



# Israel Rejects God's Plan

*Numbers 13–14*



## LESSON GOAL

Students will learn how to respond to a faithful God.

## BIBLE TRUTHS

- God promised to bless Abraham and his descendants.
- Ten spies doubted God, but Caleb and Joshua trusted in God's promise.
- The people did not trust God to bring them safely into the land that He promised.

## KEY VERSE

"Then the LORD said to Moses: "How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them?" (Numbers 14:11).

## APPLICATION

- Thank God for His promises.
- Obey God's instructions, which He has given for our good.
- Trust God that His plans are always the best.

## NEXT WEEK

Israel Rejects God's Prophet and Priest  
Read Numbers 16.

### Symbol Key



Craft



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Activity



Q & A



Work Sheet



2 Grade Level

# 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

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## 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 three episodes of rebellion in Numbers 11–12 revealed the hardness of the Israelites' hearts as they approached the Promised Land. They were physically coming closer to the land that God had promised, but their hearts were far from the God who had made the promise. Both the people and the leaders proudly thought that they deserved something better from God. The people rebelled against God's provision of manna, and Miriam and Aaron rebelled against God's provision of Moses' leadership. Israel's rejection of God's provision revealed their rebellious and prideful hearts. In the next episode of rebellion (Num. 13–14), Israel continued to exalt their will over God's will by rejecting God's plan and His power to accomplish that plan.

#### Submission to God's Plan: Numbers 13:1–29

Despite the tumultuous journey from Mount Sinai to the Wilderness of Paran, Israel had safely arrived at the southern border of the Promised Land. The book of Deuteronomy reveals that Moses was eager for the people to take the land. Moses said, "Look, the LORD your God has set the land before you; go up and possess it, as the LORD God of your fathers has spoken to you; do not fear or be discouraged" (Deut. 1:21). The people asked to first send into the land men who could bring back word about which way the Israelites should go and what cities they would come to. Moses was pleased with the plan (1:23), and God commanded that spies be sent into Canaan (Num. 13:2). Because God commanded that the spies be sent, there is no reason to suspect that the people were wrong in their desire.

Twelve leaders were chosen to survey the land, one from each of the 12 tribes (Num. 13:3–16). Joshua and Caleb were among those men. The men were to enter the land from its southern edge and then continue north. They probably followed the mountain range on the western side of the Dead Sea, continued up the Jordan River valley, skirted the Sea of Galilee, and continued to the southern boundary of present-day Lebanon. Moses commanded the spies to gather tactical information about the people and cities, but he also commanded that they report as to "whether the land they dwell in is good or bad...[and] whether the land is rich or poor" (13:19–20). Moses knew that God had promised to bring Israel to a land rich in resources, a "land flowing with milk and honey" (Ex. 3:8). Moses was eager for the spies to encourage the people by sharing details about how good the land was.

After 40 days, the spies returned carrying grapes, figs, and pomegranates (Num. 13:23–25). They reported to Moses, "We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit" (13:27). But not all their findings were comforting. They also reported, "The people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there" (13:28). The descendants of Anak were a "people great and tall," of whom it

### Additional Reference Materials

*The MacArthur Study  
Bible* by John MacArthur

was said, "Who can stand before the descendants of Anak?" (Deut. 9:2). God had been faithful in His description of the land; it was as good as He had said. But would God be faithful to give Israel the land in the midst of such opposition?

### **Rejection of God's Plan: Numbers 13:30–14:10**

Caleb tried to quiet the people's growing concern. He said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it" (Num. 13:30). Caleb, who remained blameless in this incident (Num. 14:24), was confident that the God whom they served would grant them victory. But the other spies argued against obeying God. They said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we" (Num. 13:31). Their report of the land was darkly twisted; they claimed that the land "devoured [its] inhabitants" and that the spies were "like grasshoppers" in the eyes of the giants dwelling in the land (13:32–33). They exaggerated the inhabitants' height and denied the land's goodness.

The Israelites chose to reject God's plan for them to enter the Promised Land. They "lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night" (Num. 14:1). Once again, they complained against Moses and Aaron. They judged that it would have been better for them to die as slaves in Egypt, or even to die in the wilderness, than to die in the land that God was giving them. They agreed to select a leader and return to Egypt (14:4)! At that moment, Israel spurned everything that God had done for them and everything He had planned for their future. The Israelites believed they knew a better place to be, a better way to get there, and a better person to lead them.

Moses and Aaron knew how severe God's anger would be. They fell on their faces in front of the Israelites, perhaps already interceding to God on the people's behalf (14:5). Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes; their hearts were devastated over Israel's rejection. They testified to the goodness of the land God had promised and God's ability to bring the Israelites there. They pleaded with the people to neither rebel against God nor to fear the inhabitants of the land (14:8–9). Revealing their dark hearts, that wicked generation responded by planning to stone the four men (14:10).

### **God Punishes the Rebellious: Numbers 14:11–38**

God knew what was happening and intervened in time to protect His servants. As the Israelites prepared to stone Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb, the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle before the Israelites (Num. 14:10). The time of Israel's rejection and disbelief had ended. God announced that He was going to destroy the Israelites and keep His promise to Abraham by giving the land to the descendants of Moses (14:11–12).

As Moses had done when God had previously announced the destruction of Israel after they worshiped the golden calf (Ex. 32), Moses again pleaded with the Lord based on His reputation among the nations. God had graciously aligned Himself with the Israelites. Moses said to the Lord, "You, LORD, are among these people.... You, LORD, are seen face to face and Your cloud stands above them, and You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night" (Num. 14:14). The nations knew that the Lord was the God of Israel, and if the Lord destroyed Israel, the nations would assume that He was not powerful enough to bring the people into the land (14:16). Fueled by a passion for God's glory, Moses appealed to God's longsuffering, His abundant mercy, and His forgiveness, and he asked God to forgive the people (14:18–19). This from a man on the verge of being stoned!

The Lord heard Moses' prayer and forgave the people. But God was still going to punish the Israelites who had rebelled by forbidding their entrance into the

Promised Land (Num. 14:23). The entire generation that had been numbered at the beginning of Numbers, all those age 20 and older, would die in the wilderness (14:29). Caleb and Joshua would be the only Israelites from that generation who would enter the Promised Land. Israel would wander for 40 years, one year for every day the spies spent in the land (14:34). While the first generation slowly died off, the second generation would have to suffer with their parents, living as shepherds in the desert when they could have been settled in the land (14:31–33). God did not reject Israel, but He did righteously punish them for rejecting His plan.

### Rejection of God's Plan Continues: Numbers 14:38–45

The people mourned when they discovered their punishment, but it was not a godly sorrow that led to repentance (Num. 14:39). They still proudly made their own plans and rejected God's plans. They decided to go into the Promised Land and ignore God's punishment (14:40). Moses told them that they would be defeated by the nations in the Promised Land, the Amalekites and the Canaanites, because the Lord would not go with them. But they "presumed to go up to the mountaintop," leaving behind in the camp the ark of the covenant and their leader, Moses (14:44). They were defeated and driven back.

Israel had a heart that rejected God's plans. Their way continually seemed better than God's way. They doubted that God had the power to do what He said. Without confidence in the Lord's promises, they left themselves with no hope but the shallow imaginations of their hearts. Israel needed to learn the blessing of having God as their sovereign authority. They would have 40 years in the wilderness to learn the goodness of God's plans and the extent of His power.

## 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.*

What did the Israelites do in Numbers 11?

*They complained about their hardships and wanted to go back to Egypt.*

Did the Israelites have any reason to complain about their hardships?

*No. God gave them water and food (manna from heaven). He also gave them guidance and protection. God gave them everything they needed. They had no reason to complain.*

How were the Israelites rejecting God's provision?

*The people of Israel were not satisfied with what God had given them, and they wanted more. They were tired of the manna and wanted meat. They rejected God's provision by not being grateful for what He had given them. They had unthankful attitudes.*

Moses asked the Lord for mercy. How did God respond to Moses' prayer?  
*He stopped the judgment. God is merciful!*

What did God give the people because of their complaints about not having meat?  
*God gave Israel quail to eat. There was quail for a day's journey in each direction and three feet deep.*

What did the people do with the quail?  
*They gathered food for two days, not trusting God to provide.*

What did Aaron and Miriam do in Numbers 12, and what was the punishment?  
*They spoke out against Moses. They were not trusting God's decision for Moses' leadership. They thought they knew what was best for God's people. God punished Miriam for her sin with a terrible skin disease called leprosy.*

What was God's answer to Moses' prayer?  
*God healed Miriam, but first she was sent out of the camp for seven days.*



### Turning from God's Good

This discussion about sin may be done before the story. The students can listen for examples in the story and see how Israel sinned against God. In this story, we will see how Israel's unbelief is really a rejection of God's commands, provision, and promises. Sin is knowing the right thing but choosing not to do it, or doing the wrong thing. Obedience is doing what God has told us to do in the Bible (example: Ephesians 6:1). We always have a choice whether or not to sin. When we sin, we are turning away from the good that God has for us and doing what we want instead.

Students can experiment with this by approaching something good (a teacher ready to give a hug or a bag of candy) then stopping and turning around and walking away. Talk about how foolish it is to walk away from something good. In the story, we see that Israel knew God's promises yet chose not to obey Him but to do their own thing.

We each have a sinful heart. What we need are new hearts, which only God can give us through salvation. With new hearts, we will love God's commands and desire to obey them. First John 2:5 says, "But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him."



### Grumbling Puppets

Use a couple of puppets to demonstrate grumbling. Have them complain to each other about the food they get. They might also tell a story similar to the Israelites' story in the lesson today, describing an escapade to a neighbor's house where they saw giants and were very frightened. Tell the students that the Bible lesson today will tell about some grumbling Israelites and some huge people that they encounter.



### Review Past Promises: Abraham to Moses

Ask the students what promises God had given to His people in the past. Review the promises to Abraham in Genesis 12:1–3 and 22:18–19; to Isaac in 26:2–4; to Jacob in 28:13–14; and to Moses in Exodus 3:8–10. Show students the appropriate A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards as you review the promises. To change the review time, you may wish to use these as sword drills. Have the students hold their Bibles



in the air, and then tell them the verse you want them to find. The first one to find the verse can stand up to read it. In today's lesson, we will see whether the Israelites believed God's promise.

### God's Promises for Us Are Good

Sometimes God asks us to do things that seem hard. Ask the students if they have ever had to do something hard or scary. One of the things parents may ask a child to do is ask for forgiveness for hurting someone or for saying something mean. God also asks students to be kind to people who are unkind to them. Think of other situations in which God asks things that might be hard for a child to do. He promises to bless those who obey Him. God's commands don't always feel good, but they are good. Everything God commands is good, even if it seems difficult or scary. In today's lesson, the Israelites are asked to do something very hard. God promised them a special land to live in, and they were commanded to go take it. Let's see if they obey God's Word and trust His good promise.

## 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

Have you ever disobeyed your mommy or your daddy? Why did you disobey? Sometimes children disobey their parents because they think they know better than their parents do. Sometimes people disobey God for the same reason. Today we are going to learn about a time when the Israelites disobeyed God because they did not have faith in Him and thought they had a better plan.

What is a plan? A plan is the way you have decided to do something. God had a plan for how the Israelites were going to enter the Promised Land. Does anyone remember what the Promised Land was? There were already many people living in the Promised Land. They were wicked people. The Israelites needed to follow God's plan to get rid of the wicked people living in the Promised Land so that they could go and live there peacefully. God had promised this land to Abraham hundreds of years before Moses was even born.

The Israelites finally arrived at the edge of the Promised Land, and Moses had them stop and set up their tents. The Israelites wanted Moses to send some spies into the Promised Land to find out what it was like. What is a spy? Moses liked the idea of sending in spies, and God commanded that spies be sent. Moses knew that the spies would find a beautiful land with lots of flowers and trees, fruits and vegetables, and animals. How did Moses know that? He knew that because it's what God had promised the land would be like, and God never breaks a promise. Moses knew that the spies would come back with good reports about the land and the Israelites would be encouraged.

The spies were gone for 40 days, and when they came back, they brought lots of yummy food from the land. They said, "We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit." But they did not bring back all good news. The spies also told the Israelites about the people who already lived in the Promised Land. They said that the people were very big and strong and that the people living in the land would fight for it. The Israelites would have to go to war to get the Promised Land.

Most of the spies decided that they did not want to obey God and go into the Promised Land. They were afraid to fight the people living there. They told terrible stories about the Promised Land to the rest of the Israelites. The Israelites became very scared! They decided not to obey God's plan. They thought that their plan was better than God's. The Israelites started to complain about their leaders, Moses and Aaron, and about Joshua and Caleb, the two spies who wanted to obey God. The Israelites said they wished they had never left Egypt. They decided to get a new leader and to kill Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb. Do you think that God knew what was happening? Of course He did! Just before the Israelites were going to kill Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb with stones, God came and showed His glory at the tabernacle. God announced to Israel that He would destroy the Israelites because they had disobeyed Him. But Moses begged God not to destroy Israel. Moses was afraid that if God destroyed Israel, the other nations would think that God was not strong enough to bring the Israelites into the Promised Land. God listened to Moses.

God forgave the Israelites for disobeying Him, but He still punished them. He told them that now they would have to wait 40 years to enter the Promised Land. They would have a very difficult life wandering around in the desert. God also said that none of the people who were grownups at that time ever could go into the Promised Land. Only their children, when they were grown up, would get to go there. That was the Israelites' punishment for disobeying God.

Do you think the Israelites learned their lesson? They should have, but they did not! They did not like that God told them they could not have the Promised Land and that they had to live in the desert, so they disobeyed God again and tried to go into the Promised Land anyway. Do you think they got in? No, they did not. They still had not learned to obey and follow God's plan, but they would have 40 years of wandering in the desert to think about and learn from their mistakes!



## Lesson Questions

What did God command Moses to do?

*God told Moses to send spies into the Promised Land. This was the land that God had promised to give to the Israelites.*

What were the spies supposed to do?

*The spies were to bring back a report of the land. They were to find out what the land was like and what kind of people were there.*

How many spies did Moses send?

*Twelve—one from each of the tribes of Israel.*

What did the spies report when they came back from their 40-day journey?

*Ten of the spies said that the land was very good but that the people were too big and strong. They did not believe that God would help them take the land.*

*Two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, came back with a good report. They told the Israelites that they should trust God to give them the land.*



Did the people of Israel decide to trust the Lord?

*No. They did not believe that God would help them. They wanted to get a new leader, and they wanted to kill Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb.*

Did God allow the Israelites to kill Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb?

*No. God showed His glory in the Tabernacle before the people could stone Moses and the others.*

How did God punish the Israelites?

*They would have to wander in the wilderness for 40 years because they were not willing to take the land that God had given them.*

## 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.



### Seeing as God Sees

This activity requires two adults to help. Bring two pairs of play eyeglasses into class. Gather the students into a group. Tell them that in today's lesson, the Israelites are going to have a hard time seeing things as God sees them. The Israelites were supposed to fight the Canaanites and take the land that God had promised. Select one student to put on the "man's" glasses. Before you put the glasses on the student, have the student close his eyes. Have a teacher stand on a chair and pretend to be a mean Canaanite. Put the glasses on the student, and then have the student open his eyes. Ask him whether he would be afraid to fight a big Canaanite like this. Most of the Israelites were afraid of the Canaanites. Have the student close his eyes again, and have him stand on a chair. While his eyes are closed, have the mean Canaanite get off the chair and sit on the floor. Have the student open his eyes and look now. Ask him whether the mean Canaanite looks so scary now. From God's perspective, all men are tiny. He can help the Israelites defeat the Canaanites. The Israelites should see things not as man sees them but as God sees them. Let's find out today whether the Israelites were brave or were afraid of the Canaanites.



### In God's Time

Materials: stopwatch with alarm

Directions: At the beginning of the lesson, ask the students to stand up. Explain that you are going to test how quickly they can obey. Turn on the stopwatch and ask the students to sit down. Tell the students how long they took to obey. Challenge them to try to obey instantly, and then time them sitting down and standing up a few times. Explain to the students that God desires instant obedience. When God gives us instructions or commands, we are to immediately respond, "Yes, Lord." Explain that in today's lesson, they will learn about Israel, who tried to obey God in their own time and their own way, not in God's time and God's way.

## Praise and Worship

*Awesome God*  
*Great Is Thy Faithfulness*  
*Mighty Is Our God*  
*My God Is So Great*  
*Trust and Obey*



### Israel Rebels

Another sad story of Israel  
*(Hold hands like a book and shake head back and forth.)*

Choosing to disobey God and rebel:  
*(Shake fist at ceiling and look up.)*

Spies went to the Promised Land; what did they see?  
*(Make a circle with fingers, hold over eye while looking back and forth.)*

A fruitful land flowing with milk and honey.  
*(Hold hands near face, and then slowly move diagonally down while wiggling fingers.)*

But some spies made up terrible lies,  
*(Hold hand over heart, cross fingers with opposite hand, and shake head back and forth.)*

And Israel believed them; they wailed and cried.  
*(Move fists back and forth under eyes.)*

They rejected God's will, His power, His plan.  
*(Turn head to side, hold up hands, and move hands as if pushing something away.)*

God's punishment for rebels—no Promised Land.  
*(Point up, and then hold hands in front of chest and quickly move to sides, like "safe" in baseball.)*

## 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.



### Fruit of the Land

Materials: cardstock copies of the "Fruit of the Land" craft page, 3½ x ¼-inch strips of brown construction paper, small wads of purple construction paper, scissors, glue, crayons

Directions: Cut out the shapes along the solid lines. Fold the men up along the dotted line. Glue the verse to the base. Use a strip of brown cardstock about 3½ inches long to represent the pole. Glue wads of purple construction paper to the pole to represent grapes. Finally, glue the pole to connect the men.



### Wrong-Way Binoculars

Have a teacher stand at the front of the room. Give students a turn looking at you through a pair of binoculars from only a few feet away. If you look through a pair of binoculars from the small side, it makes things look bigger. But if you look at things from the large side, they seem very small. In today's lesson, God asked the Israelites to spy out the land. They were afraid because they were looking at things from man's perspective and not God's. The people living in the Promised Land seemed bigger than they really were. What happened when Israel looked at things from fear instead of faith? When God asks us to do things that are scary, what can we do? We can trust His promises and remember that He can do anything. Everything is small compared to God.



### Spying out the Land

Make binoculars from toilet-paper rolls or a spyglass from a paper-towel roll. Glue a verse from the lesson onto the binoculars or spyglass, and have the students decorate it with markers. Discussion: Is there anything that makes you afraid? Do you believe that God promises to take care of you in every situation? How did the 10 spies prove that they believed the Canaanites were stronger than God? How does our fear show that we think God isn't strong enough to take care of us? Pray now and confess any sin of unbelief.



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### A Grape Report

Materials: copies of the "A Grape Report" craft sheet at the back of the lesson, scissors, glue, crayons

Directions: Give each student a copy of each "A Grape Report" craft sheet. Have students cut out the grapes and glue them to the appropriate grape cluster. Have the students color the grapes purple, or copy the grapes onto purple paper before they cut them out.



### Race to Obedience

Materials: stopwatch with alarm

Directions: Coordinate a brief "obedience race," such as walking a line of tape across the room to say "good morning" to a teacher or cleaning up from the craft. Time the students in teams, and see who races to obedience the fastest.

### Coloring Sheets

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

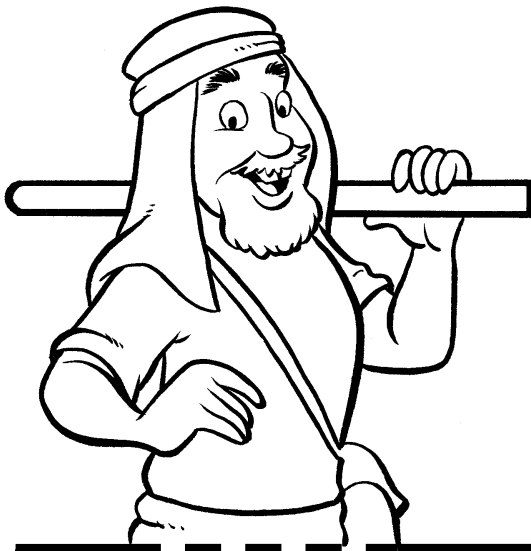


### MEMORY VERSE

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6).



# Fruit of the Land

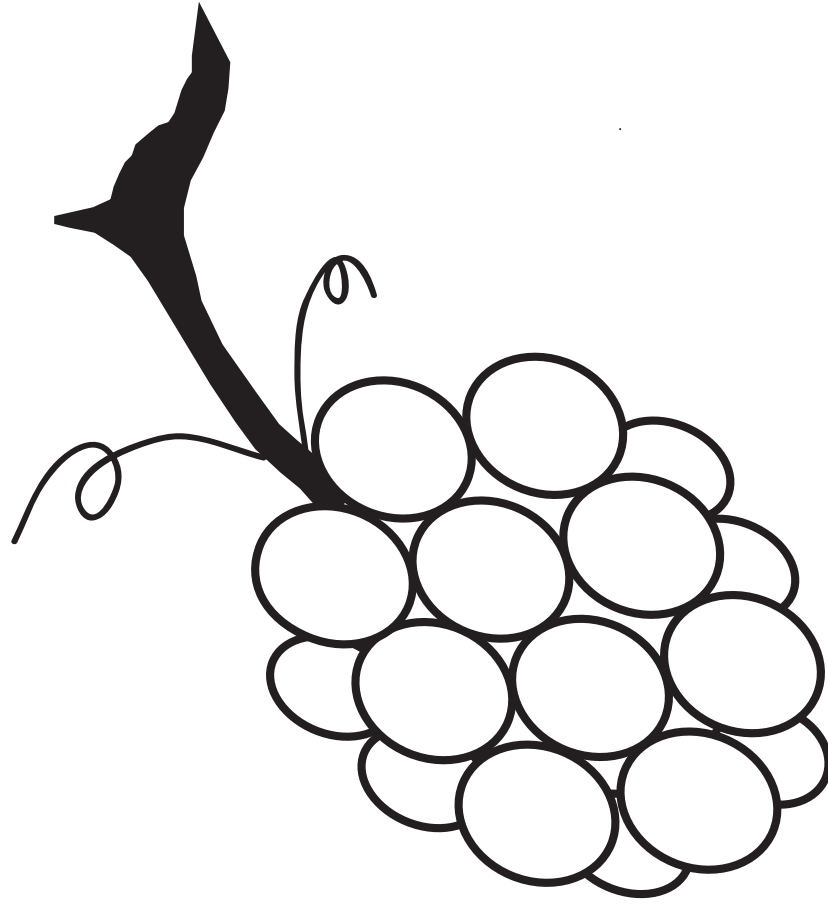


“Then they came to the Valley of Eshcol, and there cut down a branch with one cluster of grapes; they carried it between two of them on a pole. They also brought some of the pomegranates and figs”  
(Numbers 13:23).

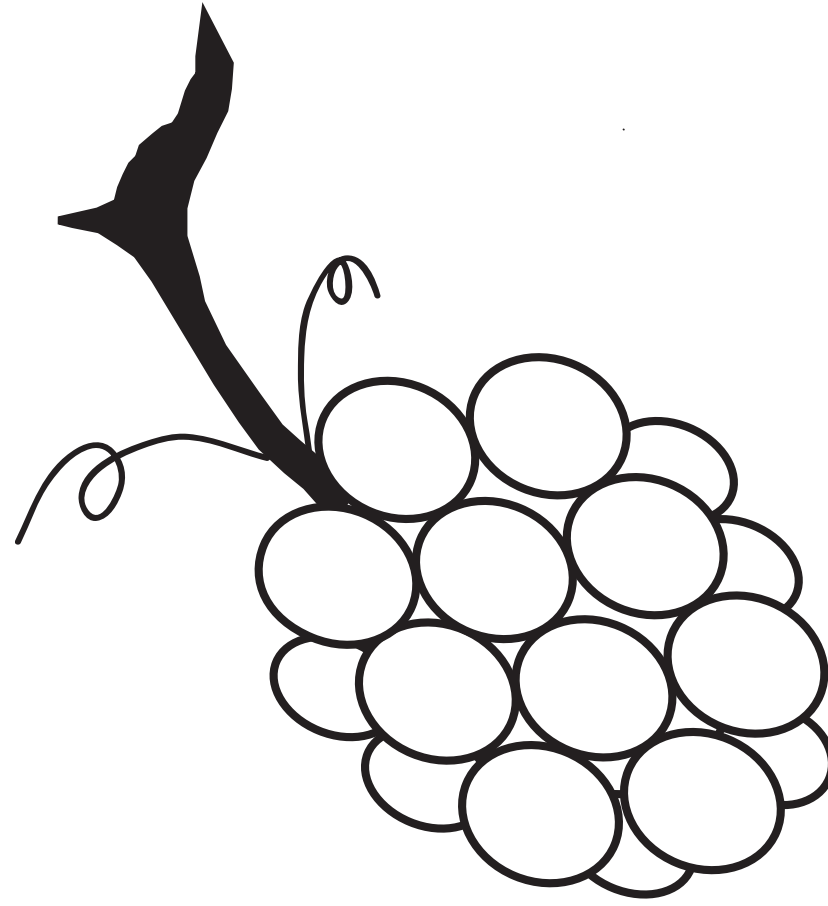


# A Grape Report

Read Numbers 13–14. Moses sent 12 spies into the land God promised to give to the Israelites. When they came back 40 days later, they reported what they had seen. Two different reports were given. Cut out the grapes on the second page of “A Grape Report,” and glue each one to the grape cluster that best represents the report given.



**Grapes of Faith and Trust**



**Grapes of Fear and Doubt**





# A Grape Report

Caleb  
&  
Joshua

The  
Lord is  
with us.

God  
will  
fight for  
us.

We  
can't  
do it!

Let's go  
back to  
Egypt!

10  
spies

Moses  
&  
Aaron

Cities  
have  
huge  
walls.

They  
are too  
big!

Let's  
trust  
God.

God has  
promised  
it.

We are  
afraid.

They had  
faith in  
God.

They  
lacked  
faith in  
God.

They  
are too  
strong.

People  
cried all  
night.

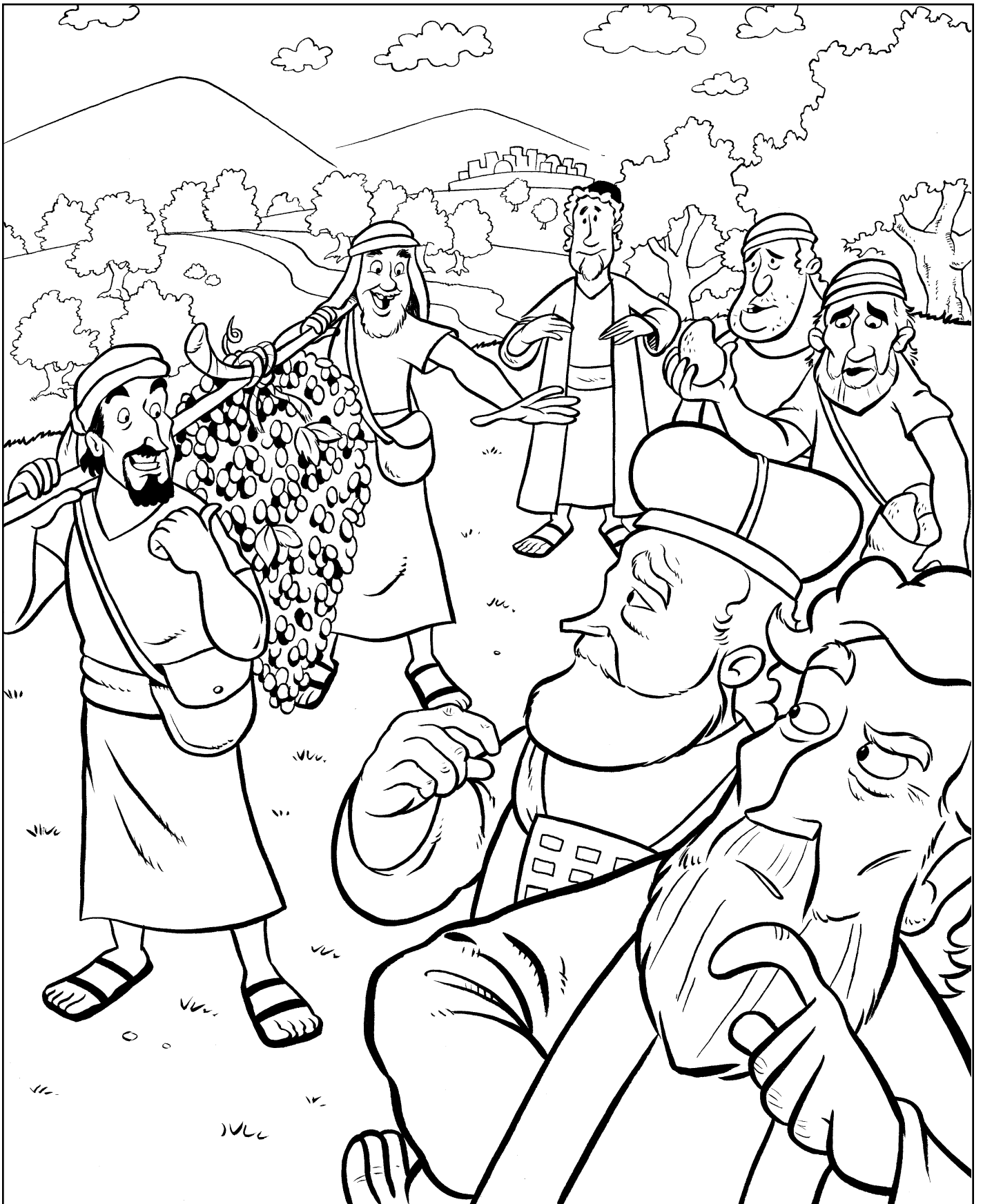
God was  
pleased.

God  
became  
angry.

Do not  
rebel  
against  
God.

Do not  
fear the  
people.





So the spies returned from spying out the land after forty days. And they told Moses, "We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit" (Numbers 13:25, 27).





**Ten of the spies did not trust God and gave a bad report of the people of the Promised Land (Numbers 13:26–29).**

