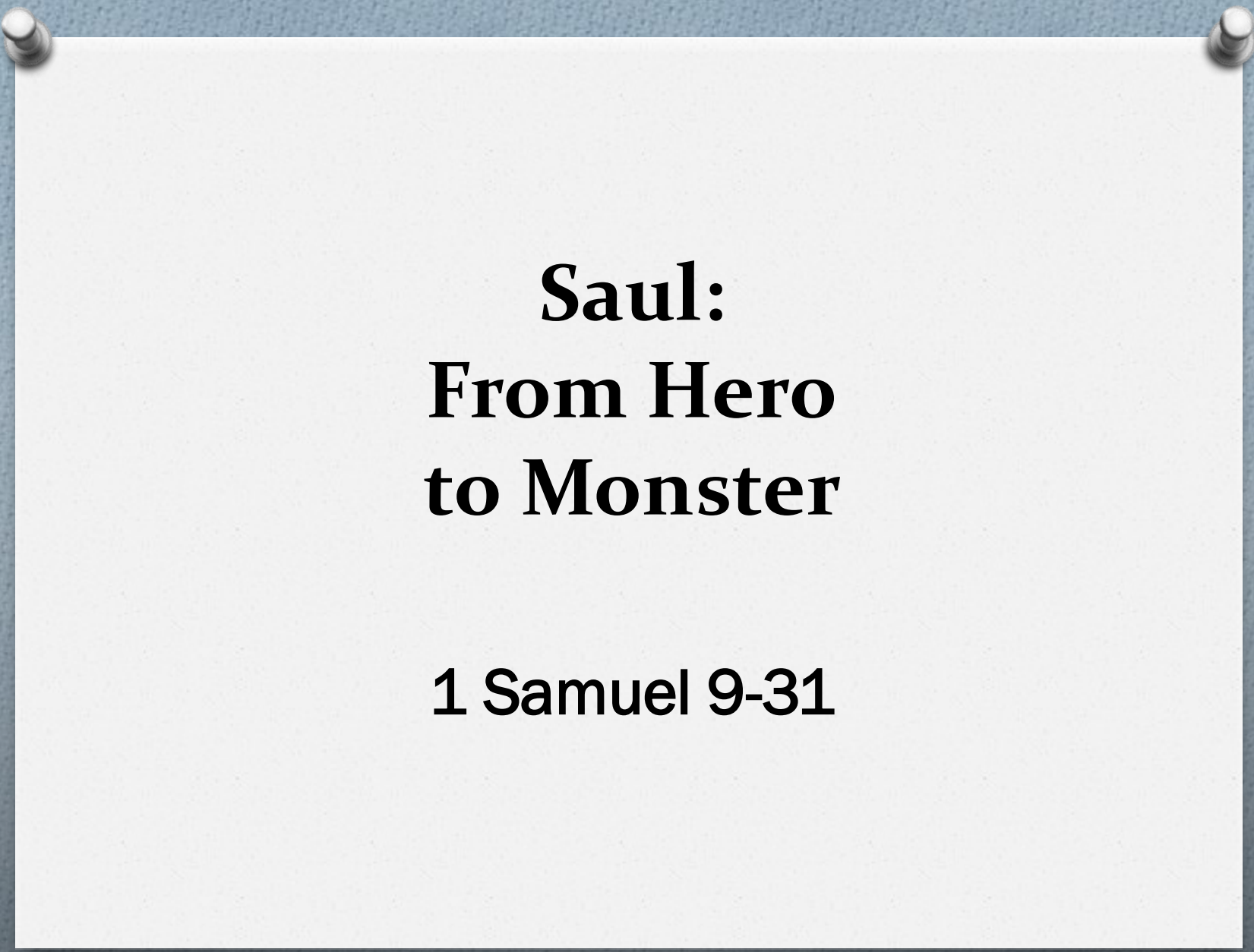


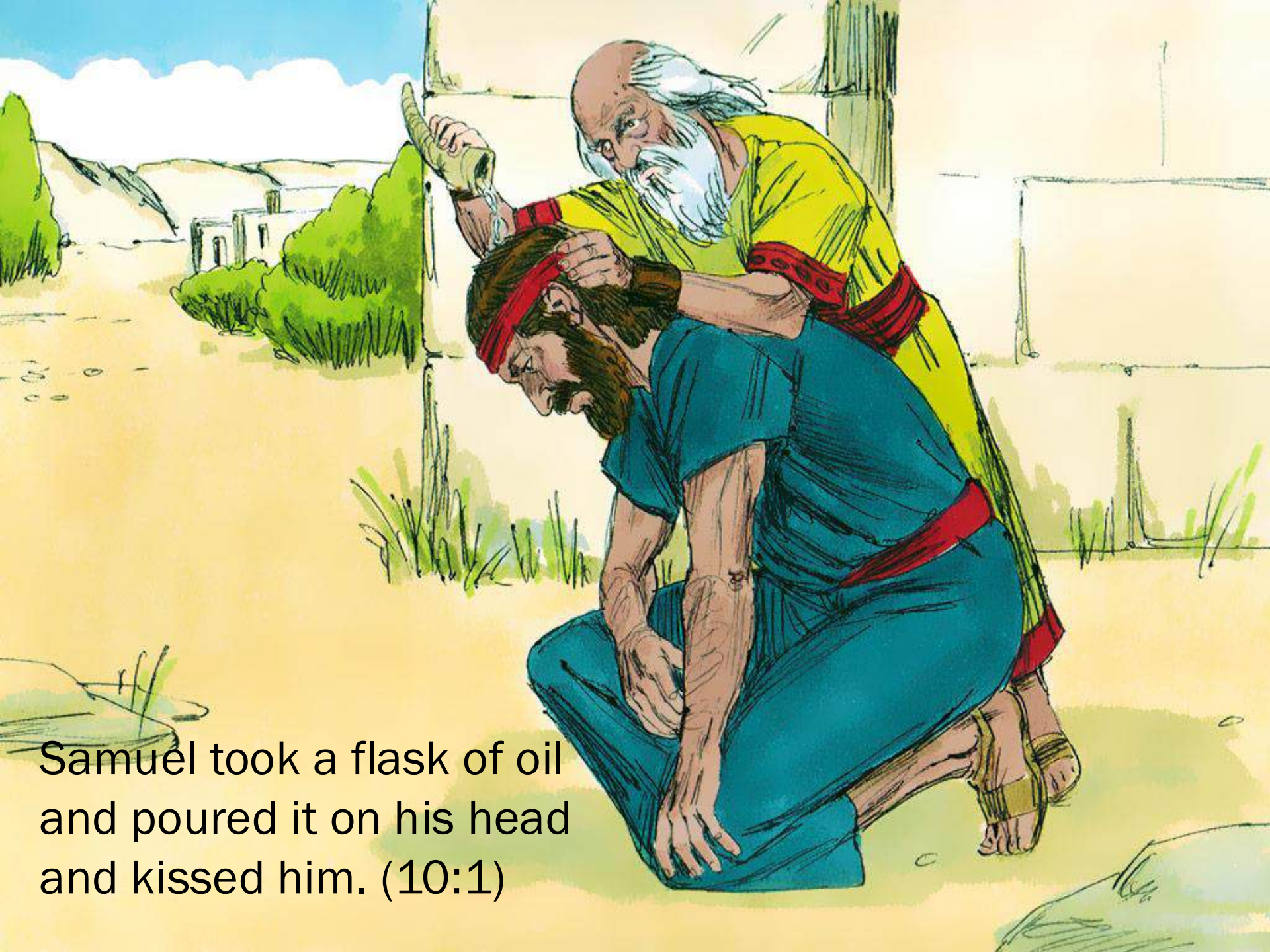


Saul: From Hero to Monster

1 Samuel 9-31

Rich, tall, handsome

There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish ... a man of wealth. And he had a son whose name was Saul, a handsome young man. There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people. (1 Samuel 9:1-2)



Samuel took a flask of oil
and poured it on his head
and kissed him. (10:1)

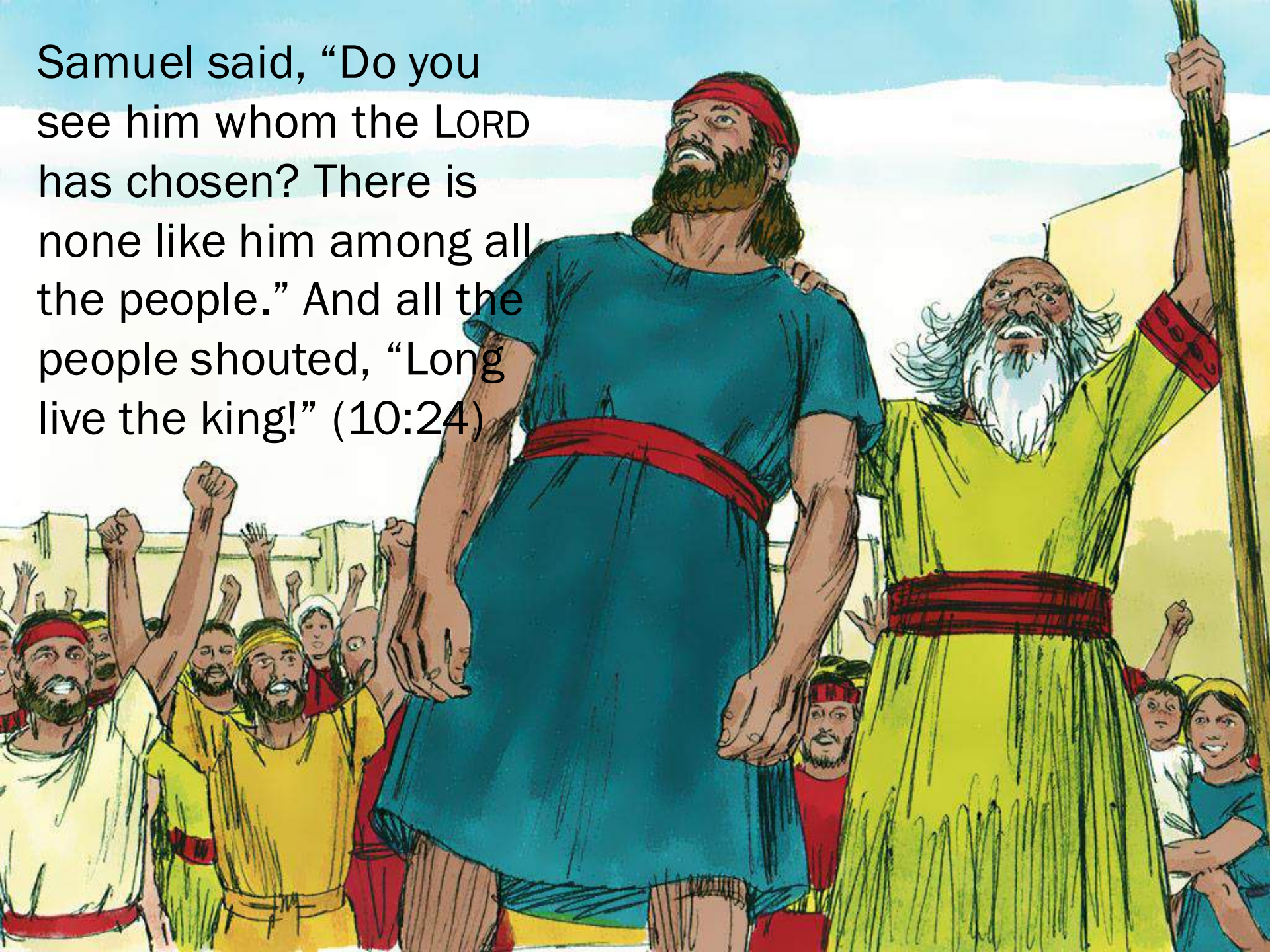
Anointed by God

Samuel said, “Has not the LORD anointed you to be prince over his people Israel? And you shall reign over the people of the LORD and you will save them from the hand of their surrounding enemies... The Spirit of the LORD will rush upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man.” ... When he turned his back to leave Samuel, God gave him another heart. (1 Samuel 10:2-6, 9)

Chosen but humble

When Samuel had all Israel come forward by tribes, the tribe of Benjamin was taken by lot... Finally Saul son of Kish was taken. But when they looked for him, he was not to be found. So they inquired further of the LORD, "Has the man come here yet?" And the LORD said, "Yes, he has hidden himself among the supplies." They ran and brought him out, and as he stood among the people he was a head taller than any of the others. (10:20-23)

Samuel said, “Do you see him whom the LORD has chosen? There is none like him among all the people.” And all the people shouted, “Long live the king!” (10:24)



Listening to God, ignoring naysayers

Then Samuel told the people the rights and duties of the kingship, and he wrote them in a book and laid it up before the LORD. Then Samuel sent all the people away, each one to his home. Saul also went to his home at Gibeah, and with him went men of valor whose hearts God had touched. But some worthless fellows said, "How can this man save us?" And they despised him and brought him no present. But he held his peace. (10:25-27)

Bold leadership

Nahash the Ammonite said to Jabesh-Gilead, “On this condition I will make a treaty with you, that I gouge out all your right eyes, and thus bring disgrace on all Israel.”

...And the Spirit of God rushed upon Saul when he heard these words, and his anger was greatly kindled... Then the dread of the LORD fell upon the people, and they came out as one man... the people of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand. (11:1-8)



Victory without vengeance

Saul put the people in three companies. And they came into the midst of the camp in the morning watch and struck down the Ammonites...

Then the people said to Samuel, “Who is it that said, ‘Shall Saul reign over us?’ Bring the men, that we may put them to death.” But Saul said, “Not a man shall be put to death this day, for today the LORD has worked salvation in Israel.” (11:11-13)

Saul the rescuing hero

When Saul had taken the kingship over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side... Wherever he turned he routed them. And he did valiantly and struck the Amalekites and delivered Israel out of the hands of those who plundered them. (14:47-48)

Heroic beginning

- **Family:** wealthy and well regarded
- **Looks:** tall and handsome
- **Anointing:** empowered by God's Spirit
- **Humility:** not eager to become king
- **Acclaim:** chosen by God and the people
- **Wisdom:** doesn't react to naysayers
- **Bravery:** dares to take on brutal invaders
- **Mercy:** forgives those who rejected him
- **Victory:** unites Israel and defeats enemies

Foolish curse

Saul had laid an oath on the people, saying, “Cursed be the man who eats food until it is evening and I am avenged on my enemies.” So none of the people had tasted food... But Jonathan had not heard his father charge the people with the oath, so he put out the tip of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it in the honeycomb and put his hand to his mouth, and his eyes became bright. (14:24,27)

Ready to kill his son

Saul said, “God do so to me and more also; you shall surely die, Jonathan.” Then the people said to Saul, “Shall Jonathan die, who has worked this great salvation in Israel? Far from it! As the LORD lives, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day.” So the people ransomed Jonathan, so that he did not die. (14:44-45)



Tried to use daughter Merab to destroy David

Saul said to David, “Here is my elder daughter Merab. I will give her to you for a wife. Only be valiant for me and fight the LORD's battles.” For Saul thought, “Let not my hand be against him, but let the hand of the Philistines be against him.” (18:17)

- Saul then gave Merab to another man, despite promising his daughter to anyone who could defeat Goliath.

Tried to use daughter Michal to destroy husband David

Now Saul's daughter Michal loved David. And they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. Saul thought, "Let me give her to him, that she may be a snare for him and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." (18:20-21)

- David won the battles and married Michal. But later Saul wanted for her, even as David's wife, to help kill David.

Tried to use son Jonathan to destroy best friend David

The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. (18:1)

Saul spoke to Jonathan his son and to all his servants, that they should kill David. But Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David. (19:1)







Threatened Michal for rescuing her husband

Saul said to Michal, “Why have you deceived me thus and let my enemy go, so that he has escaped?” And Michal answered Saul, “He said to me, ‘Let me go. Why should I kill you?’” (19:17)



Saul exploded in anger at Jonathan: “You son of a slut! Shame on you and on the mother who birthed you! (20:30)



Saul hurled his spear at Jonathan. (20:33)

22:9 Doeg the Edomite, who was standing with Saul's officials, said, "I saw the son of Jesse come to Ahimelek son of Ahitub at Nob. ¹⁰ Ahimelek inquired of the LORD for him; he also gave him provisions and the sword of Goliath the Philistine."

¹¹ Then the king sent for the priest Ahimelek son of Ahitub and all the men of his family, who were the priests at Nob, and they all came to the king.

¹² Saul said, “Listen now, son of Ahitub.”

“Yes, my lord,” he answered.

¹³ Saul said to him, “Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, giving him bread and a sword and inquiring of God for him, so that he has rebelled against me and lies in wait for me, as he does today?”

¹⁴ Ahimelek answered the king, “Who of all your servants is as loyal as David, the king’s son-in-law, captain of your bodyguard and highly respected in your household? ¹⁵ Was that day the first time I inquired of God for him? Of course not! Let not the king accuse your servant or any of his father’s family, for your servant knows nothing at all about this whole affair.”

¹⁶ But the king said, “You will surely die, Ahimelek, you and your whole family.”

¹⁷ Then the king ordered the guards at his side: “Turn and kill the priests of the LORD, because they too have sided with David. They knew he was fleeing, yet they did not tell me.”

But the king’s officials were unwilling to raise a hand to strike the priests of the LORD.

¹⁸ The king then ordered Doeg, “You turn and strike down the priests.” So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck them down. That day he killed eighty-five men who wore the linen ephod. ¹⁹ He also put to the sword Nob, the town of the priests, with its men and women, its children and infants, and its cattle, donkeys and sheep. ²⁰ But one son of Ahimelek son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped and fled to join David.









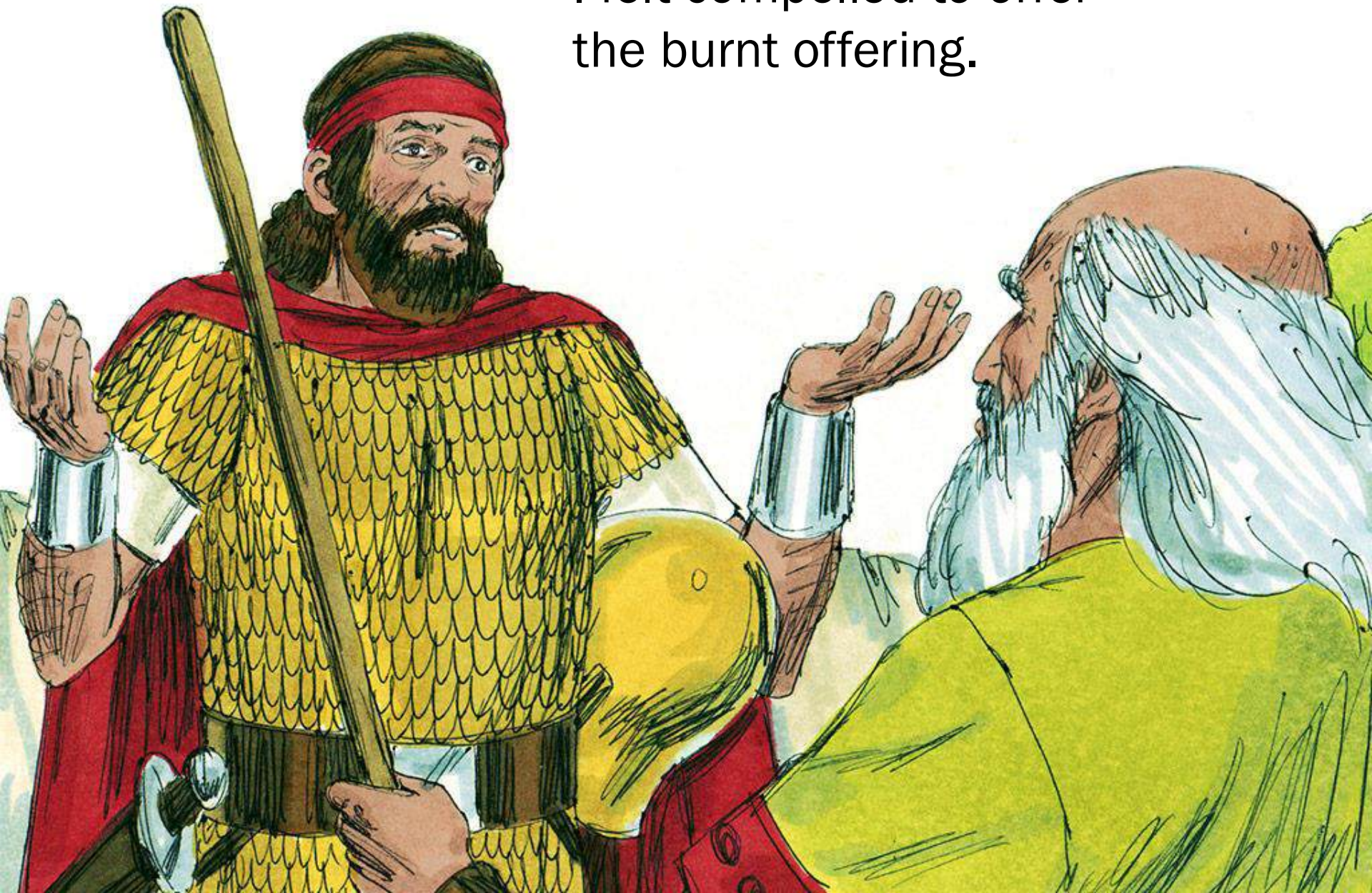
Murderous monster

- Used his daughters as bait for murder
- Tried to turn his son against best friend
- Twice wanted to kill his noble son
- Many times tried to kill heroic son-in-law
- Uttered horrid insults against his wife, the mother of his noble son
- Massacred God's priests and families
- Used witchcraft to consult the dead
- Committed suicide on his own sword

Heroic beginning

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I felt compelled to offer
the burnt offering.



Impatience and unbelief

Saul offered up the burnt offering.

(13:19)

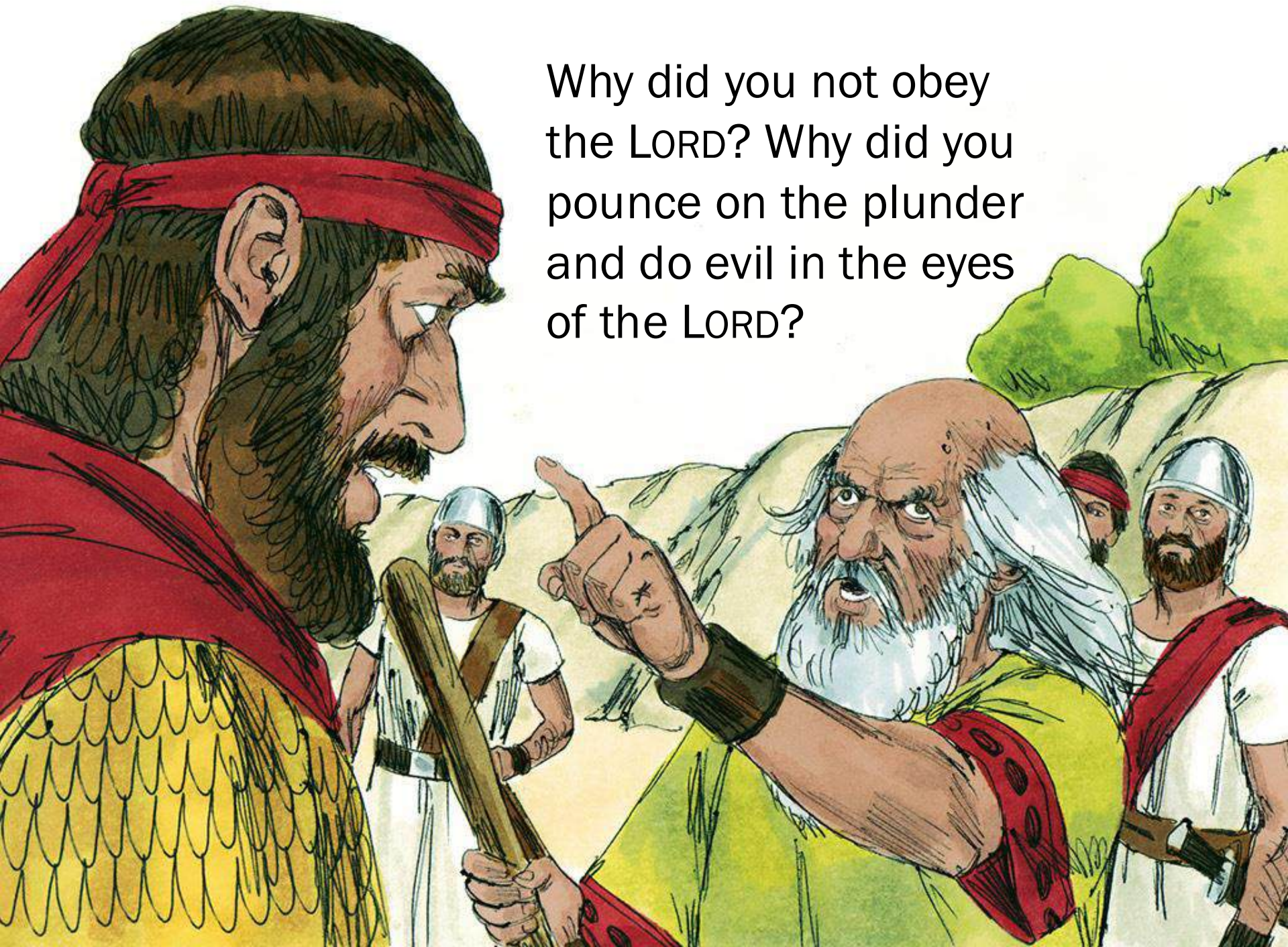
I saw that the men were scattering, and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling... I thought, ‘...I have not sought the LORD’s favor.’ So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering.” (13:11-12)

- King tries to do a priest’s job.

Not keeping God's command

Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of the LORD your God, with which he commanded you. For then the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought out a man after his own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you." (13:13-14)

Why did you not obey
the LORD? Why did you
pounce on the plunder
and do evil in the eyes
of the LORD?



Pride and reputation

“Saul has set up a monument in his own honor.” (15:12)

“I feared the people and obeyed their voice.” (15:24)

“I have sinned. But please honor me before the elders of my people and before Israel; come back with me, so that I may worship the LORD your God.” (15:30)

Rebellion and arrogance

But Samuel replied: “Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has rejected you as king.” (15:22-23)

And the LORD regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel. (15:35)

Lies, excuses, blame

“You did not come at the set time.” (13:12)

“I have performed the commandment of the LORD.” (15:13)

“They spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the LORD your God, but we totally destroyed the rest.” (15:15)

Grieving the Holy Spirit

Now the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him. (16:14)

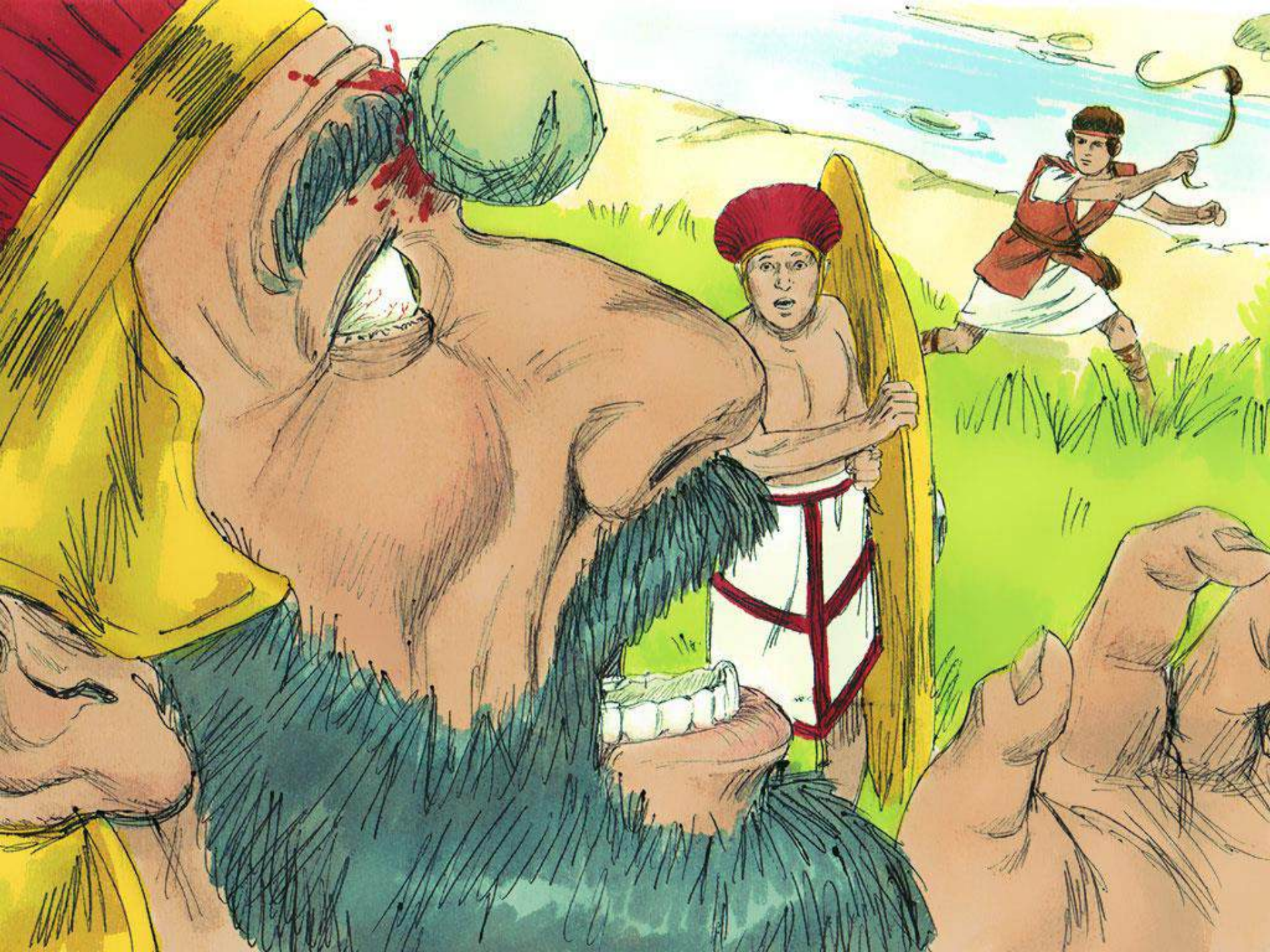
Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God... Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. (Ephesians 4:30-31)

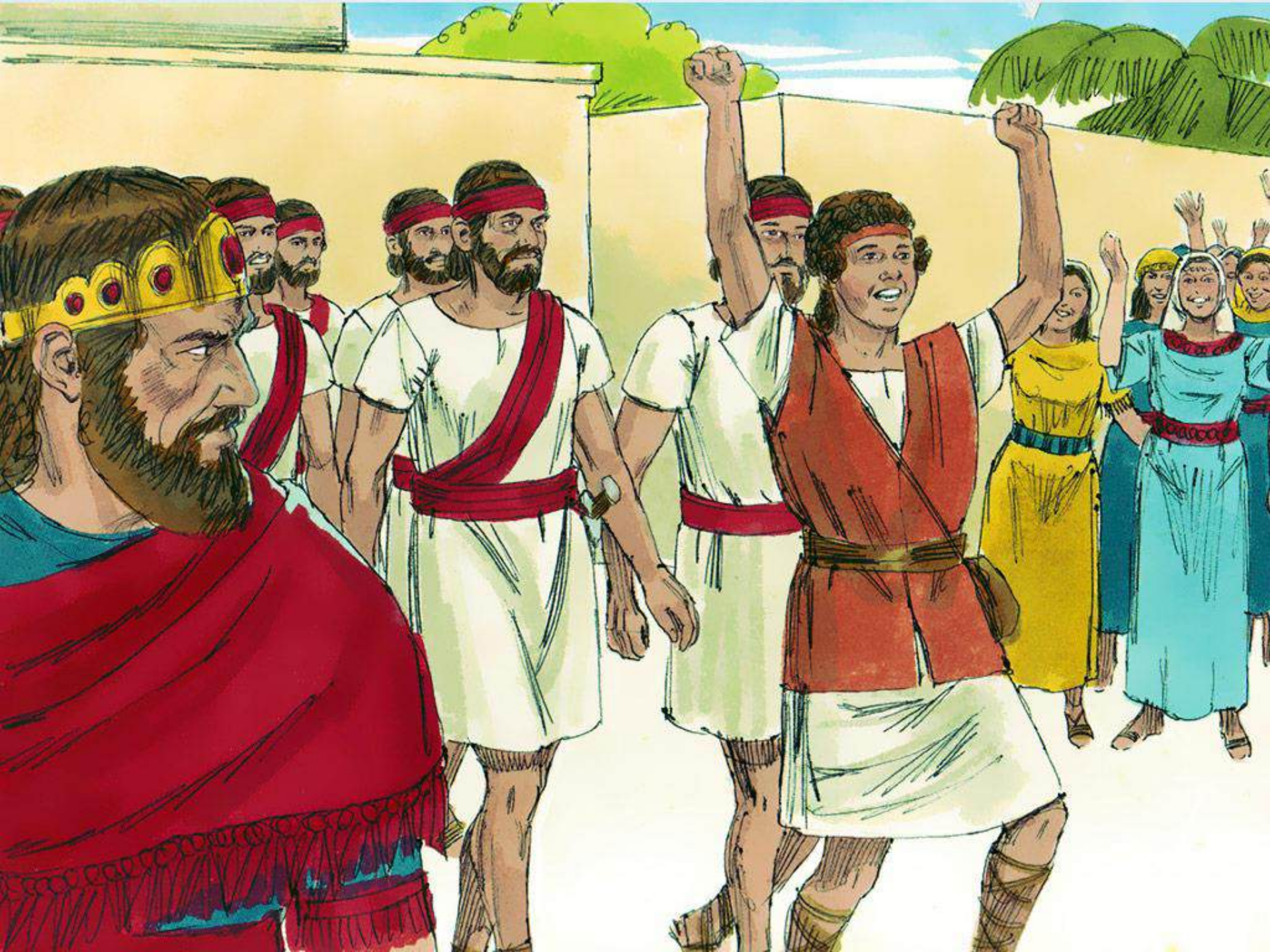
- If we won't be led by God's Spirit, he may hand us over to a different spirit.









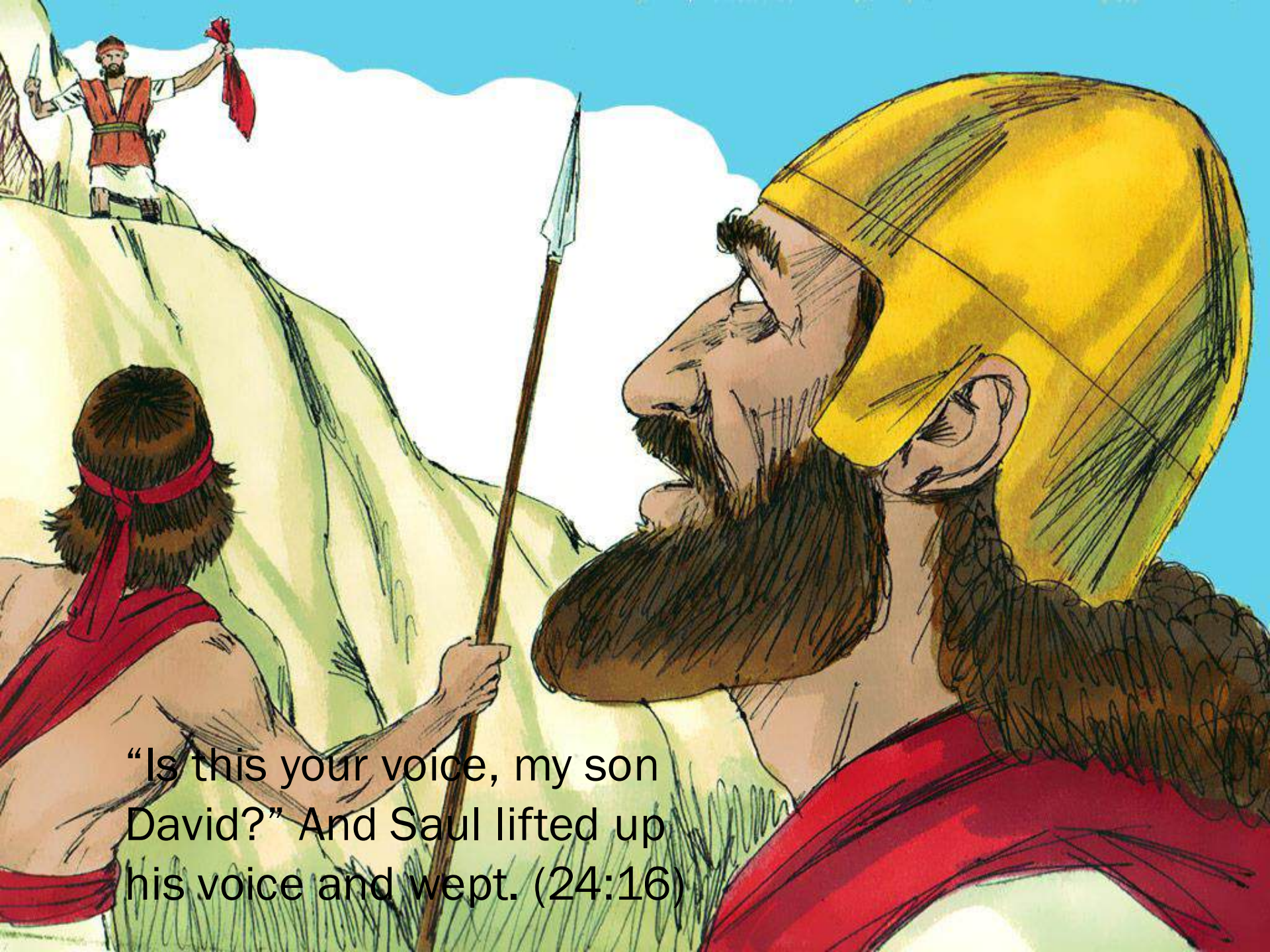


Jealousy and anger

David was so successful that Saul gave him a high rank in the army... The women sang, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands." Saul was very angry; this refrain displeased him greatly. "They have credited David with tens of thousands," he thought, "but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?" And from that time on Saul kept a close eye on David. (18:5-9)







“Is this your voice, my son David?” And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. (24:16)

Fighting God's kingship

Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed David in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward... Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a harmful spirit from the LORD tormented him. (16:13-14)

- Saul's rage against David and the priests was rage against God. Saul's pride and lust for power resisted God's reign.



Honoring the fallen hero

When the people of Jabesh Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, all their valiant men marched through the night to Beth Shan. They took down the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall of Beth Shan and went to Jabesh, where they burned them. Then they took their bones and buried them under a tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and they fasted seven days. (1 Sam 31:11-13)

How the mighty have fallen!

David took up this lament concerning Saul and his son Jonathan... “How the mighty have fallen! ... Saul and Jonathan—in life they were loved and admired, and in death they were not parted. They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions. Daughters of Israel, weep for Saul, who clothed you in scarlet and finery... How the mighty have fallen in battle!” (2 Samuel 1:19-27)