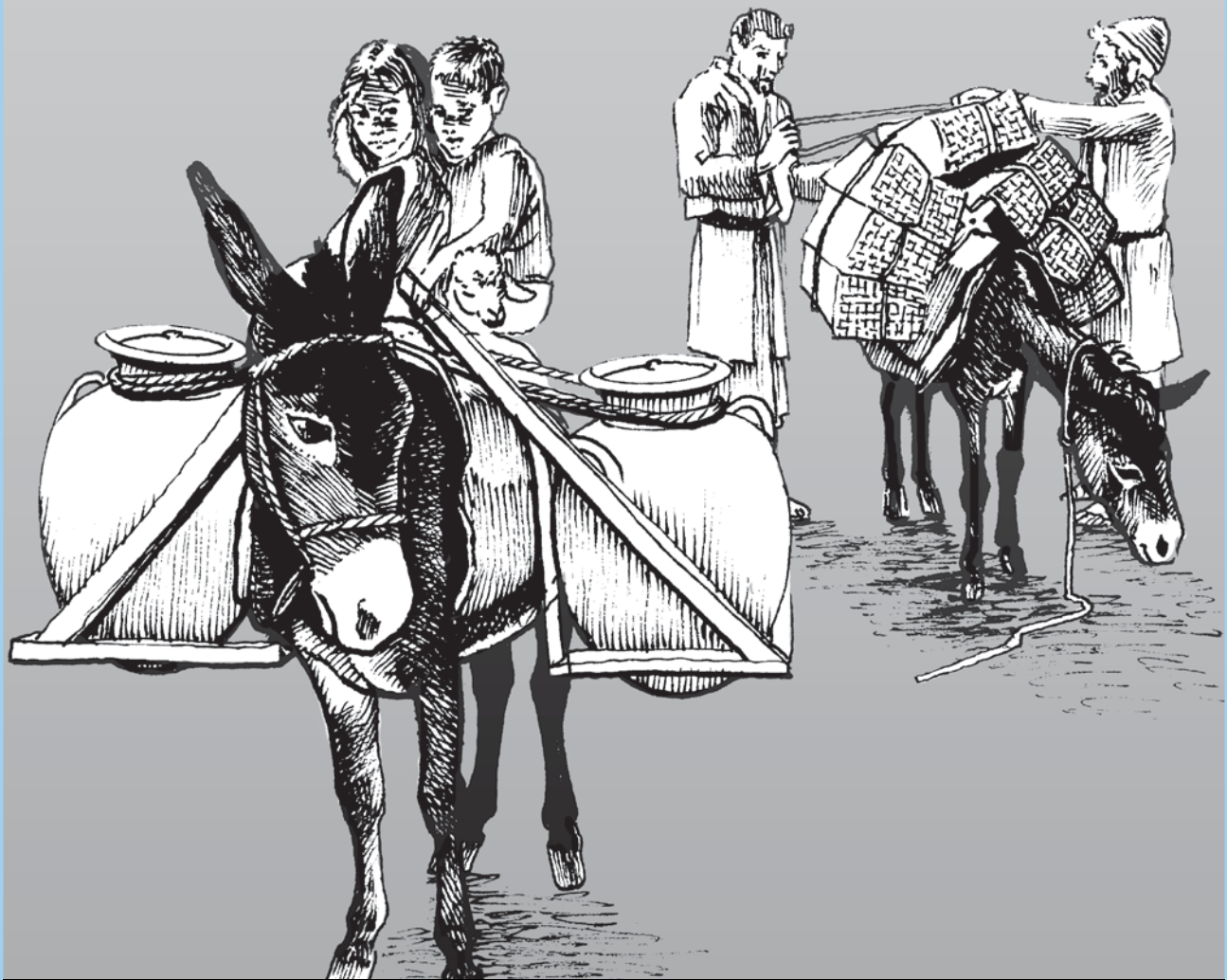


THE RESTORED CHURCH OF GOD®

# CHILDREN'S BIBLE LESSONS



Israel Wanders the Wilderness



LEVEL 4  
LESSON 6

# Israel Wanders the Wilderness

In the last lesson, we explored the fascinating life of Joseph—the hardness that he endured and the incredible blessings God gave him later in life. These blessings were all due to his obedience to God. He never failed to trust his Creator, and he always had faith that he could overcome any trial with God’s help.

You may have heard that you can learn from good examples and bad examples. In this lesson, we will look at the miraculous exodus of Joseph’s descendants from the land of Egypt, and some of the good and bad examples that they set.

If you recall, Joseph reminded his people that God would eventually bring them back to the land of Canaan, which was promised to Abraham as an inheritance. In this lesson, we will follow the Israelites in their journey to the Promised Land.

After the death of Joseph, a new Pharaoh came to power in Egypt. He did not know what Joseph had done for Egypt and became very suspicious of the Israelites. As the years passed, the new Pharaoh noticed that these people were growing very quickly and feared that they would soon be able to conquer Egypt.

To avoid this, the Pharaoh forced all the Israelites into slavery. They were made to work many hours and do much backbreaking labor. The conditions grew worse and worse for the Israelites, and they began to cry out for deliverance from their bondage.

Since Abraham’s covenant with God about 400 years earlier, the nation of Israel

had grown much larger. Yet, the suffering they experienced under the Egyptians was severe. God heard the cry of this slave nation and chose Moses to lead them to freedom. The words spoken by Joseph were starting to come to pass.

After many miracles had destroyed much of Egypt, the Pharaoh fearfully agreed to free the Israelites. Moses gathered all his people and their belongings and left Egypt. This was quite a difficult task, and the process was slow, as there were now millions of Israelites.

As they traveled across the land, Egypt was getting farther and farther away. However, the Pharaoh began to think he made a mistake in letting the Israelites escape. After all, he reasoned, Egypt had millions of slaves to do all their labor, and now they were gone.

Pharaoh became angry! He quickly gathered his army and chariots and pursued the Israelites—he wanted his slaves returned!

Meanwhile, the people of Israel did not know about the coming army until it



seemed too late. Because they camped at the banks of the Red Sea, they were trapped between the mountains and the water—with the Egyptian army quickly approaching!

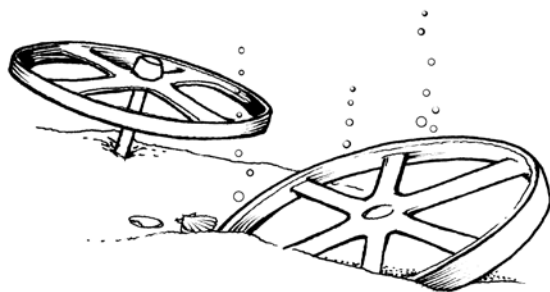
God wanted the Israelites to realize that, on their own, they had no escape. He was going to perform a mighty miracle so they would learn to trust Him.

God instructed Moses to lift his staff and stretch out his hand over the sea, and it will divide before the nation of Israel. Moses did as God commanded, and the huge body of water parted! Amazingly, the land between the walls of water was completely dry!



The Israelites hurried through the Red Sea, with the Egyptians in hot pursuit. When all had made it to the other side, God commanded Moses to raise his staff again. Suddenly, the great walls of water came crashing down—right on top of the Egyptian army!

The Israelites were finally free! The people were in awe of their Creator and sang a song of thanks to God.



## Special Food

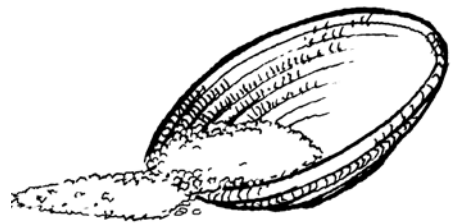
The Israelites began traveling to the land promised to Abraham—the land of Canaan. They continued for three days and could not find water. They eventually came to a river, but the water was poisoned. Upset, the people complained to Moses.

When Moses sought God, he was told to throw a certain tree into the water. He obeyed God, and the people were finally able to drink! The people rejoiced because of this miracle.

God was beginning the process of testing His nation. He wanted the people to understand that if they trusted and obeyed Him, they would never have to worry about a lack of food or water.

As they continued their journey, the people again complained and grumbled about not having enough food and water. But God was patient with His nation and told Moses that they would soon receive a very special food.

God would cause the heavens to rain down enough food for them to be filled for the day. However, this was no ordinary food.

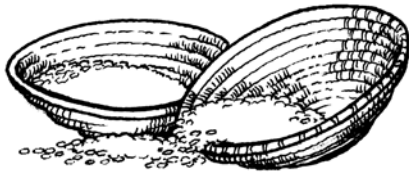


God was supplying Israel with manna. Notice what Psalm 78:24-25 says manna is. Write in the missing words to this passage: “Had rained down manna on them to eat, and given them of the \_\_\_\_\_. Men ate \_\_\_\_\_; He sent them food to the full.”

God placed special conditions on collecting this food from heaven. There were two purposes for this. First, He commanded



the people to collect enough food for every day—and not store any extra—to teach them obedience. Second, much time had passed while the Israelites were in slavery, and knowing which day the Sabbath was might not have been understood. On the sixth day, they were to gather twice the amount of manna. This is because God



wanted them to rest on the seventh-day—the Sabbath.

God was testing Israel to see if they

would obey Him. They were specifically commanded to gather only on certain days and to rest on other days. Sadly, some did not obey God. Yet, He was very patient with Israel, as He is with us today.

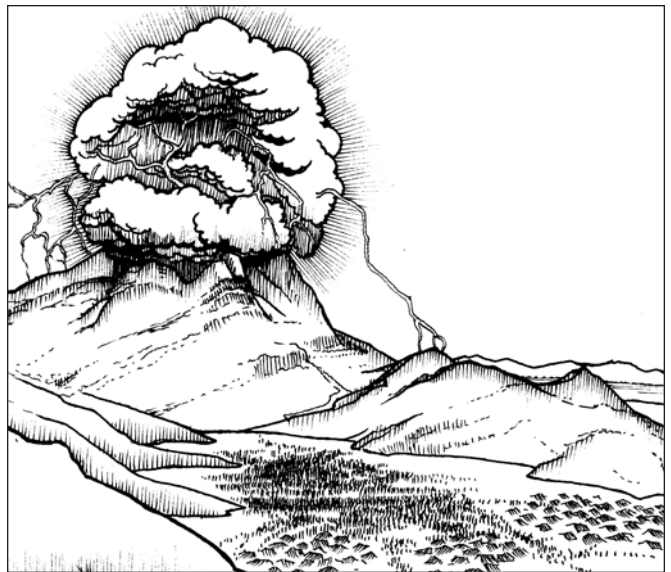
### Test Your Memory:

- 1) What did God do to the Red Sea? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) What did Moses throw into the poisoned river? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) What was the name of the food that rained from heaven? \_\_\_\_\_

### Receiving the Ten Commandments

After traveling for three months, the Israelites arrived at Mount Sinai. God brought the people here to give them His laws. The Israelites camped several days around the base of the mountain.

Then one day, God, accompanied with lightning and thunder, gave His people the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17). It was explained to them that following these commandments would cause them to be blessed. Many statutes and laws were also given to this new nation.



God's laws would make Israel unique from all other nations. God's plan was to make Israel a model nation for the ancient world. Those nations would see the blessings that spring from obedience to God and would then be inspired to follow those same laws and statutes.

### Israel Quickly Disobeys God

God commanded Moses to journey up the mountain and appear before Him. God gave him more details about how this



new nation would function. The Ten Commandments were written onto stone tablets by the finger of God and given to Moses.

Moses was on the mountain for 40 days and 40 nights (Exodus 24:18) and learned many important things from God.

Israel, on the other hand, very quickly fell back into wrong practices. Moses had been away for so long that the people began to wonder what had happened to him.

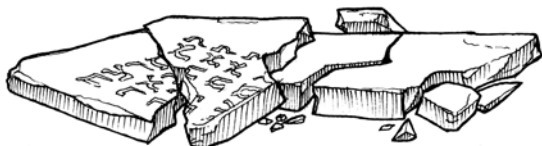
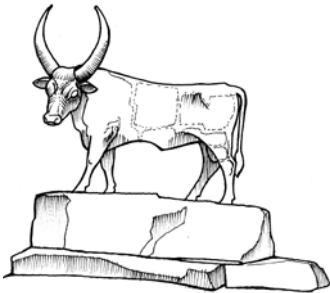
Some grouped together and began to complain that Moses was gone, and that he might have died. It took a very short time for people to lose their trust in God. The group approached Aaron and told him that Moses was gone, and that they wanted a god to worship. The size and mood of the mob scared Aaron. He did not know what to do.

In fear, Aaron told them that he would have men build a golden calf for them to worship (Exodus 32:1-5). It took several days and the gold of many people, but a golden calf was placed on an altar in the midst of the camp. The Israelites began to worship this fake god!

Aaron declared a feast day for the camp and the people feasted and partied. Quickly, the festivities became unruly, and the people lost control of themselves. Their conduct was nothing like how God wanted His people to behave. The nation was returning to the things they had learned while in Egypt. They quickly forgot the miracles that God performed and began to worship a powerless chunk of gold.

Much to the surprise of those partying wildly, someone saw Moses walking down the path leading back to the camp (vs. 18-20)—and he was VERY angry! He was so angry that he took the two stone tablets, upon which God had written the Ten Commandments, and threw them. When they landed at the base of the mountain, they smashed into pieces.

Moses commanded that an enormous bonfire be created. It burned very hot, and



the golden calf was thrown into the fire. The idol was burned until it melted into a puddle of gold. The gold was ground into a fine powder and sprinkled into the people's water. When they drank it, they were to remember what they had done and the sins they committed.

However, some suffered greatly for their rebellion. Due to disobeying God and causing the people to turn away from Him, 3,000 people died that day (vs. 27-28). Israel learned a tragic lesson: They should always obey God—and not follow men!

### Test Your Memory:

- 1) Where did God give Moses the Ten Commandments? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) What gold statue did Israel make? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) What did Moses do when he saw the golden idol and partying? \_\_\_\_\_

### Israelites Complain Again!

After some time passed, the people began to complain again. How quickly they forgot the blessings God gave them! This time, they complained that they needed more than manna to survive.

They forgot that the God who created them knew exactly what they needed to be healthy—but the people were not satisfied. Write out Numbers 11:5-6 to see what they said: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

Amazing! The Israelites thought that living under slavery was better than what God promised them. God became angry with His people and said that He would give them meat. However, He was going to give them so much meat that they would grow sick of it. They would even come to dislike the thought of eating it.

Notice God's statement to Israel: "You shall eat, not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days, but for a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you, because you have despised the LORD who is among you, and have wept before Him, saying, 'Why did we ever come up out of Egypt'" (Numbers 11:19-20)?

Suddenly, great flocks of quails (birds) appeared, flying in from over the sea. The whole camp had so much that there were more than 10 birds for every person. However, instead of waiting and cooking the birds, the people started eating them raw! In doing so, they disobeyed God again and further angered Him. For all their wrong actions, God punished His people with a great plague (Numbers 11:32-34).

God wanted Israel to listen to His commands. He knew that if they did not obey

Him, they would never be happy. But the people were stubborn.

Do you ever find yourself being stubborn with your parents? When they ask you to do something, do you refuse to obey them immediately—or even try to argue with them? Learn from the example of the Israelites and obey your parents and others above you. They are looking out for your well-being.

For instance, God knew that if the people ate the birds raw, it could make them very sick. Yet, they did it anyway. Sometimes, your parents will not want you to do things because they know what the result will be, even if you do not understand what would happen.

### **Speaking Against Moses**

One day, Aaron and his sister Miriam were talking. Their

conversation quickly turned to criticizing Moses. They said that they too have done great things for Israel, and that they should have more power among the people.

Though they were alone, their conversation did not go unheard. God listened to their complaint and took note of their bad attitude. God watches over His people.

By this time, God was becoming very angry at His new nation. Even Moses' family members were showing disrespect





to the man whom He had appointed leader. God called a meeting with Moses, Miriam and Aaron and said that He and Moses had a special relationship, and that Aaron and Miriam should not think too highly of themselves.

When God was finished speaking, Miriam's skin suddenly became white as snow. God struck her with a horrible disease — leprosy! Aaron and Miriam's sin was very serious! Moses showed pity on her and prayed for God to heal her.



After seven days, she was healed. No doubt, she and Aaron never forgot what had happened.

God considers speaking against those above you to be very serious. We must respect those in authority. Be sure to learn the lesson that Aaron and Miriam learned, and always respect and obey your parents and other adults.

### Test Your Memory:

- 1) What did Israel want instead of just manna? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) What did God give them to eat? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) What disease did Miriam experience for rebellion? \_\_\_\_\_

### Israel Does Not Trust God

Continuing in their journey, the Israelites were getting near the Promised Land. Camping in the Wilderness of Paran, Moses sent the head of each of the tribes of Israel

into Canaan to spy out the land. These twelve scouts journeyed all throughout the future home of Israel. They saw many amazing things while they were scouting the land—beautiful farmlands, orchards, lush valleys and ample supplies of water. Truly, God had reserved a special place for Israel.

The scouts even brought back some of the food they found there. The land was so rich, and the grapes grew so large, that a single cluster had to be carried by two men (Numbers 13:17-24)!

Upon their return, Joshua and Caleb reported all the amazing things they had



seen—how wonderful and plentiful the land was. Their excitement was evident, and they wanted the Israelites to take and live in the rich land with which God had blessed them.

However, the other ten scouts had a different report. They said that there were giants in the land, and that the Israelites were no match for the people who lived there.

Notice what the other scouts said of the people living in the land and fill in the blanks: "But the \_\_\_\_\_ who \_\_\_\_\_ gone \_\_\_\_\_ him said, ' \_\_\_\_\_ not \_\_\_\_\_ to go up \_\_\_\_\_ the

people, for they are  
than  
we” (Numbers 13:31).

Sadly, most of the Israelites believed the bad reports. Even though Joshua said that God was on their side and that the giants were no match, the people were afraid and hesitated to enter the land (Numbers 14:4).

God punished Israel again due to their fear and lack of trust in Him. Write out Numbers 14:34 to see what God’s punishment was: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

God was going to make the Israelites wander through the wilderness for 40 years. This would mean that most of the adults would die and not see the Promised Land. However, their children would inherit the land. The only adults who would be allowed to see the land were Joshua and Caleb, because they were unwavering in trusting in God’s protection.

### God’s Punishment

A short time later, certain Israelites rebelled against God and His chosen leader, Moses. One would think that the lesson with Miriam



and Aaron would have been enough for the people to know not to speak against God’s chosen leader.

However, Korah, Dathan and Abiram, three leaders in the camp, approached Moses’ tent with a disrespectful attitude. They claimed that Aaron and Moses were taking too much power to themselves. Like Aaron and Miriam, their disrespect would not go unpunished. A short while later, the earth opened up beneath these men and

all their belongings. After all had disappeared, the earth closed again. God did not take speaking against His servants lightly!

But the people did not learn. Some in the camp began to spread rumors that Moses caused the earth to open. Of course, this is ridiculous. True miracles come from God. Yet, the Israelites kept on speaking against Moses.

Suddenly, a plague broke out among the people. Those who were speaking against Moses began dying. Aaron quickly gave an offering to God to atone for the sins of the people and it stopped the plague. Even still, 14,700 people died that day, because they failed to learn that one should not speak against those in authority over them.

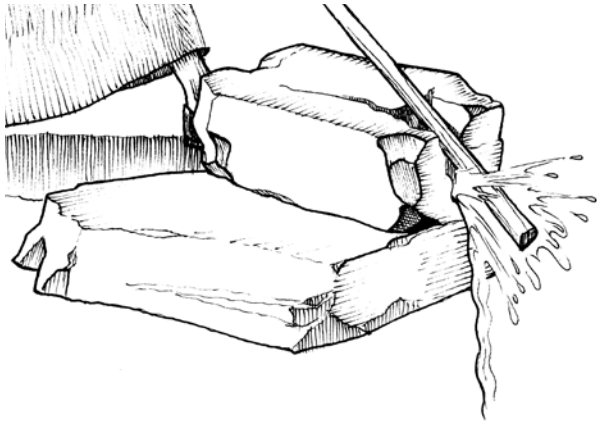
### Promised Land—at Last!

Finally, after many hard lessons, and wandering the wilderness for 40 years, it was time for Israel to enter the Promised Land.



Incredibly, on the eve of something for which they had waited for 40 years, they were still full of complaints! The people complained to Moses that they were without food or water.

So God instructed Moses to speak to a rock, then God would cause water to pour from it. However, Moses was not as patient



with the Israelites as was God. Furious with the continued complaints and bad attitudes of the people, he struck the rock in a burst of anger. Suddenly, water poured from the rock—but God was angry that Moses had disobeyed His clear instruction. As punishment, God forbade him from entering the Promised Land (Numbers 20:12).

### Test Your Memory:

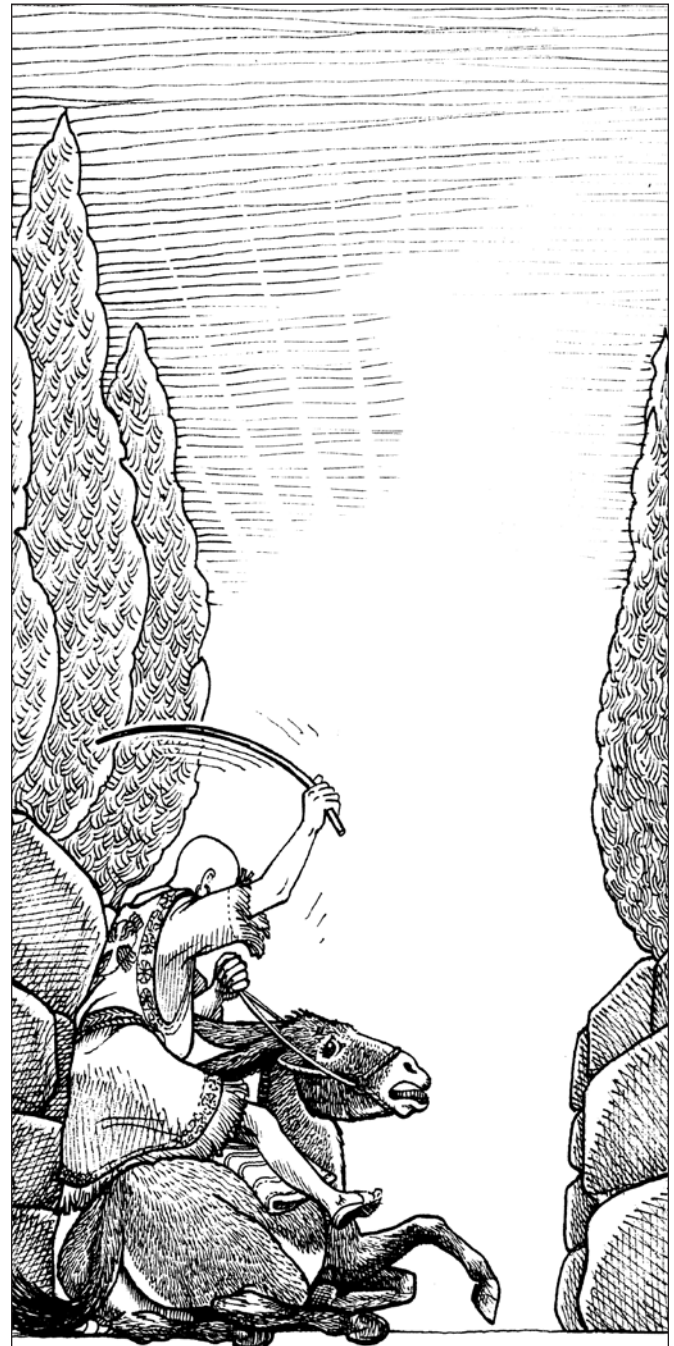
- 1) How many scouts gave a good report?
- 2) Who were the leaders who led the rebellion against Aaron and Moses? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) How many years did Israel wander through the wilderness? \_\_\_\_\_

### Balaam's Donkey Speaks

As the Israelites traveled through to the Promised Land, they fought many battles.

But, with God on their side, Israel easily defeated the nations who came up against them.

In some of these battles, the Israelites were severely outnumbered. However, God fought for Israel, so being outnumbered did not matter. This is the same for you today. You may experience things that seem difficult. At times, you may be pressured by your friends to do wrongs things; but if you



rely on God, you will be given the strength to do the right thing.

The constant defeat of each nation that fought against Israel made the king of Moab afraid of Israel. He feared that they would soon be in his land and defeat him as well (Numbers 22:5-6). To prevent this,



the king sent messengers to ask Balaam, a false prophet, to curse Israel.

Of course, God forbade Balaam to do this, or even to go to Moab. Balaam disobeyed and traveled to meet the king. God sent an angel to kill Balaam for his blatant disobedience. The donkey upon which Balaam was traveling saw this angel and tried to turn away. However, Balaam did not see him. Each time that he tried to make the donkey move forward, it turned to the side. In a fit of rage, he beat the donkey.

Then the donkey spoke! Write out what it said to Balaam in Numbers 22:28: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

This got Balaam's attention. Then God opened his eyes to see the angel, who gave Balaam a message. Balaam was sorry for what he had done, but now God wanted him to go to the king of Moab for a purpose (Numbers 24:1, 10).

Instead of cursing Israel, Balaam reluctantly blessed Israel as God commanded him. Balaam then foretold what would happen to the nations if they fought against Israel. Again, God was with this tiny nation, and no one would be strong enough to stand against it.

### God Punishes the Midianites

The Midianites plagued the Israelites, sending their women to lead the Israelite men to worship false gods. The men were severely punished for their actions—nearly 24,000 died.

It was now time for God to punish the Midianites. An army was chosen from among the Israelites to destroy them. This army was much smaller than the Midianite army they would face.



The battle was short. Even though the Israelites were heavily outnumbered, all of the Midianites were soon dead (Numbers 31:1-7). Because they obeyed and trusted in God to fight for them, not a single Israelite died in the battle! Not only was this a punishment for the Midianites, it was a lesson and a reminder for Israel that anything is possible with God—if they trust in Him.

This is another example that when we trust in God and obey what He says, He will be there for us—no matter how outnumbered we may be!

### Coming to the Jordan

With the defeat of the Midianites, Israel had conquered all of the land east of the Jordan River.

The land there had huge fields that were well suited for the vast herds that Reuben, Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh possessed. They asked Moses to see if God would allow them to take the land on the east side of the Jordan.

Moses feared that they were rebelling just as their fathers had done. He thought that, like their fathers, they were afraid to go into the Promised Land (Numbers 32:16-18). Once the leaders of the tribe explained that they wanted to obey God and would help their brothers take the Promised Land west of the river, Moses' anger cooled. With his permission, they quickly began to clear the land and build cities (Numbers 32:33-42).

### Test Your Memory:

- 1) Who was riding on the donkey who spoke? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Who did God punish for causing the Israelites to worship false gods? \_\_\_\_\_

- 3) What tribes settled on the east side of the Jordan river? \_\_\_\_\_

### Learning to Trust and Obey God

There were many lessons to be learned from the travels of the Israelites through the land. We have seen that they set both good and bad examples.

Today, you can learn from both. Write out I Corinthians 10:6 to see what God says about the lessons in the Old Testament: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Remember, we should always put God first, and that He will fight our battles for us. Try to go above and beyond what you are asked to do, sometimes even doing things before you are asked. For instance, do you keep your bedroom tidy even when your parents do not ask you?

As you grow, God will see your attitude. Do you want to appear to Him as a complaining Israelite, or one who appreciates all the blessings He gives? Try to go an entire day without complaining and think about the blessings you have in your life. If you do this, you will be living a way of life that is not centered on yourself—the GIVE way. Avoid practicing the GET way, the attitude that the Israelites had when they complained.

The more you practice the give way, the more natural it will become—and the more God will bless you in all areas of your life!



**BIBLE MEMORY:** List the Ten Commandments in order.

## EVENT SCRAMBLE

The events of this activity are scrambled below.  
Put them in order by placing the correct number on the left.

- ☐ Scouts bring back good and bad reports about the Promised Land.
- ☐ Israel receives the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai.
- ☐ God rains down manna from heaven.
- ☐ Israel worships the golden calf.
- ☐ Israel is trapped at the Red Sea.
- ☐ Aaron and Miriam speak against Moses.
- ☐ Moses gathers his people and leaves Egypt.
- ☐ The people complain to Moses about not receiving any meat.
- ☐ Israel is forced to wander in the wilderness for 40 years.