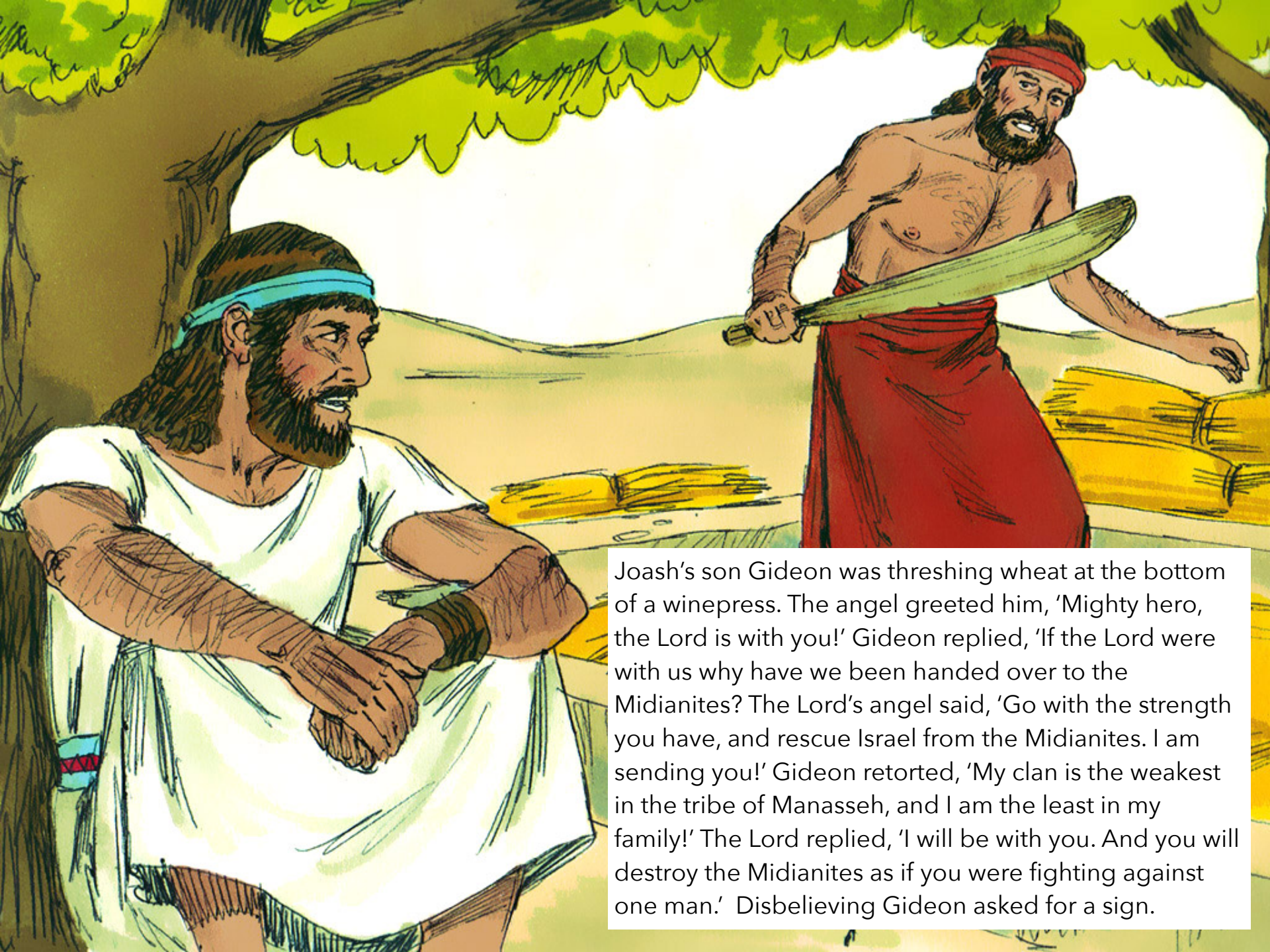
They arrived on camels and they stayed until the land was stripped bare. The Midianites were so cruel the Israelites hid in mountains, caves, and strongholds. God's people were reduced to starvation.

ISRAEL

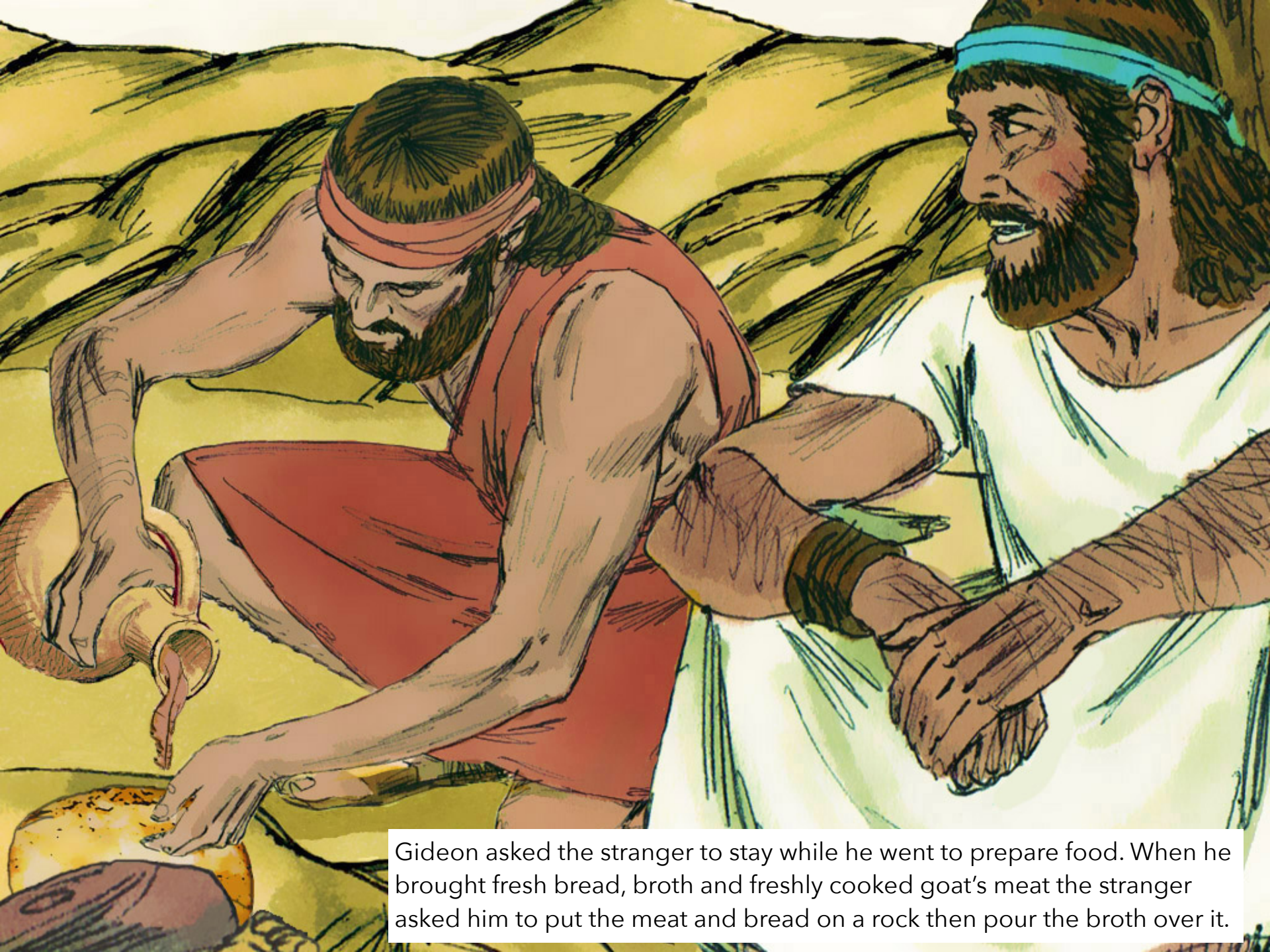
IN THE TIME OF
THE JUDGES



Then the Israelites called out to the Lord for help. God sent prophets to tell them not to worship idols but they did not listen. Then an angel of God went and sat under the great tree at Ophrah belonging to Joash.



Joash's son Gideon was threshing wheat at the bottom of a winepress. The angel greeted him, 'Mighty hero, the Lord is with you!' Gideon replied, 'If the Lord were with us why have we been handed over to the Midianites? The Lord's angel said, 'Go with the strength you have, and rescue Israel from the Midianites. I am sending you!' Gideon retorted, 'My clan is the weakest in the tribe of Manasseh, and I am the least in my family!' The Lord replied, 'I will be with you. And you will destroy the Midianites as if you were fighting against one man.' Disbelieving Gideon asked for a sign.



Gideon asked the stranger to stay while he went to prepare food. When he brought fresh bread, broth and freshly cooked goat's meat the stranger asked him to put the meat and bread on a rock then pour the broth over it.



Then the angel of the Lord touched the meat and bread with the tip of the staff in his hand, and fire flamed up from the rock and consumed the meat and bread. Then the angel of the Lord disappeared.



Gideon exclaimed, 'I'm doomed! I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face!' The Lord replied, 'Do not be afraid. You will not die.' That night the Lord gave Gideon instructions to carry out.



With the help of 10 servants Gideon took one of his father's bulls and pulled down his father's idol of Baal. They cut down the pole his family used to worship the idol Asherah.



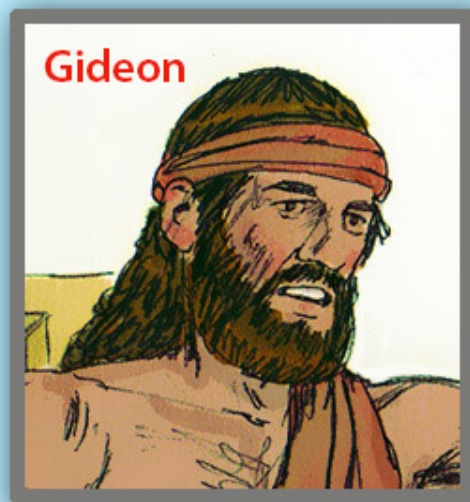
Then he made an altar to God, placed the wood of the Asherah pole on it and sacrificed the bull to God.



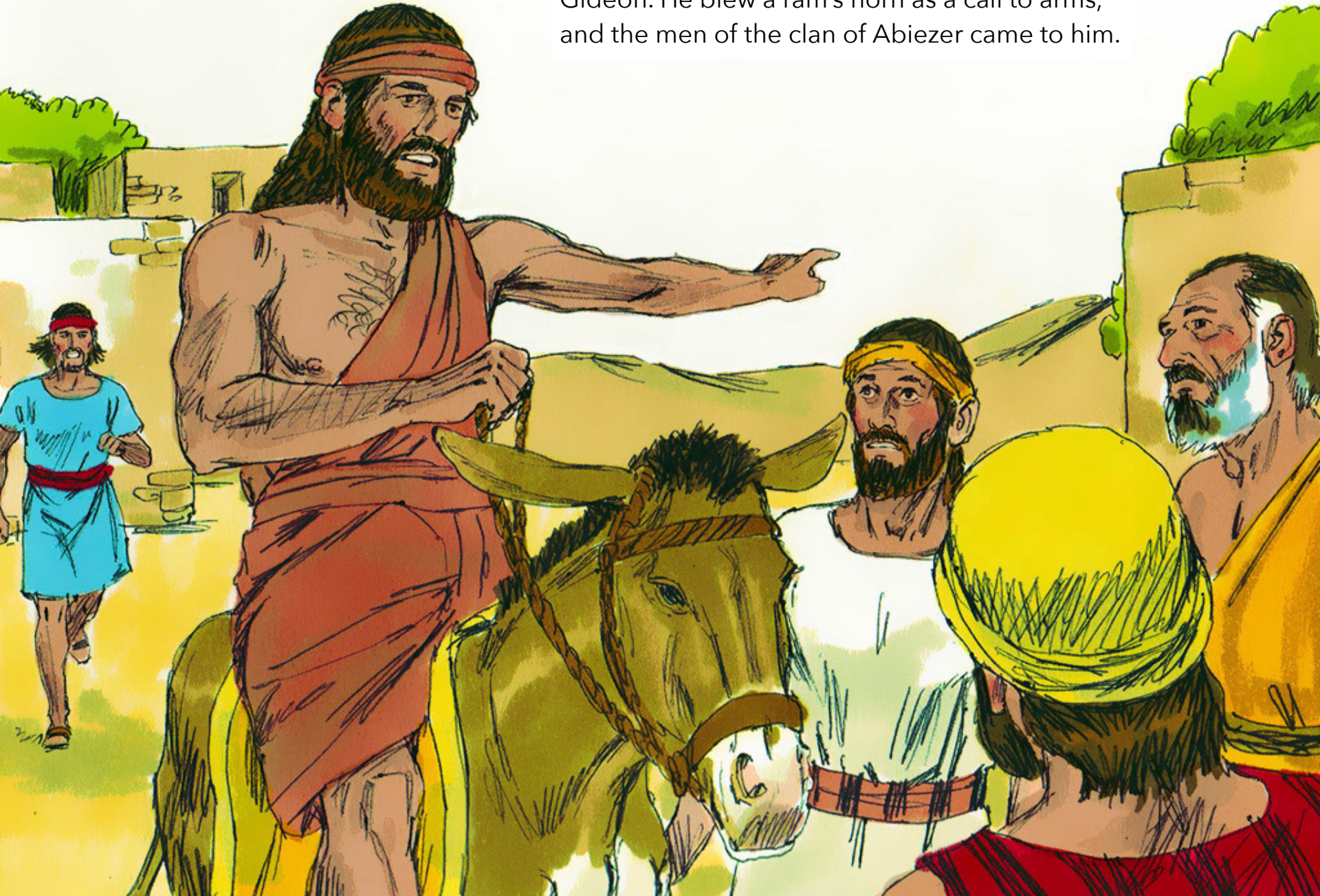
The next morning the people of the town were furious to find the idols had been destroyed. When they discovered Gideon had done this, a mob gathered outside Joash's house demanding Gideon's death. Joash confronted the mob, 'Why are you defending Baal? If Baal truly is a god, let him defend himself and destroy the one who broke down his altar!' From then on Gideon was called Jerub-baal, which means 'Let Baal defend himself'.

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THE JUDGES

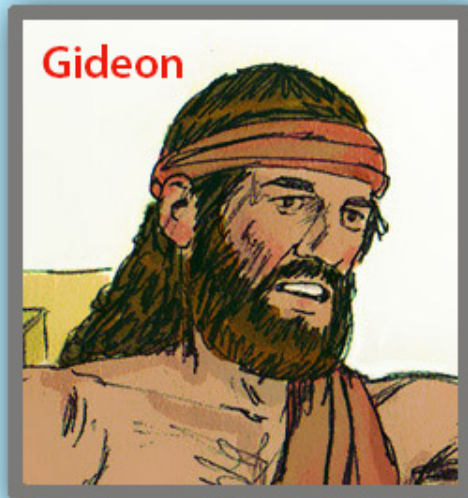


The Spirit of the Lord took possession of Gideon. He blew a ram's horn as a call to arms, and the men of the clan of Abiezer came to him.



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IN THE TIME OF
THE JUDGES

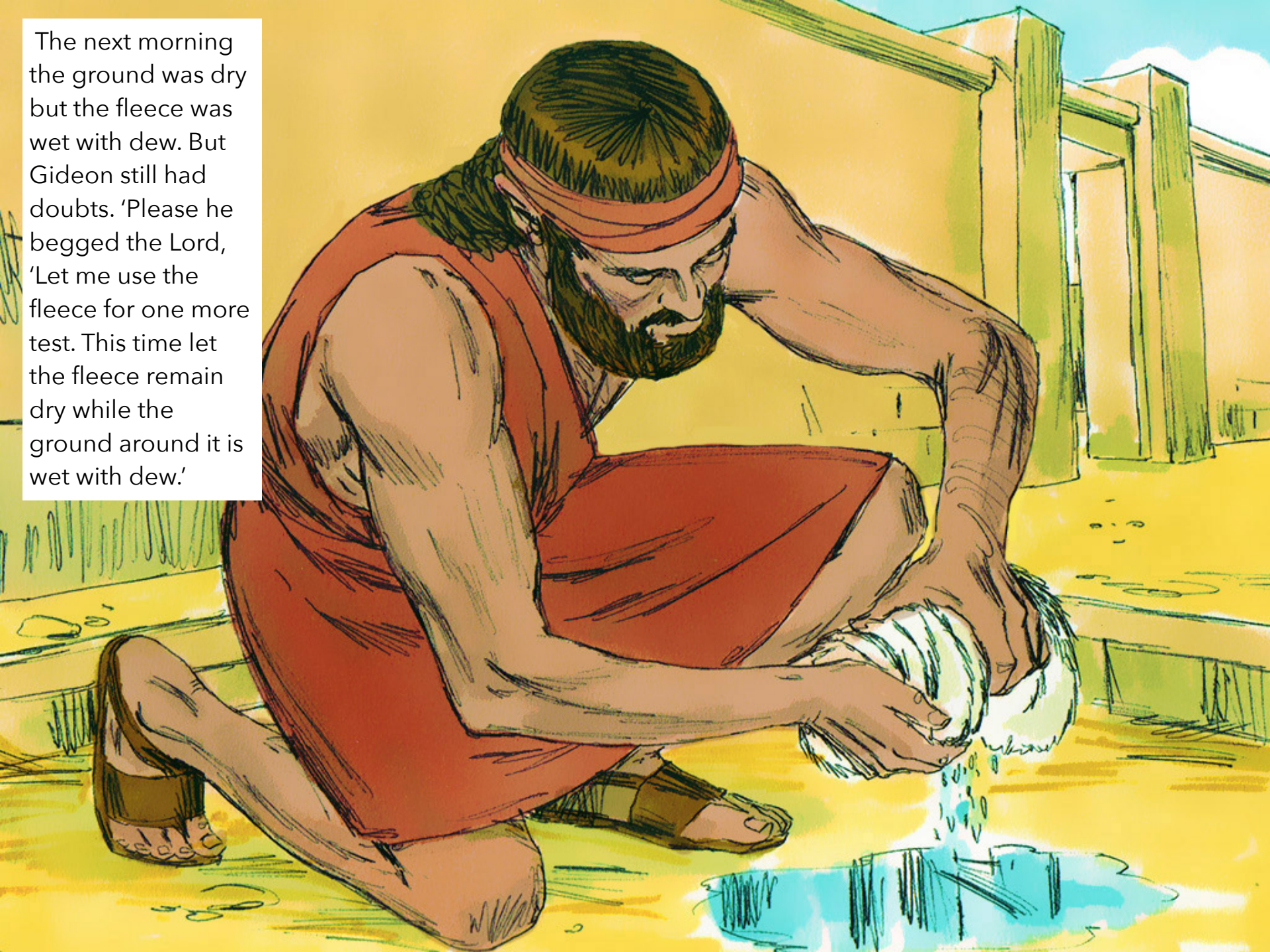


He also sent messengers throughout Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, summoning their warriors, and all of them responded.

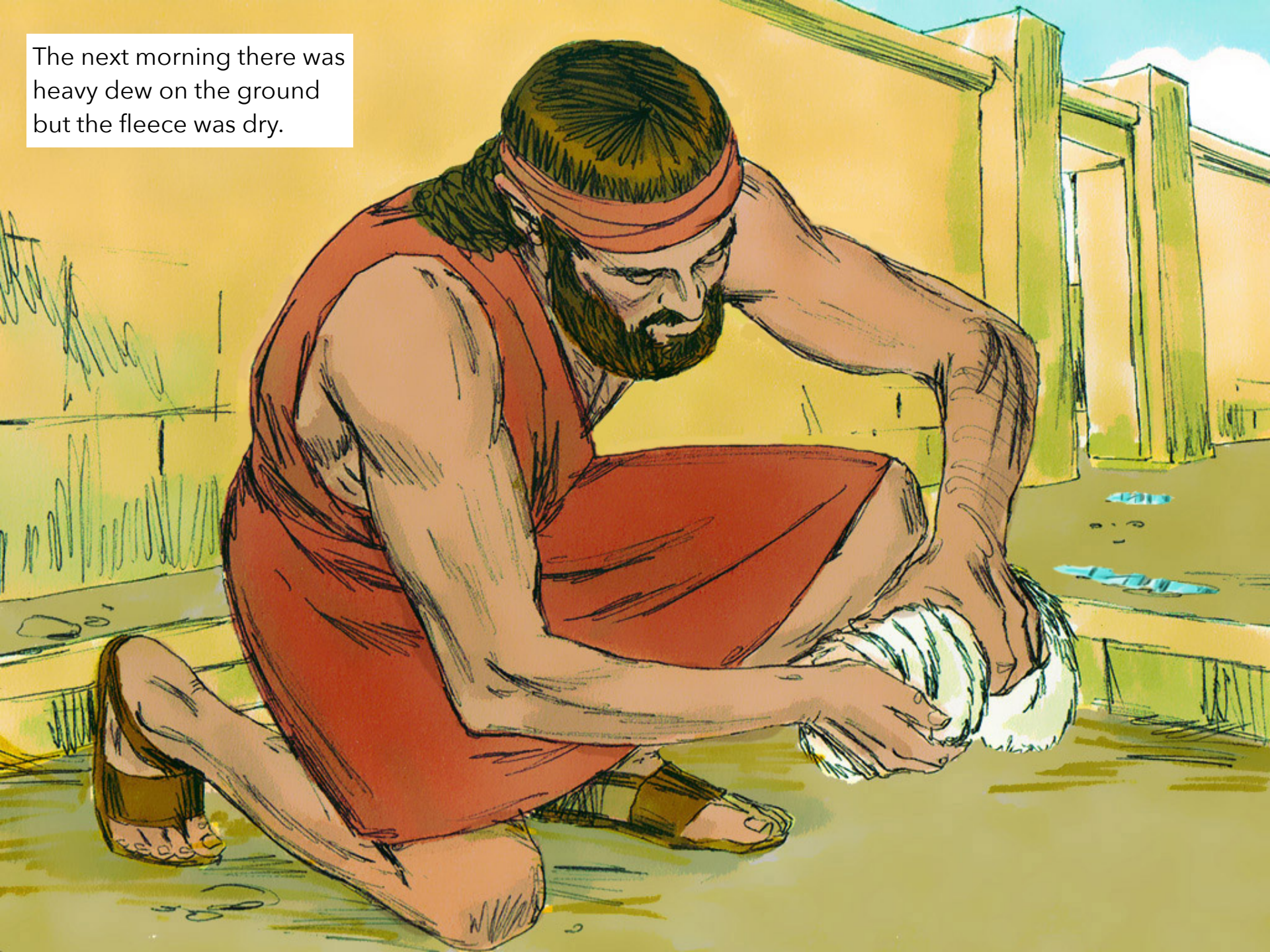


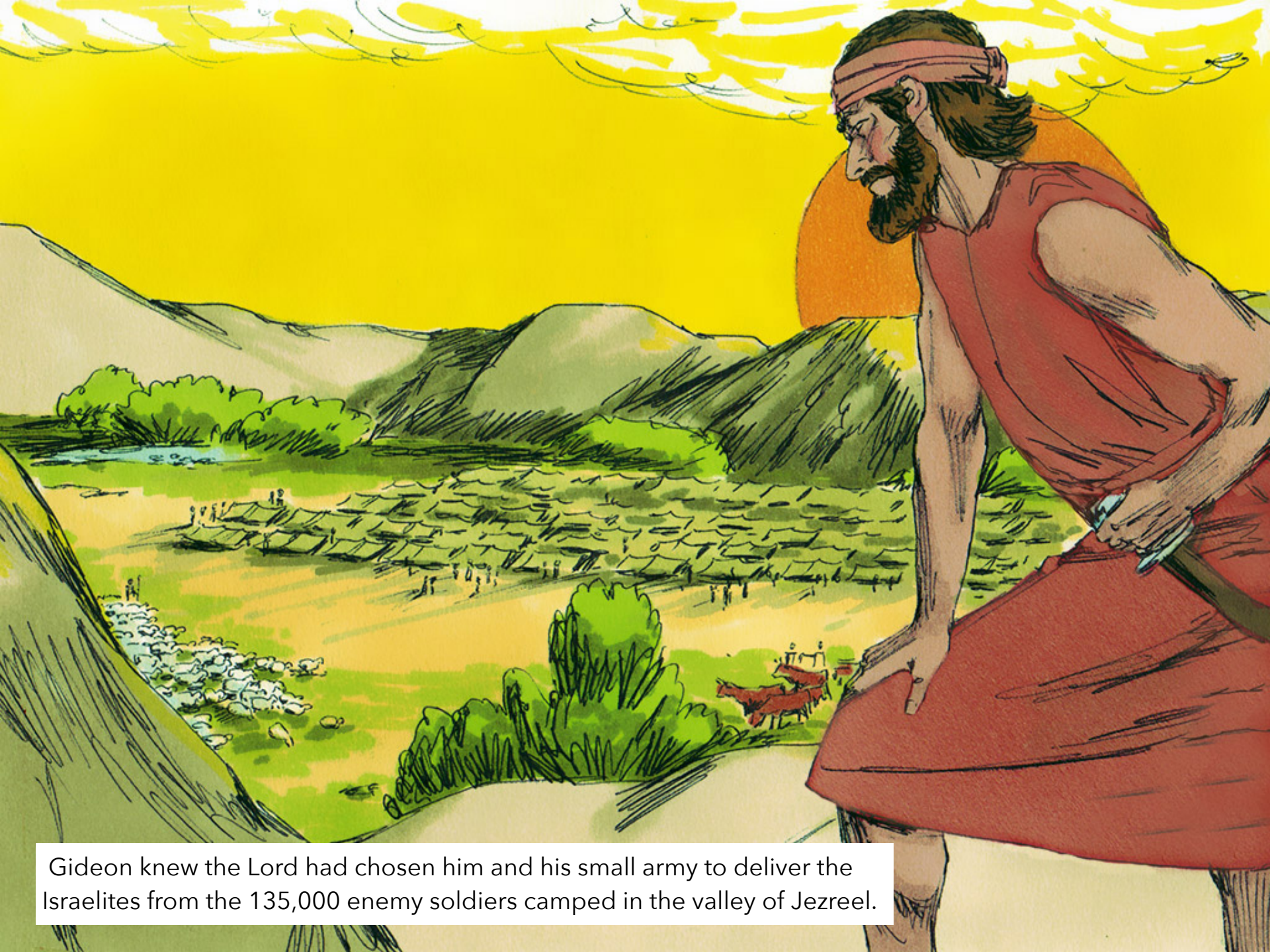
Gideon still had doubts about taking on the might army in the valley. So he said to God, 'Prove you are going to use me to rescue Israel in this way. I will put a wool fleece on the threshing floor tonight. If the fleece is wet with dew in the morning but the ground is dry, then I will know that you are going to help me.'

The next morning the ground was dry but the fleece was wet with dew. But Gideon still had doubts. 'Please he begged the Lord, 'Let me use the fleece for one more test. This time let the fleece remain dry while the ground around it is wet with dew.'



The next morning there was heavy dew on the ground but the fleece was dry.





Gideon knew the Lord had chosen him and his small army to deliver the Israelites from the 135,000 enemy soldiers camped in the valley of Jezreel.



GIDEON'S BATTLE WITH THE MIDIANITES

Judges 7:1-25

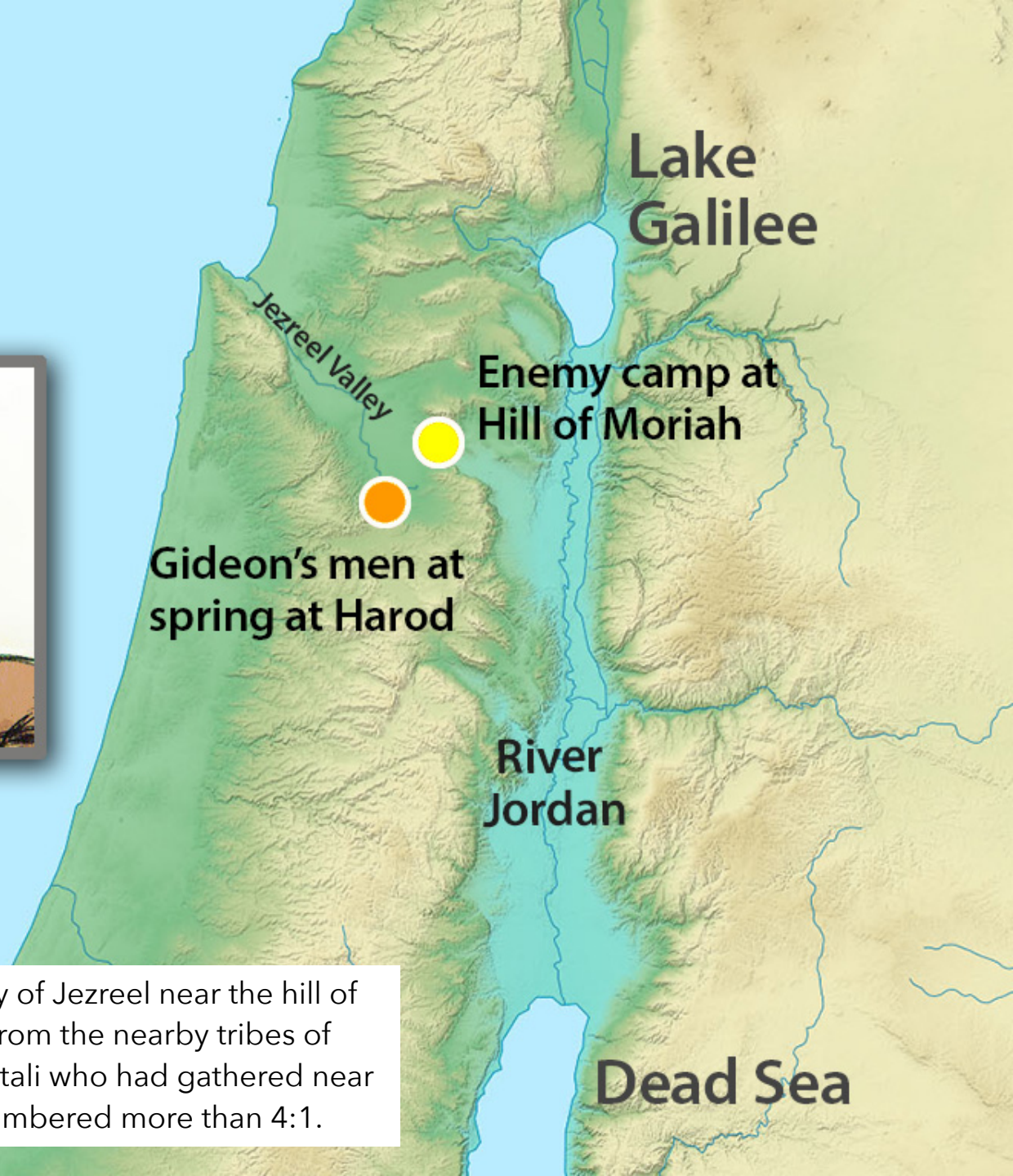
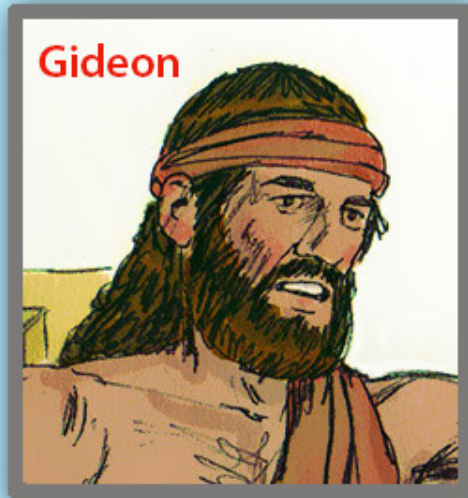
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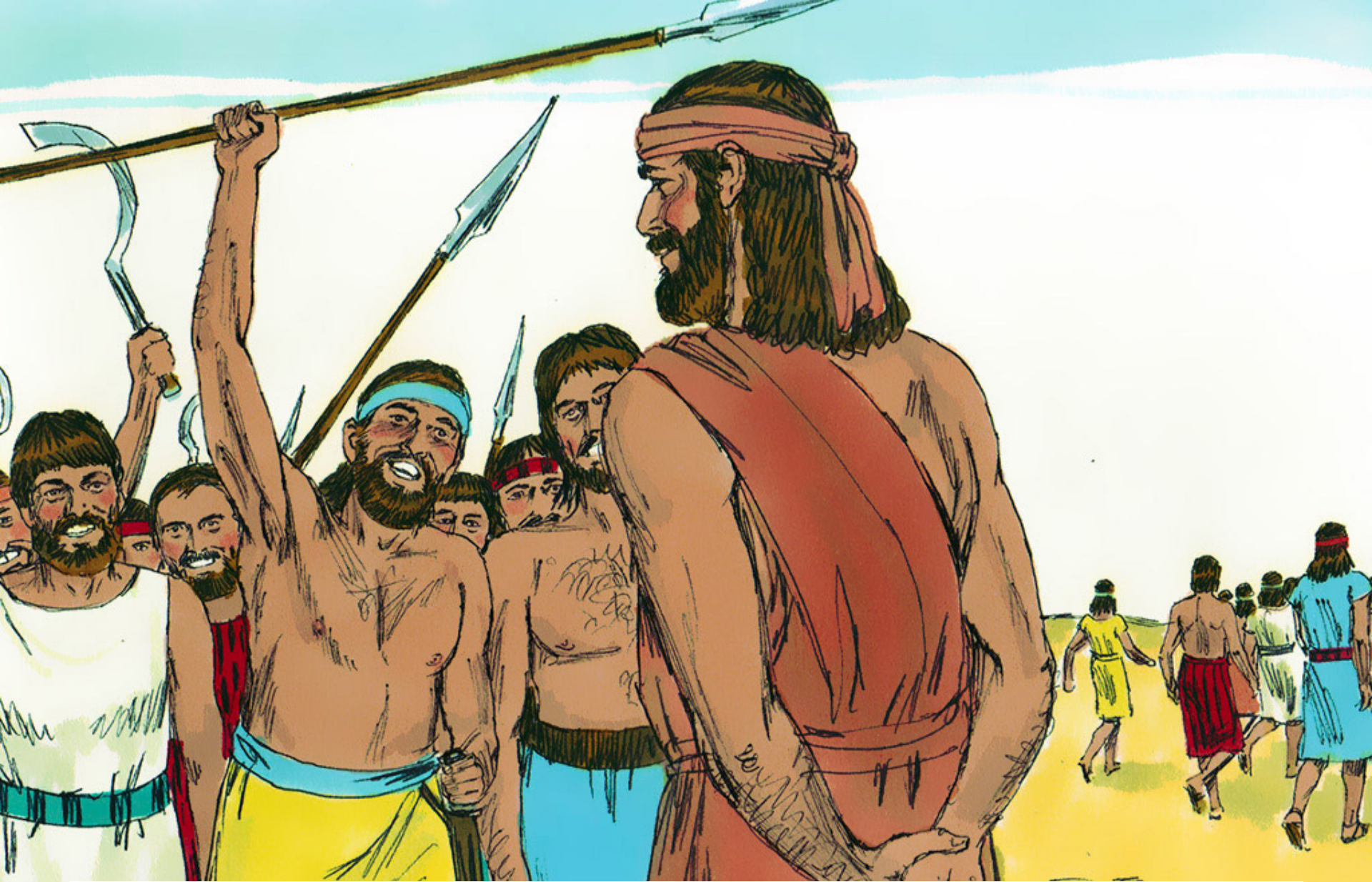
The Midianites and their allies had gathered an army of 135,000 to rob the Israelites of their crops and food. God has promised Gideon He would give him victory over them.

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IN THE TIME OF THE JUDGES



The enemy were camped in the valley of Jezreel near the hill of Moreh. Gideon had 32,000 warriors from the nearby tribes of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali who had gathered near the spring of Harod. They were outnumbered more than 4:1.



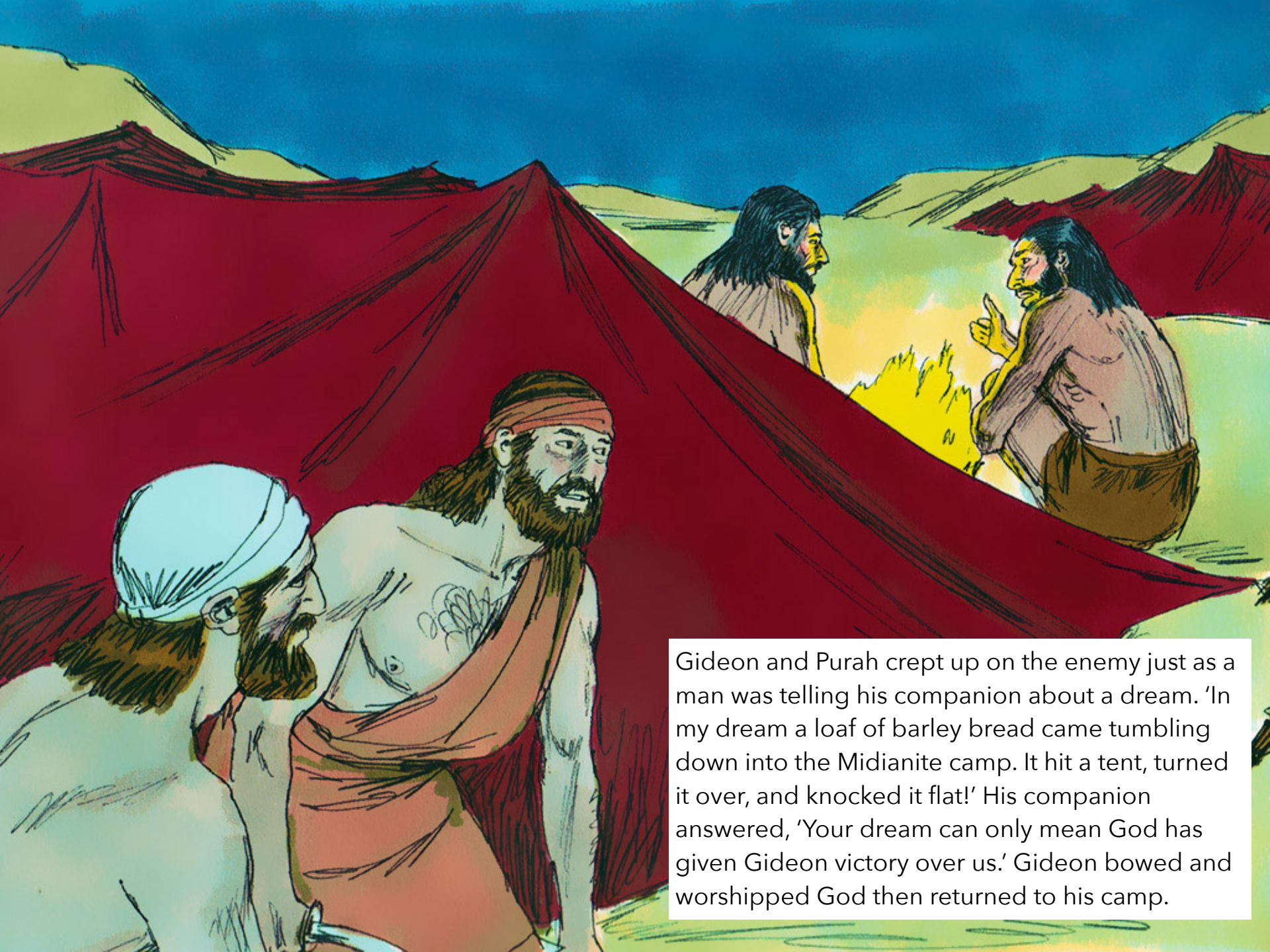
The Lord told Gideon, 'You have too many warriors. If I let you defeat the Midianites the Israelites will boast they did it themselves. Send home all those who are timid or afraid.' So 22,000 of them went home, leaving only 10,000 who were willing to fight. They were now outnumbered by over 13:1.



Then the Lord told Gideon, 'There are still too many! Bring them down to the spring.' At the spring, the Lord said, 'Divide the men into two groups. In one put all those who cup water in their hands and lap it up with their tongues like dogs. In the other group put all those who kneel down and drink with their mouths in the stream.' Only 300 of the men drank from their hands. God told Gideon to these 300 men would bring victory and the others should be sent home. They were now outnumbered 450:1.

That night the Lord told Gideon, 'If you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp with your servant Purah. Listen to what the Midianites are saying, and you will be greatly encouraged'

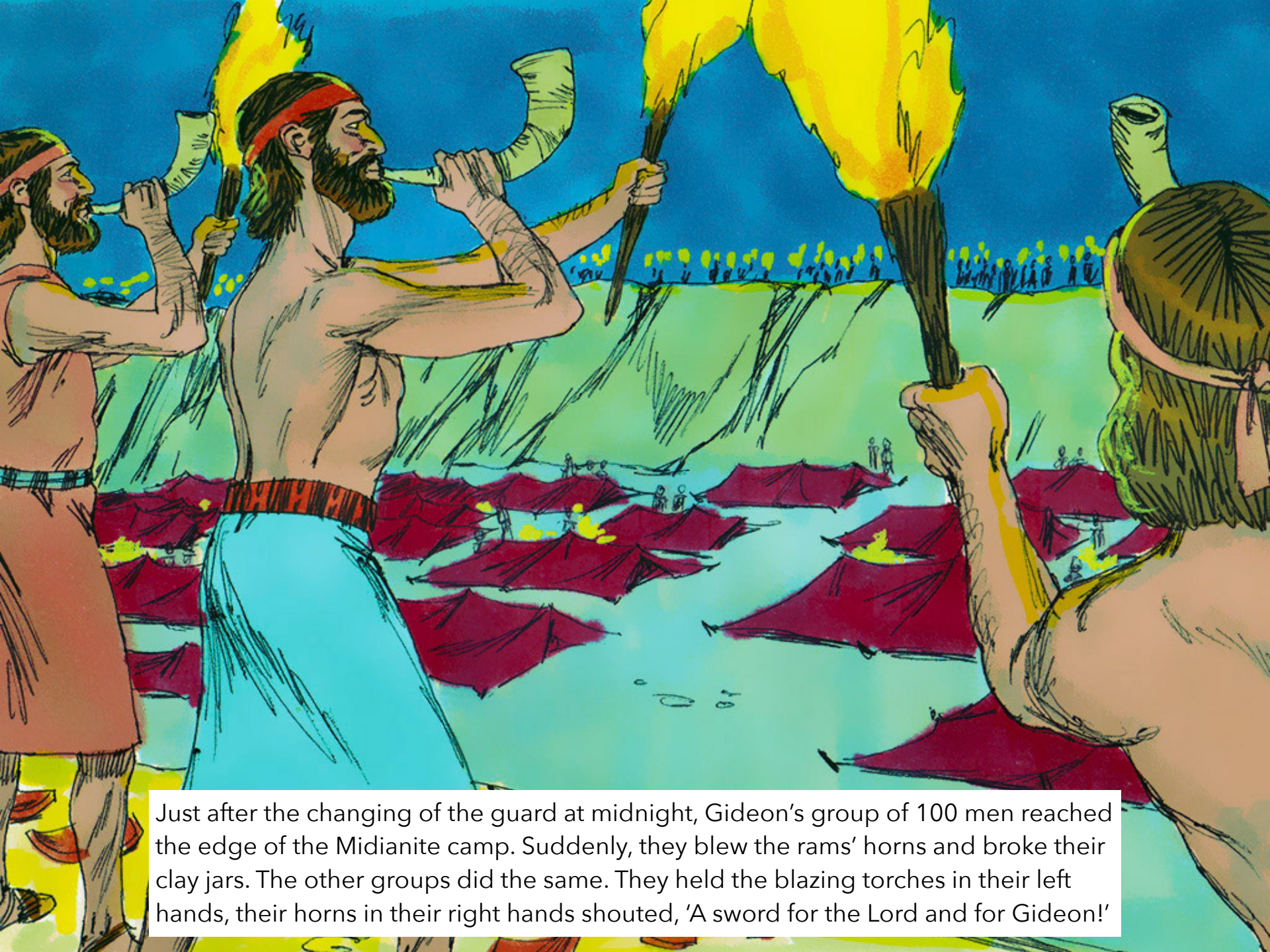




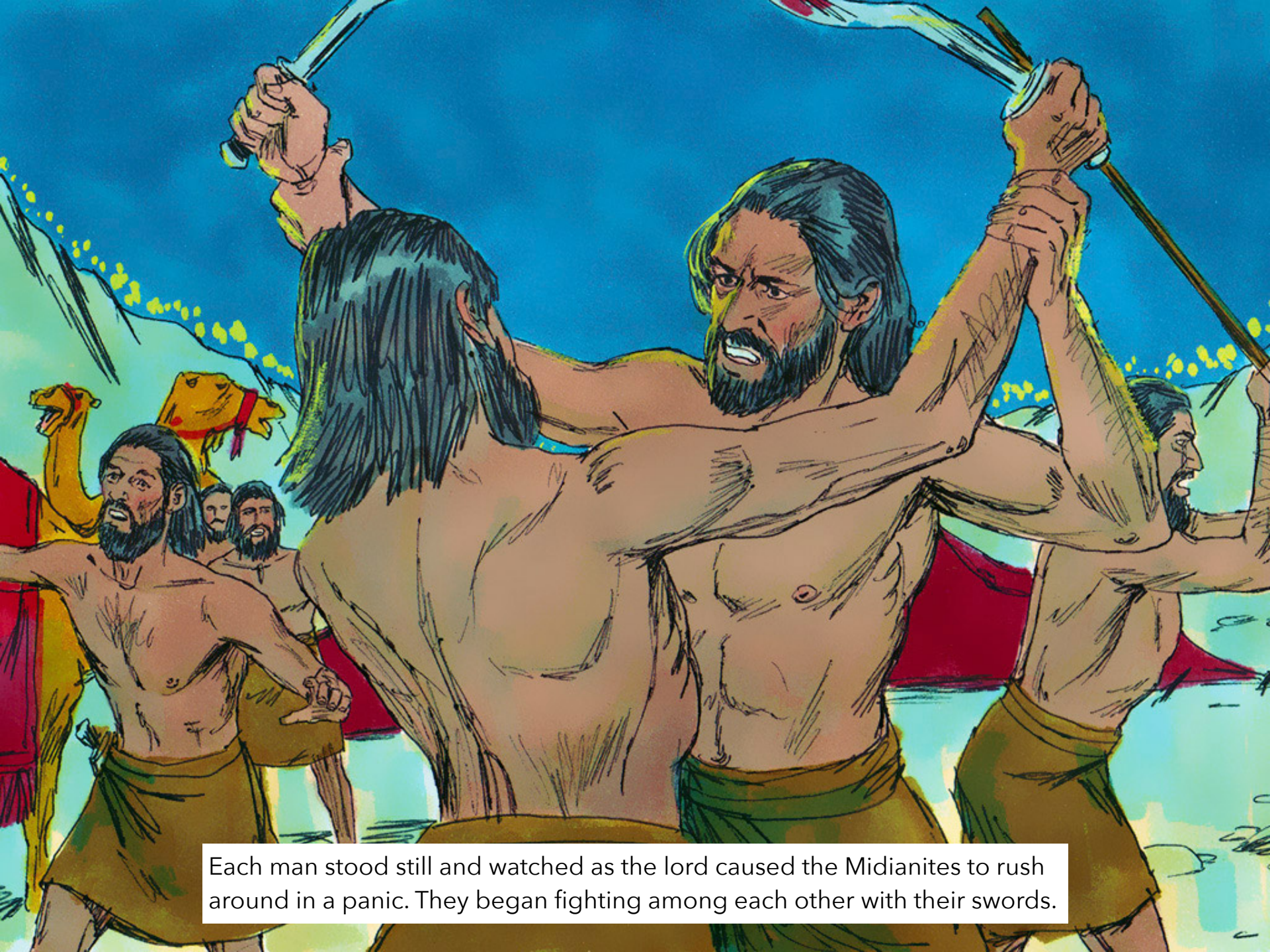
Gideon and Purah crept up on the enemy just as a man was telling his companion about a dream. 'In my dream a loaf of barley bread came tumbling down into the Midianite camp. It hit a tent, turned it over, and knocked it flat!' His companion answered, 'Your dream can only mean God has given Gideon victory over us.' Gideon bowed and worshipped God then returned to his camp.

'Get up! For the Lord has given you victory over the Midianite hordes!' Gideon shouted. He divided the 300 men into three groups and gave each man a ram's horn and a clay jar with a torch in it. He instructed them that as soon they heard him blow his horn they should do the same and shout, 'For the Lord and for Gideon!'





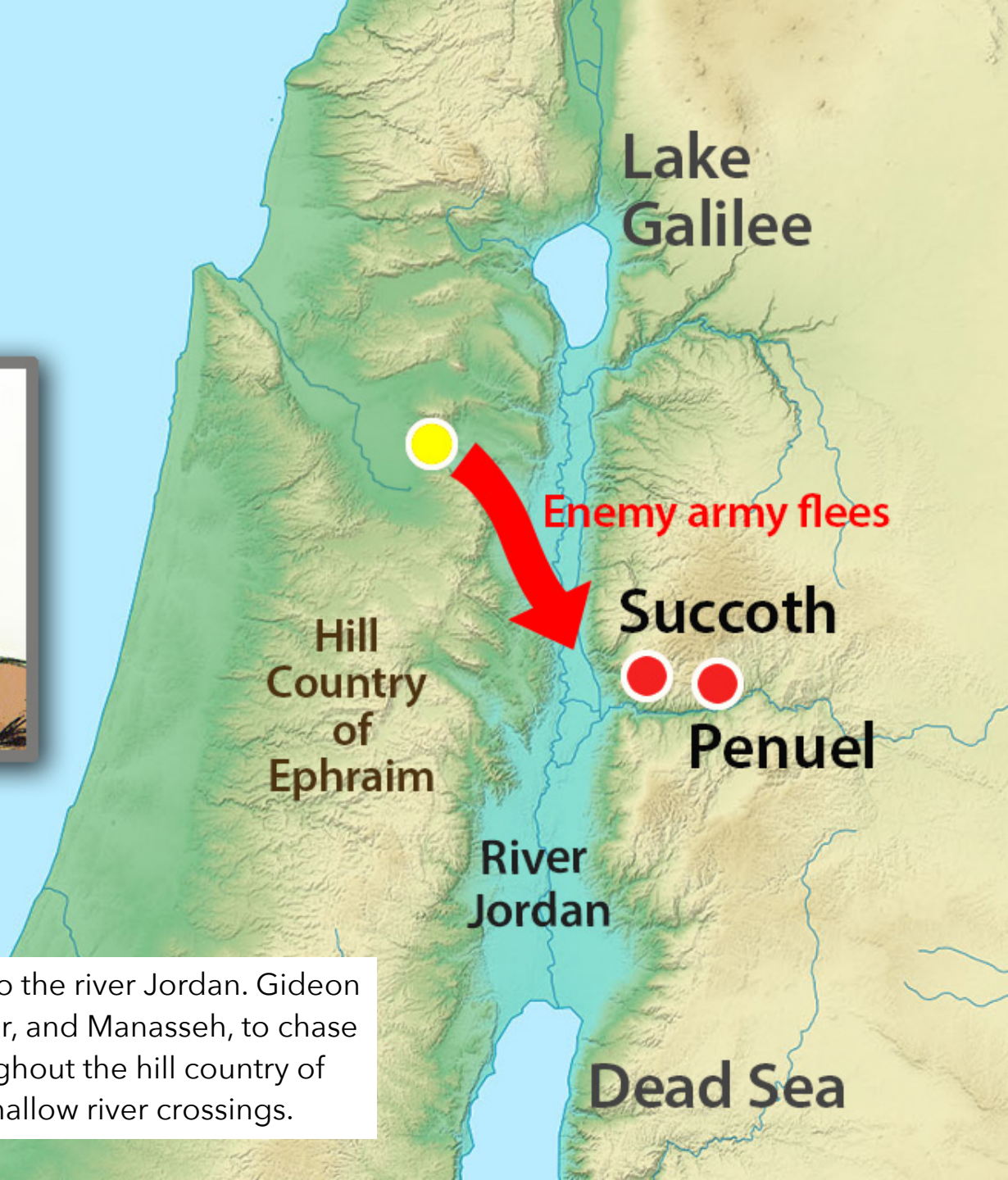
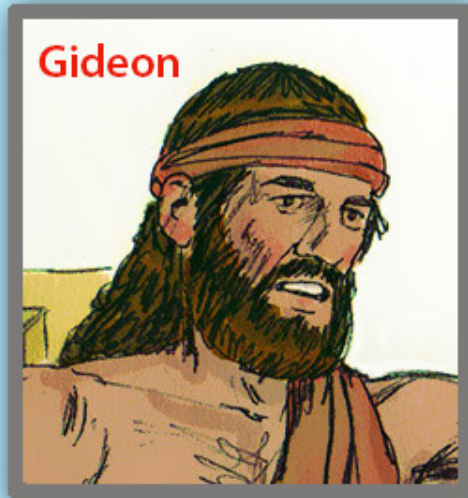
Just after the changing of the guard at midnight, Gideon's group of 100 men reached the edge of the Midianite camp. Suddenly, they blew the rams' horns and broke their clay jars. The other groups did the same. They held the blazing torches in their left hands, their horns in their right hands shouted, 'A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!'



Each man stood still and watched as the lord caused the Midianites to rush around in a panic. They began fighting among each other with their swords.

ISRAEL

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Those who were not killed fled back to the river Jordan. Gideon sent for the warriors of Naphtali, Asher, and Manasseh, to chase them. He also sent messengers throughout the hill country of Ephraim to cut the enemy off at the shallow river crossings.



They captured Oreb and Zeeb, the two Midianite commanders and executed them.



GIDEON PURSUES THE MIDIANITES

Judges 8:1-35

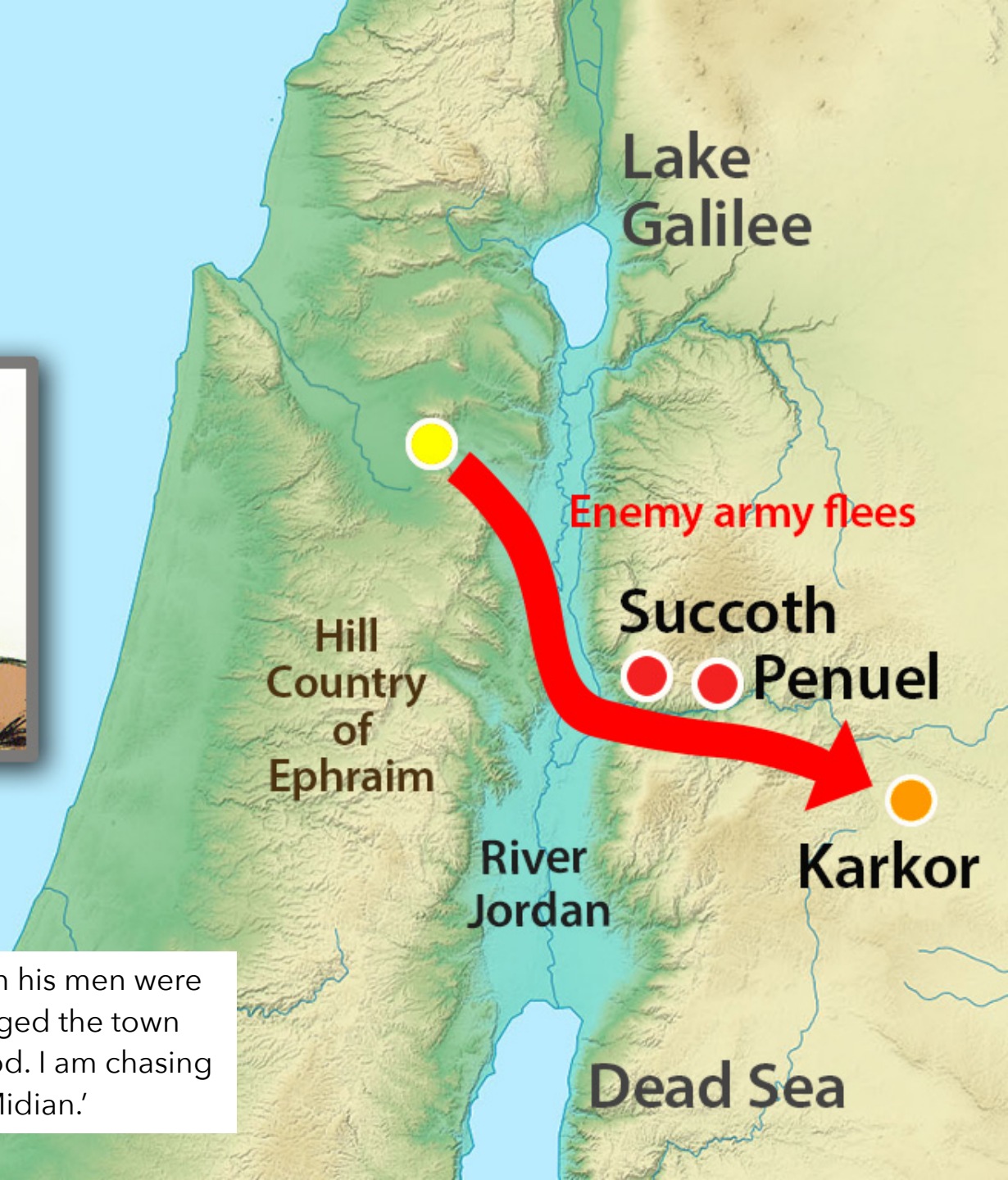
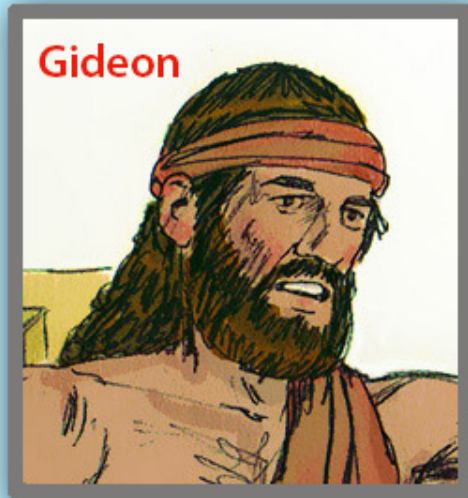
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When the Midianites fled for their lives, Gideon and his 300 men gave chase. The men of Ephraim captured and executed the Midianite commanders Oreb and Zeeb but Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian, crossed the River Jordan with 15,000 warriors and camped at Karko.

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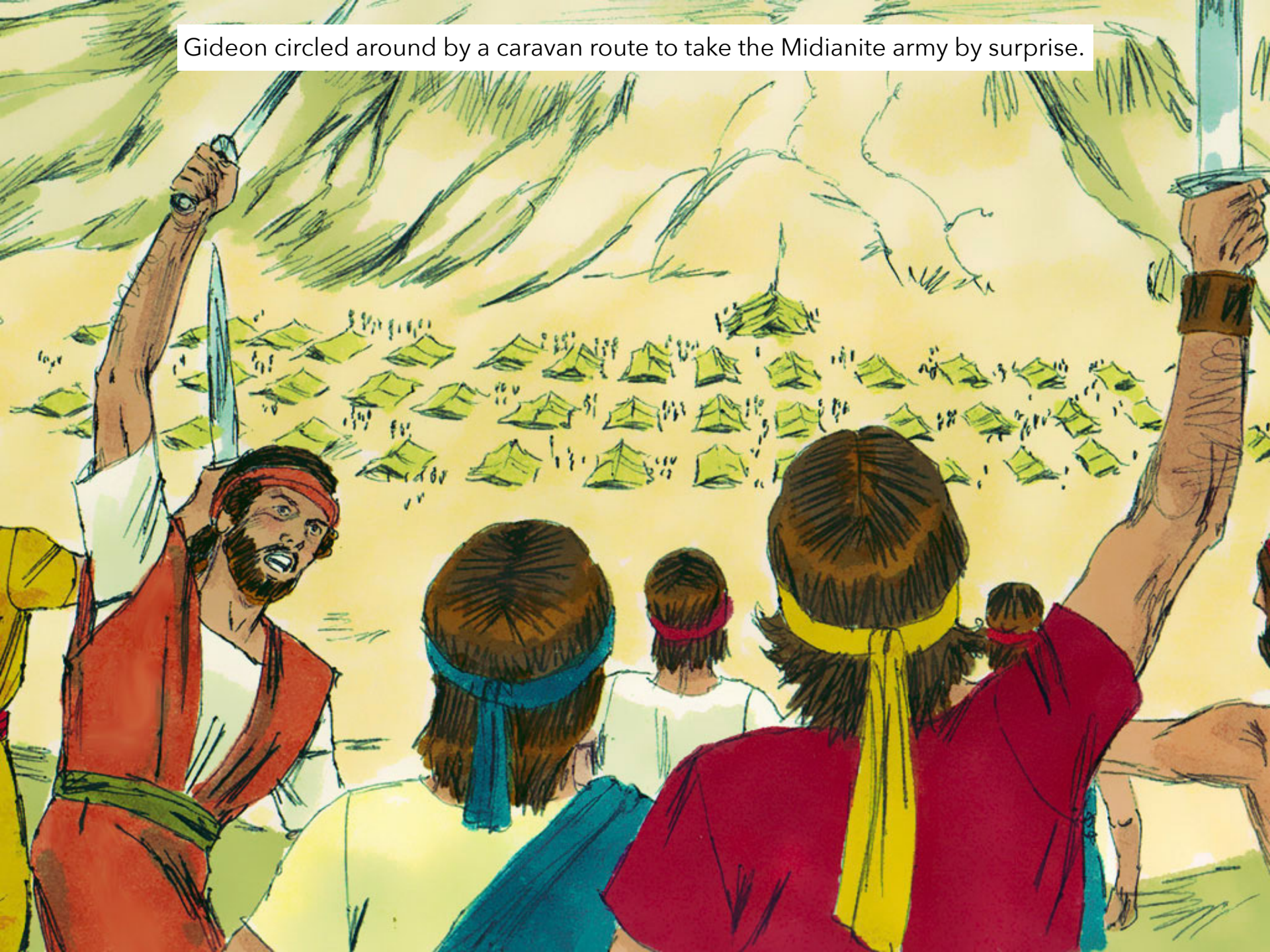


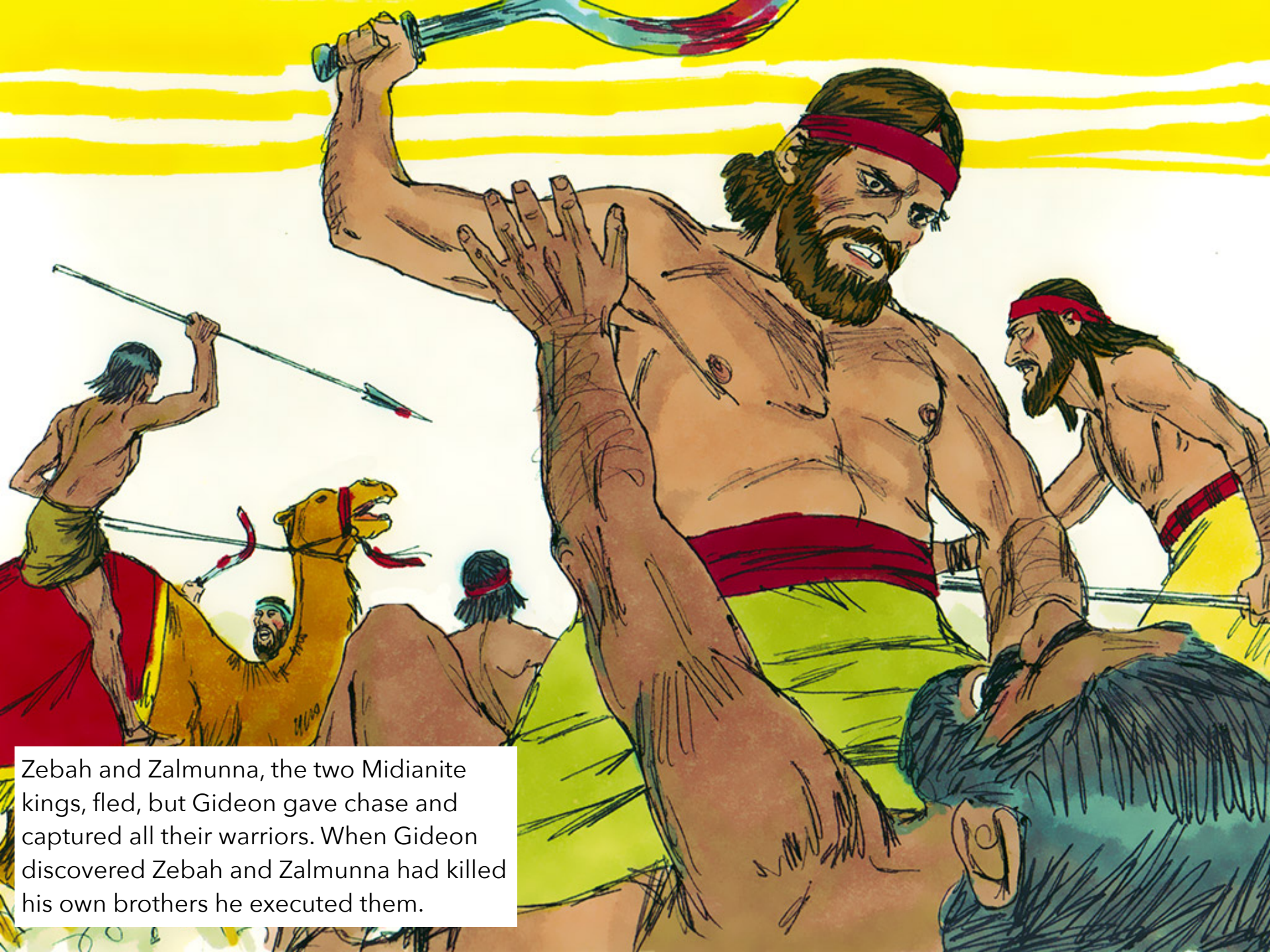
By the time Gideon reached Succoth his men were hungry and exhausted. Gideon begged the town leaders, 'Please give my warriors food. I am chasing Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian.'



The officials of Succoth replied, 'Catch Zebah and Zalmunna first, and then we will feed your army.' Gideon replied, 'When the Lord gives me victory I will return to punish you with thorns and briars.' When he arrived in Peniel he again asked for food, but he got the same answer. Gideon retorted, 'After I return in victory, I will tear down this tower.'

Gideon circled around by a caravan route to take the Midianite army by surprise.





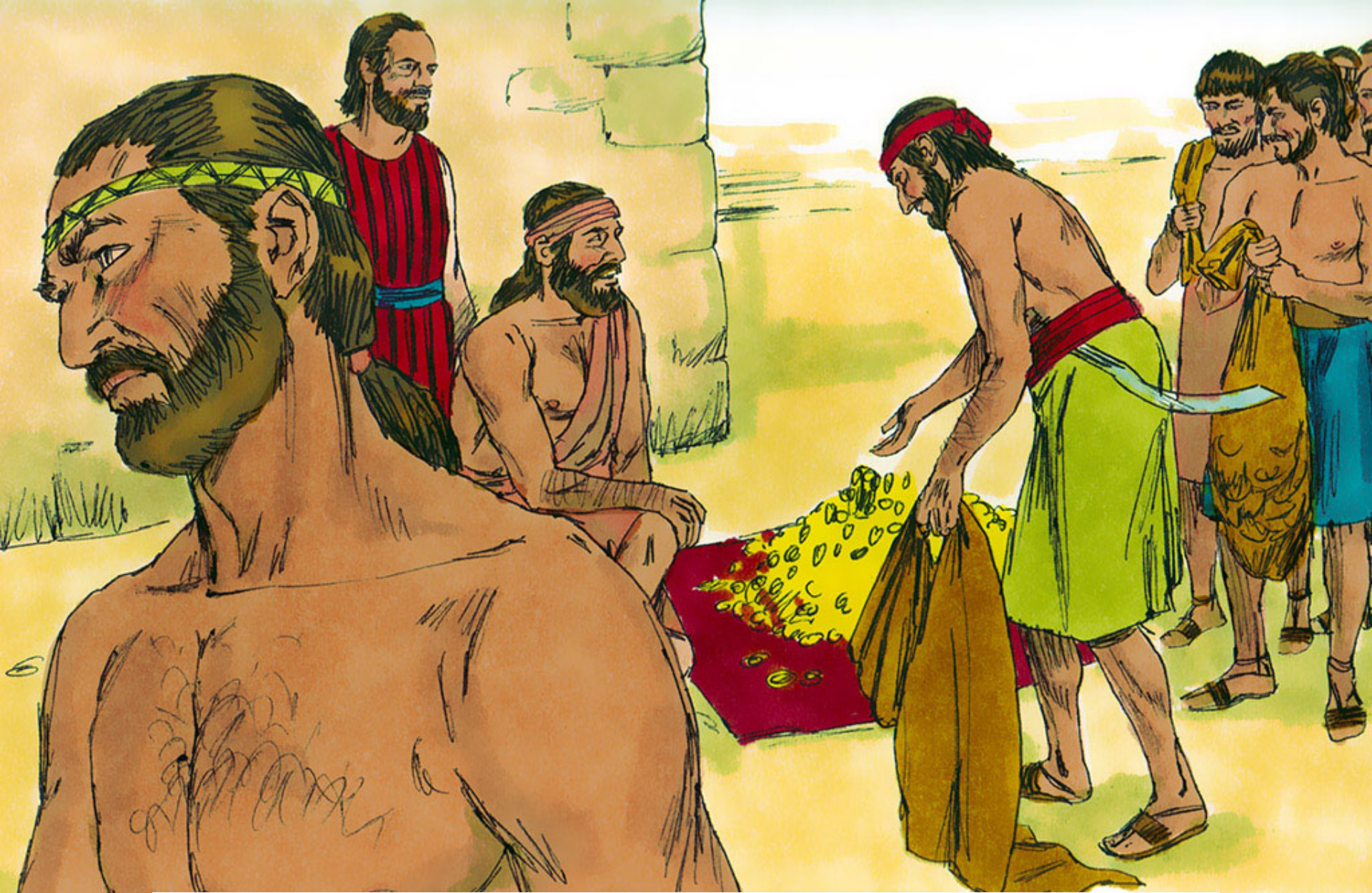
Zebah and Zalmunna, the two Midianite kings, fled, but Gideon gave chase and captured all their warriors. When Gideon discovered Zebah and Zalmunna had killed his own brothers he executed them.



Then, Gideon returned to Succoth and taught the 77 town leaders a lesson, punishing them with thorns and briars from the wilderness. He also tore down the tower of Peniel.



The Israelites said to Gideon, 'Be our ruler! You have rescued us from Midian.' 'I will not rule over you, nor will my son,' Gideon replied, 'The Lord will rule over you!'



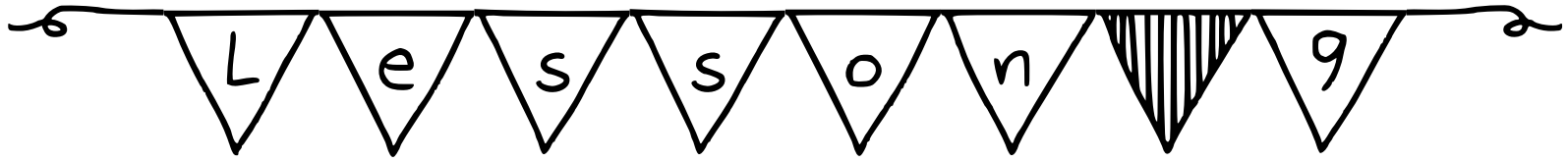
Gideon then asked that each of them give him a golden earring plundered from the enemy troops. The weight of the gold earrings was 43lbs (20kg). Gideon also received golden chains and purple robes taken from the enemy.



Gideon made the gold into an ephod, which he placed in his home town of Ophrah. However the Israelites started worshipping the ephod and it became a snare to Gideon and his

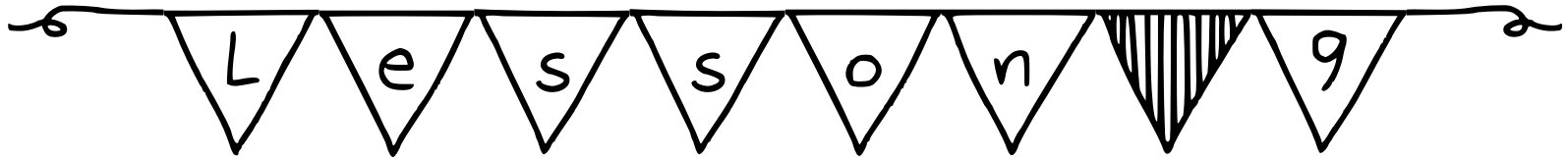


During Gideon's lifetime, the land had peace for forty years. No sooner had Gideon died, however, than the Israelites started worshipping the idol Baal once more.

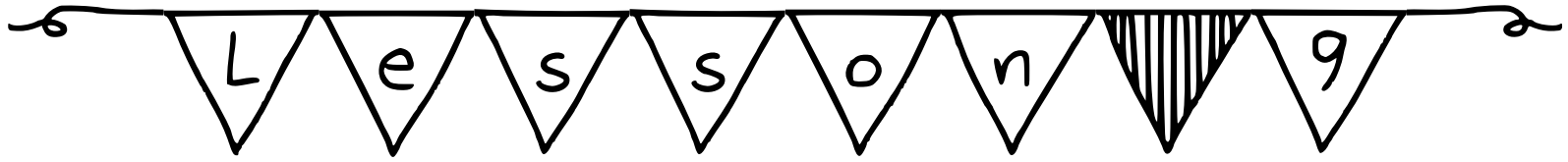


God strengthened even the humblest of people. Through Him we can accomplish great things. We have God's reassurance that He will be with us. Can you think of other people that weren't the easy choice but were used by God?

Rahab. Moses. Paul. Zaccheaus.



God has so much patience with the children of Israel. Who is someone in your life that you could show extra patience?



Israelites had no real weapons. Even after he cut down the army from 32,000 to 300, they still won. Can there be any doubt who was fighting for Israel that night? Give God the glory.