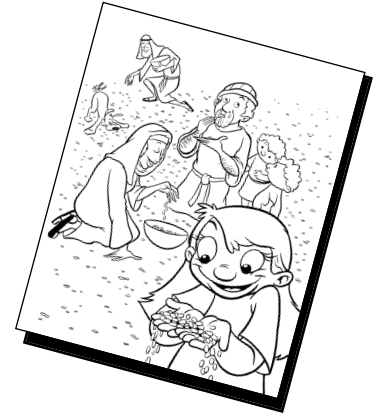




God Preserves Israel

Exodus 15:22–17:7



LESSON GOAL

Students will confess their need for God's mercy and thank Him for all He gives.

BIBLE TRUTHS

- God tested Israel to see whether they would trust Him.
- Israel grumbled and complained against God and Moses.
- Israel needed to trust God's Word.
- God was patient and miraculously provided food and water in the wilderness.
- God was merciful and good to the people of Israel.

KEY VERSE

"If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians" (Exodus 15:26).

APPLICATION

- Confess grumbling and complaining attitudes.
- Confess your need for God's mercy through Jesus Christ.
- Trust God, who is faithful to His Word.

NEXT WEEK

God Prepares Israel for the Covenant
Read Exodus 19.

Symbol Key



Craft



Finger Play



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Center



Activity



Q & A



Age Group

Teacher Planning Sheet

PREPARE

Objectives/Truths to cover this week

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Personal Application

As a result of my study in this passage, God wants me to

- _____
- _____
- _____

Three ways students need to apply this passage are

- _____
- _____
- _____

Materials Needed

POINT

Choose from various ideas to point students to the coming Bible lesson.

- _____
- _____

PROCLAIM

Choose from various ideas to proclaim the Bible lesson.

Presentation Ideas

- _____
- _____

Praise/Music Ideas

- _____
- _____
- _____

PRACTICE

Choose ideas to help review and apply today's lesson.

- _____
- _____

PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul... You shall teach them to your children” (Deuteronomy 11:18–19).

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here to aid you in understanding the Scripture.

Bible Background

The Israelites had no reason to doubt God’s goodness. He had chosen them to be His people. He had shown them how powerful He was through the sending of the plagues and the crossing of the Red Sea. God had demonstrated through strong action that He cared for His people and that He had the ability to continue to care for them. But Israel did not yet trust God. Exodus records three stops along the journey to Mount Sinai; during each of these stops, both Israel and God revealed their character. Israel demonstrated that they were hardhearted and unwilling to trust or obey God; God demonstrated that He was gracious, compassionate, and faithful to His Word.

Testing at Marah

The joy of the Egyptian defeat at the Red Sea had begun to wear off. Although Israel originally responded with praises and singing, their joy turned to complaint only three days away from the sea. After three days in the Wilderness of Shur, located east of Egypt in the northwest part of the Sinai Peninsula, Israel arrived at Marah. The water was undrinkable there, perhaps brackish and salty. For obvious reasons, the people became worried and complained to Moses. When the people cried to Moses, God showed him a tree that, when cast into the water, made the water drinkable. There was nothing magical about the tree. With a clear sign, God demonstrated that He was the one who would provide them water.

God had tested His people to know what was in their hearts and to reveal whether they would keep His commandments (Deut. 8:2). He designed the Israelites’ coming to Marah to warn them about the unbelief in their hearts. At this time, He promised them, “If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians” (Ex. 15:26). God subsequently led them to Elim, which had an abundant water supply (15:27). God had graciously used this trial to show the people the hardness of their hearts. They had to obey Him. If they obeyed and trusted Him, He both promised and demonstrated that He would take care of them.

Testing in the Wilderness of Sin

Almost a month later, God allowed the people to hunger in order to test them again (Deut. 8:3). But instead of trusting God’s promise to preserve them if they obeyed, Israel complained against Moses. They did not trust God’s direction or His goodness. The Israelites began to wish that they were back in Egypt, where they “sat by the pots of meat and...ate bread to the full” (Ex. 16:3), no doubt an exaggeration for slaves! They pitifully said that they wished that God had killed them in Egypt rather than leaving them to face death by starvation in the wilderness. God’s promise and His past preservation meant little to the people. They ignored

Additional Reference Materials

Moses and the Gods of Egypt: Studies in Exodus
by John J. Davis

The MacArthur Study Bible by John MacArthur

God's Word.

Although they had failed the test, God's grace had not run out. God heard the complaints they had made against Him (Ex. 16:8), but He did not act in judgment. Instead, His glory appeared in the cloud that led them (16:10). So that they would know that He was God, the Lord sent quail at evening, which "covered the camp" (16:13), and dew in the morning. When the dew evaporated, a "a small, round substance, as fine as frost on the ground" was left behind. The people asked "What is it?" from which the name "manna" came. The manna was "like white coriander seed, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey" (16:31). God had brought food from the sky to feed His people.

God continued to test the people to see whether they would keep His commandments and laws. He told the people how to gather the manna and commanded them to not leave any for the next day. But the same people who did not trust God to take care of them ignored God's instruction when He did take care of them. Some of the people left the food for the next day, but "it bred worms and stank" (Ex. 16:20). Again, the Lord directed them concerning the manna. He told them that manna would not come on the Sabbath, and the people were commanded to gather twice as much on the day before the Sabbath. Once again, the people ignored God's Word; "Some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none" (16:27). The people still refused to keep God's laws. They stubbornly ignored the Word of the Lord.

Testing at Rephidim

Having led the people through the Wilderness of Sin, God then led them to Rephidim, located in the southern part of the Sinai Peninsula, not far from Mount Sinai. The Lord again tested the people, leading them to a location without water. They were there "according to the commandment of the LORD" (Ex. 17:1). But God's direct leading in the pillar of cloud and fire, His providing water at Marah, and His daily giving of manna were not enough for stiff-necked Israel. They again refused to live by God's Word.

The people contended with Moses and tempted the Lord (Ex. 17:2). Moses called out to the Lord, eager to learn what to do with the Israelites, who were on the verge of stoning him. The Lord commanded Moses to take his rod and strike the rock. When Moses did so, water came out of the rock. Even though Israel had failed God's test and refused to trust His Word, God had mercy on the people and again provided for them. Even though God showed mercy, Moses recognized the danger of Israel's disobedience. Twice, he said that Israel tested, or tempted, God. As Israel refused to submit to God's testing of them, they in effect tested His patience. They asked "Is the LORD among us or not?" (17:7), even while the pillar of fire was there before them. But God was gracious and patient with Israel. He continued to refrain from punishing, though Israel persisted in their disbelief and denial of His words.

Purpose of Testing

God tried Israel so they would have faith in Him. In Deuteronomy, Moses said to Israel, "He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD" (Deut. 8:3). If God continually gave Israel unlimited food and water, they would not have lived by His Word. They would not have known their need to trust God. God tried His people, allowing them to be hungry and thirsty, so that they would cling to His words. God was about to make His

covenant with the Israelites, and they needed to learn to cherish God's Word as the source of life.

Believers can learn from the Israelites' example. The Israelites were unwilling to live by God's Word. When they had a need, their hearts were shaken, and they imagined the worst. They ignored God's training, and in the days of trial, they ignored His Word. The Lord will refine His saints. He will allow them to have needs and have no apparent answer to their problems. The purpose is that believers learn not to live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.

Our sustenance must be from God as He reveals Himself in His words. Praise God who is gracious, even when we ignore what His Word promises.

POINT TO THE TRUTH

"Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth" (Psalm 78:1).

This section includes questions to review last week's lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week's lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



Review Questions

Use these questions to review and reinforce key truths.

Where were the Israelites headed when they left Egypt?
To the Promised Land.

How did God lead the Israelites?
He led them with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

Who went after the Israelites?
The Egyptian army.

How did the Israelites cross the Red Sea?
God told Moses to stretch his rod over the sea. The water parted, and the Israelites were able to walk safely to the other side.

What happened to the Egyptian army?
God told Moses to stretch his rod over the sea again. This time, the water fell down on the Egyptian army, and they died.

What did the Israelites do when they saw how God had protected them?
They worshiped and sang praises to Him.



Bitter to Sweet

Materials: can of tonic water, a can of lemon-lime soda, clear plastic cups

Directions: Ask for one or several volunteers to come to the front of the class to do a taste test. Explain that the students may not like what they are about to taste. Show the students that the cups' contents look the same but are very different. Give the volunteers a cup with a small amount of tonic water; ask everyone to



drink at the same time. This should elicit a “yuck” response. Then give them a cup with a small amount of lemon-lime soda and instruct them to taste. They should like this better. Explain that in today’s lesson, they will learn how God made bitter water sweet and continually cared for the children of Israel.

Pick up the Manna

Materials: large clean sheet, plastic bowls, corn flakes

Directions: Before class, lay a sheet on the floor. Pour corn flakes on the sheet and spread them out. As soon as the students begin entering class, ask them why the corn flakes are there. Tell them that they cannot touch the sheet until class begins. In today’s lesson, God is going to test the hearts of the Israelites. He wants to see whether they will obey His rules. One of the ways He did this was by giving them special rules for picking up manna. Ask the students whether they can obey the rules for picking up their “manna.” Give them each a bowl and ask them to each pick up 10 corn flakes—no more, no less—and put them in their bowls. Tell them not to eat any until you say it is okay. If they obey, they can eat it for a snack just before the Bible lesson. Tell them that they will find out in today’s lesson whether Israel obeyed.



Grumbling Puppet

Use a puppet to demonstrate how Israel complained while they were in the wilderness. The puppet can exaggerate the whiny complaints of the Israelites, and you can then let the students imitate. (They might laugh, but it will help them identify when they make those “noises” at home.) Then explain how they should have responded. Show the students the right way to speak and respond to trials. Have them imitate speaking with the right attitude.

PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

“Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done” (Psalm 78:4).

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students’ understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use during the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done directly from the Bible.

Bible Lesson

Reading of the Text

Read portions of Exodus 15:22–17:7.

After leading the Israelites through the Red Sea, Moses took them into the wilderness. Last week, we learned that God was leading the Israelites by going before them in a huge pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. The Israelites walked for three days and could not find water to drink. They were getting very thirsty. They came to a place called Marah, but they could not drink the water there because it was bitter. They complained to Moses.

The Lord told Moses to cut down a tree and throw it into the water. Moses obeyed God's command, and the water became sweet! God provided the Israelites with good water to drink. It was a miracle. Do you know what a miracle is? A miracle is something that only God has the power to make happen.

God told the Israelites that if they worked hard, listened to Him, and obeyed His laws, He would not send on them any of the plagues that He had sent on the Egyptians. Do you remember the plagues God sent on the Egyptians? He plagued them with boils and killed all their firstborn sons.

After stopping at Marah, the Israelites traveled to another place, called Elim. In Elim, there were 12 water wells and 70 palm trees. It was a very nice place to stay, and God allowed Israel to camp there for almost a month.

From Elim, the Israelites traveled to the Wilderness of Sin. They were getting hungry, and they started to complain and grumble again. Do you ever complain and grumble? The Israelites said they would rather have died in Egypt than be hungry in the wilderness. When the Israelites complained, they were showing that they did not trust God. Do you remember some of the wonderful things that God did for Israel? He brought them out of slavery in Egypt, performed miracles by parting the Red Sea, and gave them water at Marah. The Israelites should have asked God for food and believed that He would give it to them. Instead, they complained and did not believe that He would provide food and water for them.

But God is very merciful, and even though the people complained, He still took care of them. God told Moses that He would rain down bread from heaven in the morning and quails at night. God said that the people were to go out every morning and gather just enough bread for their family to eat that day. He also said that on the sixth day, which was Friday, they were to gather twice the amount of bread for their family so that they would not have to work the next day, which was the Sabbath. God wanted the Israelites to rest on the Sabbath.

It happened just as the Lord had said. In the evening, a flock of quail flew into camp. The Israelites captured them and cooked them for supper. In the morning, on the ground all around them, the Israelites found small, round things that tasted like wafers made of honey. They called this bread "manna." It must have been delicious. That morning, the Israelites gathered as much manna as their families could eat that day. Moses had told them that the manna was not to be left until the next morning. But some of the Israelites did not listen and kept some of the manna overnight. The next morning they found worms in it, and it smelled terrible.

On the sixth day, the Israelites gathered twice as much manna as the other days. God did not let worms grow in the extra manna that the Israelites gathered on the sixth day so that it would last two days. Remember, God wanted the Israelites to rest on the seventh day, the Sabbath. Again, some Israelites did not listen to God, and on the Sabbath, they went out in the morning to gather manna. God had already told them that He would not rain down manna on the seventh day because He wanted them to rest.

From the Wilderness of Sin, the Israelites traveled to Rephidim. Again, they were thirsty, but there was no water. They argued with Moses and demanded water. The Israelites still did not trust God and complained that they would rather have died in Egypt than to be thirsty out in the wilderness. God told Moses to go and strike his rod against a rock. When Moses did that, water came flowing out, and the Israelites drank. It was another miracle.

God was testing Israel when He allowed them to be without food and water. He wanted them to learn to trust Him. Instead, Israel grumbled and complained. They should have trusted God to provide for them, and then they should have thanked Him. We should always trust that God will do what He says He will do.



Lesson Questions

After three days in the wilderness, what did the people not have?
Water they could drink.

How did God provide water?
He told Moses to throw his stick in the water; the water miraculously became drinkable.

With what did God provide the people when they were hungry?
Manna and quail.

How did God provide water the second time?
Moses struck the rock, and water came out.

Were the people wrong to complain?
Yes. The people did not trust God's Word.

What should the people have done instead?
The people should have obeyed God and trusted His Word.

Presentation Ideas



A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards

Use appropriate A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards with the lesson.



Betty Lukens Flannelgraph

Use appropriate flannelgraph pieces with the lesson.



Treasure-Box Object

The objects for the treasure box for this lesson are a water bottle and a loaf of bread or a jar of "manna." These represent the food and water that God sent the Israelites in the desert.



Food Pictures

Show the class pictures of food items. Ask whether each item is bread, meat, or something to drink. Talk about what the students like to eat or drink when they get hungry or thirsty. In today's Bible lesson, God provided His people with food that tasted good. He gave them manna, which was like bread, and quail, which is like chicken. He also gave them water when they could not find any in the desert.



Water from a Rock

Bring a one- to two-pound rock to class. Ask students to squeeze it as hard as they can. Ask them to squeeze water out of it. Ask them to try really, really hard. Ask them why water will not come from the rock. Tell them that there is no water in the rock. To get water from this rock would be a miracle. Tell the students that in today's lesson, we will see God get water from a huge rock. It will be a sign of His power and His patience.

Praise and Worship

My God Is So Great

Seek Ye First

Trust and Obey



God Provides for Israel

Israel was not satisfied.

(Shake head back and forth.)

They did not think God would provide.

(Continue shaking head; point up.)

Instead, they all complained and cried.

(Pretend hands are talking; pout.)

But God knew they needed to drink and eat.

(Point up; then pretend to hold glass and gulp; then smack lips.)

He gave them water and made it sweet.

(Pretend to hold glass; pat tummy.)

He sent them bread and quail for meat.

(Hold hands overhead and wiggle fingers as hands are lowered; then flap hands.)

God wanted Israel to obey,

(Point up; then fold hands in prayer.)

But they thought only of their stomachs all day.

(Shake head back and forth; rub tummy.)

Put your faith in God—He'll make a way!

(Put hand on heart; then point up.)

PRACTICE THE TRUTH

"That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments" (Psalm 78:7).

Choose ideas from this section to review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



God Provides for Israel

Materials: Bible scene page (at the back of the lesson), uncooked oatmeal, quail cutouts (at the back of this lesson), "sun" circles (cut out ahead of time), land pieces

Directions: Have the students glue the land and the sun to the paper. Then have them glue on pieces of oatmeal (for manna) on the morning side and the quail on the evening side. Talk with the students about how God tested Israel. Ask them in

what ways they grumble and complain. Share with them ways you grumble and how God is convicting you to stop. Next week, be sure to tell them how God has helped you.



Wilderness Snack Time

God provided for Israel in three special ways. Even though the people grumbled and complained, God was very patient and gracious. For your snack time, you may wish to have mineral water (which usually tastes a little bitter), frosted corn flakes, and regular water. As the students eat, ask them about the three tests God gave Israel. Be sure to pour only a small amount of bitter water into each cup.



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Manna in a Jar

Materials: baby-food jars, frosted cornflakes, one-inch piece of white string, verse labels from the back of the lesson

Directions: Glue the labels onto the baby-food jars. Color the small picture and glue it to the lid of the jar. Fill the baby-food jars half full with corn flakes. Put in a dozen pieces of white string for “worms.” Have the students stir in the “worms.” Tell the students that some of the Israelites did not obey the Lord, and as a result, their manna was filled with worms. Instruct the students to tell their parents what happened to the Israelites who did not follow God’s directions.



Hey, Israel, What’s for Dinner?

Materials: paper plates, hole punches, brown construction paper, brown feathers, glue sticks, white glue, paintbrushes, small paper cups, markers

Directions: Have each student glue a few feathers to one side of the plate. Next, punch several holes out of the brown construction paper, saving the small circles. Brush a section of the paper plate with glue, and sprinkle the brown circles all over the glue. Older students can write “manna” and “quail” over the feathers and circles.



Quail, Quail, Goose

Play the traditional game of “Duck, Duck, Goose,” saying, “Quail, Quail, Goose.”



What Is in Your Heart?

Hang a poster board with two large felt hearts: one big, red heart marked “Happy Heart” and another black or gray, ragged heart marked “Grumbling Heart.” Attach the following words to small pieces of felt, and place them in a bag. Invite students to come up, pull out a word from the bag, and stick the word on the correct heart.

Happy Heart: think what is true; be thankful; look for the best; obey God; obey parents; speak kindly; pray; praise God; sing for joy; rejoice; trust

Grumbling Heart: think the worst; complain, disobey; worry; cry; exaggerate the problem; imagine the worst; doubt God; whine



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Rock Cup

Decorate a paper cup by gluing on “rocks” and attaching the Bible verse, Exodus 17:6 (God said to Moses, “You shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink”). The rocks could be small stones, pebbles, pinto beans, or small wads of gray paper. After the craft is done, serve water and let the students drink, praying and thanking God for the clean water He has provided.



5

Making Moses Memories

Choose a coloring page and reduce it to 4 x 6 inches. Have each student color the page, cut it out, and glue it to the next page in his scrapbook.

Coloring Sheets

Give each student a copy of the coloring sheets at the back of this lesson. The students can color the pages in class or at home.



MEMORY VERSE

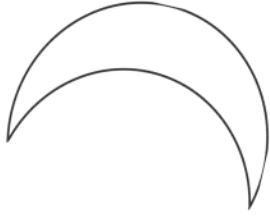
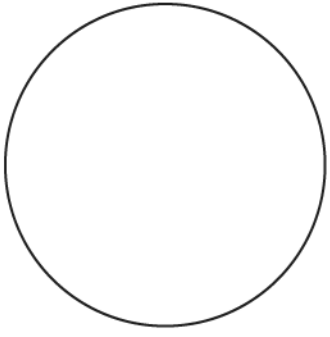
“You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13).



Sixth Commandment

If you have decided to assemble the Ten Commandments as you go through them, post the sixth commandment. Man was made in God’s image. Murder is destroying something in God’s image. Noah left the ark in Genesis 9. God said any man who murders should be killed. Jesus said if we say a harsh word to a neighbor, we will be guilty of a sin as bad as murder (Matt. 5:21–22).

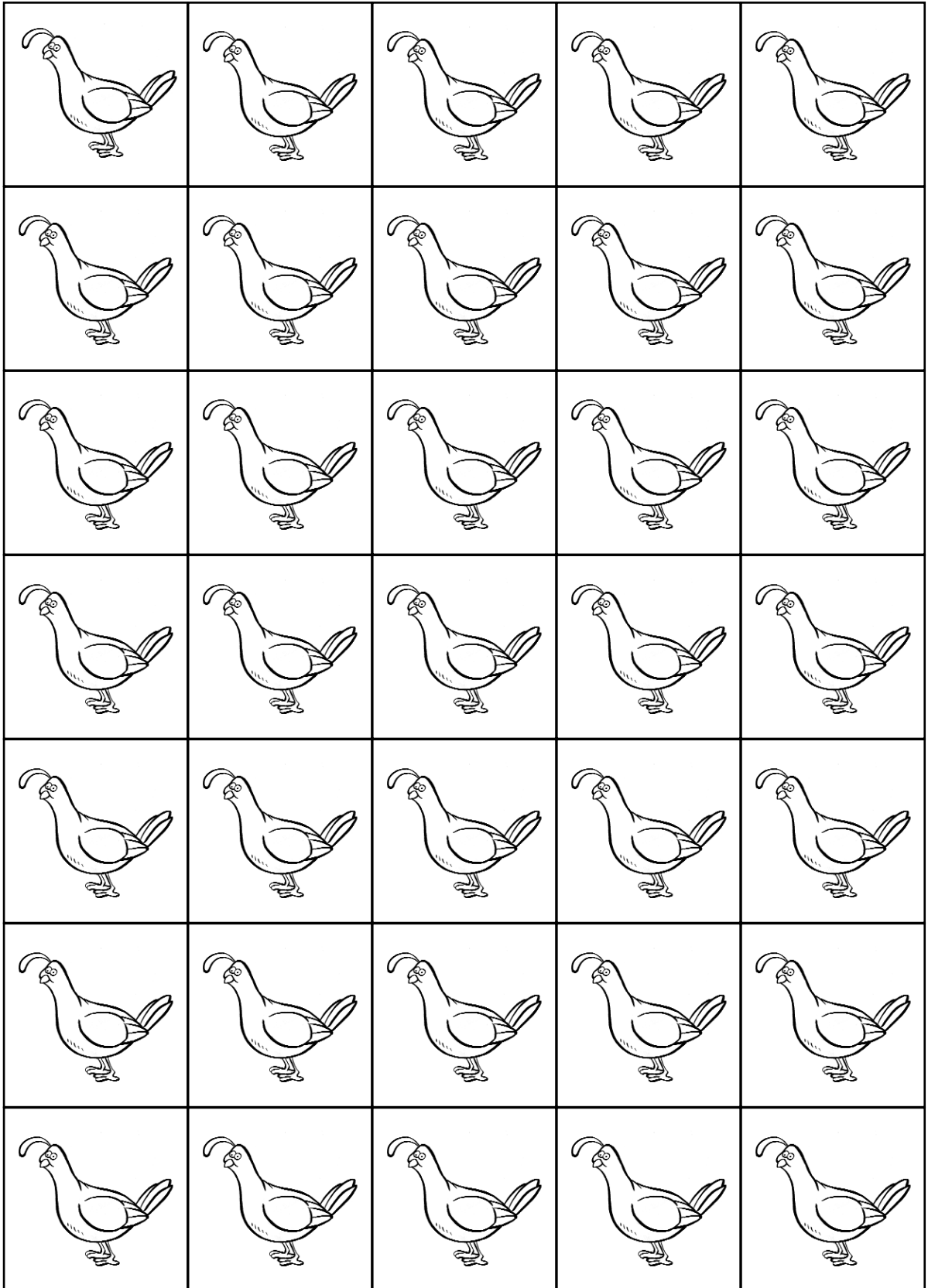
God Provides for Israel



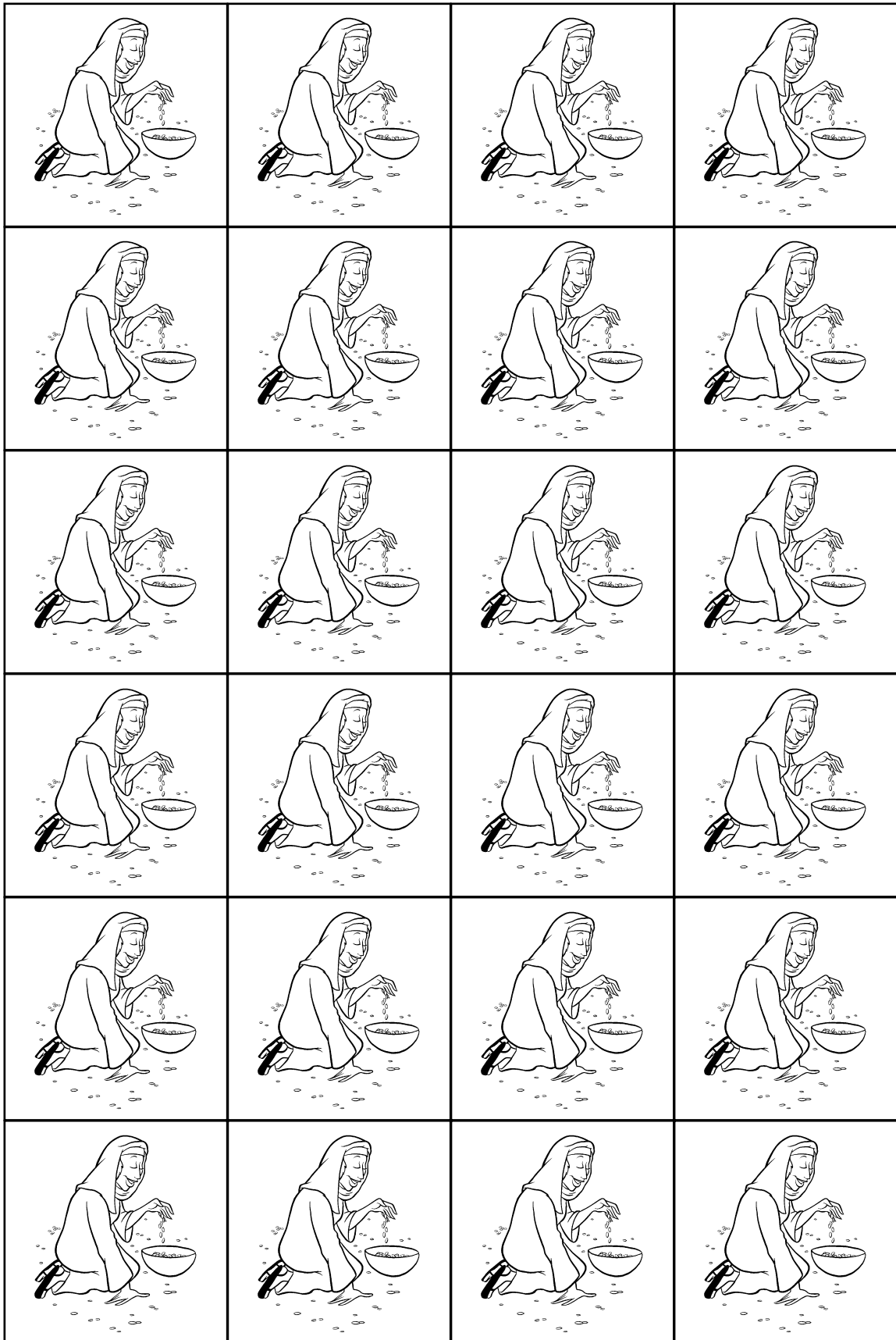
“Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you’” (Exodus 16:4).

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Quail



Manna in a Jar



Manna in a Jar Verse Labels

“Notwithstanding they did not heed Moses. But some of them left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them” (Exodus 16:20).

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Rock Cup Verse Labels

“Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink” (Exodus 17:6).

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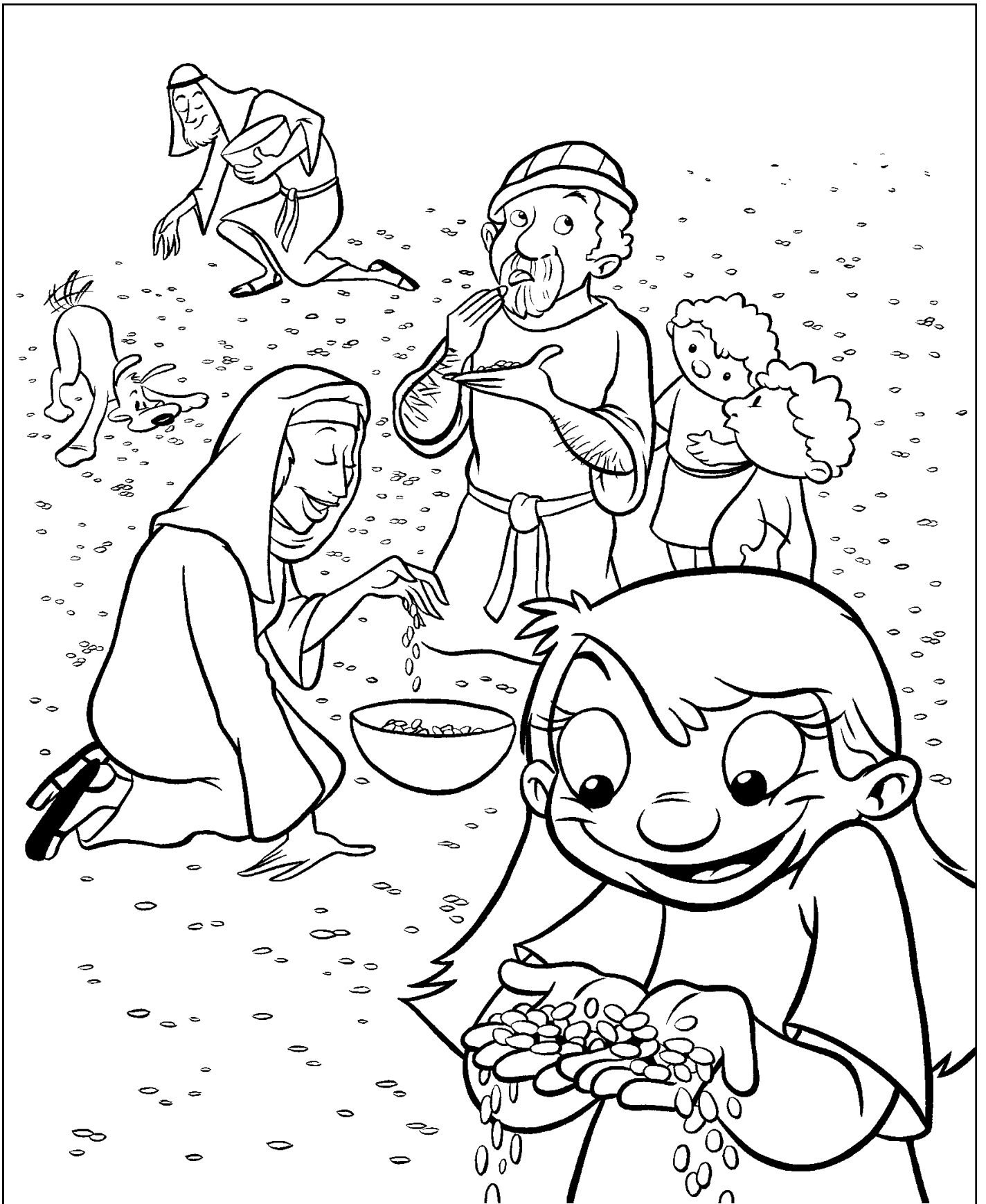
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“Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not!’” (Exodus 16:4).



**“Behold, I [the LORD] will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink”
(Exodus 17:6).**

