



Israel Rejects God's Plan

Numbers 13-14



LESSON GOAL

Students will learn how to respond to a faithful God.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to

- Explain the Abrahamic Covenant.
- Describe and contrast the reports given by the spies.
- Evaluate the people's response to the news of the spies.

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 the promises that He has given us.
- Obey the commands that God has given in His Word.
- Trust that God's plans are always 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

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 "devour[ed] 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.

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."



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.



Standing against Peer Pressure

Have you ever been afraid of what other people think about you? Or have you ever done something only because others were around? That is what we call "fear of man" or "peer pressure." Many people care about what others think about them

more than they care about what God thinks about them and about being obedient to Him. Some people drive nice cars, say jokes to make people laugh, or do wrong things only to get the attention of others. All these things have to do with the fear of man. When you don't tell someone about God's love and His good news because you are afraid of what they might think, you fear man more than you fear God. Or if you were to tell even a little lie to make people think that you are popular, that is the fear of man.

The children of Israel also had the fear of man. They worried that the people who were living in the Promised Land would kill them. They didn't trust God's promise to give them the victory and the land. But two very brave men stood up against the rest of the nation. They were not afraid of what man thought but wanted to be obedient to God. Even though Caleb and Joshua were against the other 10 spies, they desired obedience to God over having the other men approve of them. Let's find out what Caleb and Joshua did.



God's Promises Are Good

Sometimes God asks us to do things that seem hard. Ask the students whether 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 children 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.



Remove and Remember

Materials: cookie sheet or tray, various items of your choice

Directions: Bring in a cookie sheet or tray with many different items on it. Allow the students one minute to look at the tray and try to remember everything on it. Then take away the tray and ask the students to write down as many items as they can remember. Now try a variation of this by removing one of the items and seeing if the students can guess which one was removed. Everyone's ability to look and remember differs. One student may remember something that another student does not. Moses sent out 12 spies to look things over before the Israelites proceeded into the Promised Land. These 12 men each saw things a little differently and remembered different things in different ways.



Spy out the Land

Set up a scene, or bring in a detailed picture or painting and position it in a corner of the classroom. At various times during class, allow individual students or table groups to go "spy out the land." Give them a half-sheet of paper with some open-ended questions and some blank spaces for general observations. This should provoke different answers based on each student's perception of what he is looking at. Review these answers during the Practice time, and use this time to discuss why sometimes our perceptions of what we see may be different from others' perceptions.

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 Numbers 13–14.

Introduction

The people of Israel had been in the wilderness for over a year (Num. 10:11) as God was preparing them to take possession of the Promised Land. These people had never seen the Promised Land, so they did not know what kind of land it was. God told Moses to choose 12 men to spy out the land to see what was there. They found some interesting and scary things in the land. Would you like to learn about what they saw? Me too! Let’s open our Bibles to Numbers 13.



Leadoff Questions

LOQ: Where was God leading Israel?

Answer: To the land He had promised Abraham. Six hundred years before Moses, God promised Abraham that his descendants would one day dwell in the land of Canaan.

LOQ: What did God tell Moses to do in Numbers 13?

Answer: God told Moses to choose a man from each tribe of Israel to spy out the land of Canaan.

LOQ: What did Moses tell the men to look for when they spied out the land?

Answer: The men were to find out what the land was like, as well as the strength or weakness of the people. They were also told to bring back some fruit from the land.

LOQ: What kind of report did the spies bring back?

Answer: When the men returned, they showed the people the fruit they had taken from the land. They reported that the land was rich and good. However, the men said that the people who lived in the land were too strong to be conquered.

LOQ: Was this the right attitude for the men to have?

Answer: No. Moses told the men in Numbers 13:20 to “be of good courage.” The men showed a lack of courage when they failed to believe that God would give them the land He had promised.

LOQ: What was the Israelites' response to the negative report?

Answer: They wept. They said they would have preferred to die in Egypt and questioned why God had brought them out in the first place. They were even prepared to choose a new leader to take them back to Egypt. In essence, they were rejecting God's plan for them.

LOQ: How did Moses and Aaron react when they saw the Israelites' sinful response?

Answer: They fell on their faces before the people, perhaps preparing to intercede to God on their behalf.

LOQ: Which two spies encouraged the Israelites to trust God and take possession of the land?

Answer: Caleb and Joshua. They encouraged the Israelites to trust God to help them conquer the land. They knew that if God delighted in them, He surely would help them defeat the inhabitants of the Promised Land, regardless of their strength and size.

LOQ: Did the Israelites listen to Caleb and Joshua?

Answer: No. When Caleb and Joshua stood up for what was right, the people became so angry that they wanted to stone them along with Moses and Aaron. Not only was Israel rejecting God's plan, but they also were rejecting the leaders He had placed in charge.

LOQ: What stopped the Israelites from stoning the four men?

Answer: The Lord stopped them. He appeared in the tabernacle before the Israelites.

LOQ: How was God going to judge Israel for rejecting His plan?

Answer: He was going to destroy them all and start a new nation through Moses.

LOQ: What did Moses do in response to this?

Answer: Moses pleaded to God on behalf of the Israelites. Destroying them would ruin the Lord's reputation among the Egyptians and cause them to deny His power. Moses pleaded with God to preserve Israel because He was merciful and had forgiven them in the past.

LOQ: Did the Lord forgive Israel?

Answer: The Lord forgave Israel, but He still punished their sin. Everyone who was 20 years old and above would die in the wilderness and would not be allowed to enter the Promised Land. The only two people in that category who would be allowed to enter were Joshua and Caleb. All Israel would now have to wander in the wilderness for 40 years before the younger generation could enter the Promised Land.

LOQ: How did the Lord judge the 10 spies who had brought back the negative report?

Answer: He killed them with a plague.

LOQ: Did the people accept the punishment God gave them?

Answer: No; they tried to take the city even though the Lord was not with them. But the inhabitants of the land attacked them and drove them back (Num. 14:44–45).

LOQ: Are there times when you do not trust God's instructions or wisdom?

Answer: *[Obeying parents, telling the truth, loving others, etc.]*

LOQ: Are God's instructions always best?

Answer: Yes, God always has the best plans. Although they are not always the easiest, they are always the best.

Summary

God had Israel send 12 spies into the land of Canaan, one from each tribe. They were sent with specific instructions to check out the land that they were being given. When the spies returned, 10 of them reported that the land was truly wonderful but that they would not be able to conquer the people. God was displeased with Israel's disobedience. He was giving them the land that He had promised their forefathers, but they feared the people rather than trusting in Him. Their eyes were focused not on God's mighty power but on their own strength. After they rejected God's plan to conquer the land, they realized their sin and decided to obey. God was not with them in their attempt to conquer the land, and they were driven out. God's punishment for their disobedience was going to be death, but Moses interceded for the people and God spared their lives. The spies who gave the false report were killed, and the nation's punishment for their sin was to remain in the wilderness for 40 years—one year for each day that they were spying out the land.

Application

The nation of Israel was given a chance to possess the land that God had promised. Instead, they looked to themselves for strength. Have there been situations in your life that looked hard, maybe even impossible, but that you needed to trust God to get through? If we look to ourselves for strength, we will fail, but if we trust God to work out every situation for our good and for His glory, it will become clear that He is always faithful. Our job in tough circumstances is to be obedient to what God has commanded and to trust that His ways are always best.

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.



Mega Grapes

Blow up purple balloons and string them over a broom handle like a cluster of grapes. Have two teachers carry the balloons into the classroom, talking about what happened to them.



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.



"Israel Rejects God's Plan" Readers' Theater

Before class, make 21 photocopies of the script for the readers, and keep a master copy for yourself. Write the name of one character on the top of each photocopy, and highlight that character's name throughout the pages as a reminder of when to speak.

During class, assign students to the roles, and give them each a copy of the script. Direct the students participating in the theater production to stand in front of the class in random order. Remind them that a readers' theater involves minimal acting with the body, and that all the excitement is in the tone of voice and facial expressions of each reader. Point out that the directions in parentheses give instruction on how to make simple movements or expressions. Emphasize the importance of following along and reading quickly, one voice after another. Also point out that at times they may be asked to read along with another character, and stress the importance of listening to one another so that they are reading simultaneously.

Variation: For smaller classes, you may wish to combine some of the roles. For example, assign one person as narrator instead of using three different people. Another option is to invite parent volunteers to join you in reading some of the longer roles.



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

Give Thanks

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Mighty Is Our God

My God Is So Great

O-B-E-D-I-E-N-C-E

Standing on the Promises

'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus

Trust and Obey

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.



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.



How Do You View?

With the students seated together, have a teacher enter the room as if to teach a lesson. This teacher should complain about the number of students in the class, the difficulty in teaching multiple age levels, the lack of supplies, the quality of room furnishings, and the amount of preparation required to teach. The next teacher should enter the room and talk about exactly the same things—students, supplies, furnishings, and preparation—but giving an entirely different and much more positive perspective. When both teachers are finished, discuss with the students how these two people could have completely different outlooks on the very same things. Discuss what made Joshua and Caleb's report different from that of the other spies.



Journal Page: "Faith or Fear"

Give each student a copy of the journal page at the back of this lesson. The students can complete the page individually, in small groups, or at home.



"Israel Rejects God's Plan"

Use this work sheet to reinforce the key truths of this week's lesson. The work sheet is located at the back of the lesson.

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).

Israel Rejects God's Plan

Numbers 13–14

Readers' Theater

NARRATOR 1: And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

THE LORD: Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel; from each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a leader among them.

NARRATOR 2: So Moses sent them from the Wilderness of Paran according to the command of the LORD,

NARRATOR 3: all of them men who were heads of the children of Israel.

NARRATOR 1: Now these were their names:
[Each spy steps forward as his name is read.]

NARRATOR 2: from the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur;

NARRATOR 3: from the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori;

NARRATOR 1: from the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh;

NARRATOR 2: from the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph;

NARRATOR 3: from the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Nun;

NARRATOR 1: from the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu;

NARRATOR 2: from the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi;

NARRATOR 3: from the tribe of Joseph, that is, from the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of Susi;

NARRATOR 1: from the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli;

NARRATOR 2: from the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael;

NARRATOR 3: from the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi;

NARRATOR 1: from the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi.

NARRATOR 2: These are the names of the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land. [All spies step back in line.]

NARRATOR 3: And Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun, Joshua.

NARRATOR 1: Then Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said to them,

MOSES: Go up this way into the South, and go up to the mountains, and see what the land is like: whether

the people who dwell in it are strong or weak, few or many; whether the land they dwell in is good or bad; whether the cities they inhabit are like camps or strongholds; whether the land is rich or poor; and whether there are forests there or not. Be of good courage. And bring some of the fruit of the land.

NARRATOR 2: Now the time was the season of the first ripe grapes.

NARRATOR 3: So they went up and spied out the land from the Wilderness of Zin as far as Rehob, near the entrance of Hamath.

NARRATOR 1: And they went up through the South and came to Hebron;

NARRATOR 2: Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai,

NARRATOR 3: the descendants of Anak,

NARRATOR 2: were there.

NARRATOR 1: Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.

NARRATOR 2: Then they came to the Valley of Eshcol,

NARRATOR 3: and there cut down a branch with one cluster of grapes;

NARRATOR 1: They carried it between two of them on a pole.

NARRATOR 2: They also brought some of the pomegranates and figs.

NARRATOR 3: The places was called the Valley of Eshcol,

NARRATOR 1: because of the cluster which the men of Israel cut down there.

NARRATOR 2: And they returned from spying out the land after forty days.

NARRATOR 3: Now they departed and came back to Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh;

NARRATOR 1: They brought back word to them and all the congregation,

NARRATOR 2: and showed them the fruit of the land.

NARRATOR 3: Then they told him, and said:

ALL SPIES: We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.

SHAMMUA: Nevertheless the people who dwell in the land are strong,

SHAPHAT: the cities are fortified and very large;

IGAL: moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there.

PALTI: The Amalekites dwell in the land of the South;

GADDIEL: the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains;

GADDI: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan.

NARRATOR 1: Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said,

CALEB: Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it.

NARRATOR 2: But the men who had gone up with him said,

AMMIEL: We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we.

NARRATOR 3: And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying,

SETHUR: The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants,

NAHBI: and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature.

GEUEL: There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight,

ALL SPIES (except CALEB & JOSHUA): and so we were in their sight.

NARRATOR 3: So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried,

NARRATOR 1: and all the people wept that night.

NARRATOR 2: and all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron,

NARRATOR 3: and the whole congregation said to them,

ISRAELITES 1–3: If only we had died in the land of Egypt!

ISRAELITE 1: Or if only we had died in this wilderness!

ISRAELITE 2: Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword,

ISRAELITE 3: that our wives and children should become victims?

ISRAELITE 2: Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?

NARRATOR 1: So they said to one another,

ISRAELITES 1–3: Let us select a leader and return to Egypt.

NARRATOR 2: Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel

NARRATOR 3: But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh,

NARRATOR 1: who were among those who had spied out the land,

NARRATORS 1–3: tore their clothes;

NARRATOR 2: and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying,

CALEB & JOSHUA: The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land.

CALEB: If the LORD delights in us,

JOSHUA: then he will bring us into this land and give it to us,

CALEB & JOSHUA: a land which flows with milk and honey.

CALEB: Only do not rebel against the LORD,

JOSHUA: nor fear the people of the land,

CALEB: for they are our bread;

JOSHUA: their protection has departed from them,

CALEB & JOSHUA: and the LORD is with us. Do not fear them.

NARRATOR 3: And all the congregation said to stone them with stones.

NARRATOR 1: Now the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of meeting before all the children of Israel.

NARRATOR 2: Then the LORD said to Moses:

THE LORD: 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? I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they.

NARRATOR 3: And Moses said to the LORD,

MOSES: Then the Egyptians will hear it, for by Your might You brought these people up from among them, and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that You, LORD, are among these people; that 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. Now if You kill these people as one man, then the nations which have heard of Your fame will speak, saying,

NATIONS: Because the LORD was not able to bring this people to the land which He swore to give them, therefore He killed them in the wilderness.

MOSES: And now, I pray, let the power of my LORD be great, just as You have spoken, saying,

THE LORD: The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.

MOSES: Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray, according to the greatness of Your mercy, just as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.

NARRATOR 3: Then the LORD said:

THE LORD: I have pardoned, according to your word; but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD—because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice, they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it. But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it. Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwell in the valley; tomorrow turn and move out into the wilderness by the Way of the Red Sea.

NARRATOR 1: And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying,

THE LORD: How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who complain against Me? I have heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against Me. Say to them,

MOSES & AARON: As I live, says the LORD, just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you:

MOSES: The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness,

AARON: all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above.

MOSES: Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun,

AARON: you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in.

MOSES: But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in,

AARON: and they shall know the land which you have despised.

MOSES: But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness.

AARON: And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years,

MOSES: and bear the brunt of your infidelity,

AARON: until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness.

MOSES: According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years,

AARON: and you shall know My rejection.

THE LORD: I the LORD have spoken this. I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.

NARRATOR 2: Now the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land,

NARRATOR 3: who returned and made all the congregation complain against him by bringing a bad report of the land,

NARRATOR 1: those very men who brought the evil report about the land,

NARRATORS 1 & 2: died by the plague before the LORD.

NARRATOR 2: But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive,

NARRATOR 3: of the men who went to spy out the land.

NARRATOR 1: Then Moses told these words to all the children of Israel,

NARRATORS 1–3: and the people mourned greatly.

NARRATOR 2: and they rose early in the morning and went up to the top of the mountain saying,

ISRAELITES 1–3: Here we are,

ISRAELITE 1: and we will go up to the place which the LORD has promised,

ISRAELITES 1–3: for we have sinned!

NARRATOR 3: And Moses said,

MOSES: Now why do you transgress the command of the LORD: For this will not succeed. Do not go up, lest you be defeated by your enemies, for the LORD is not among you. For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and you shall fall by the sword; because you have turned away from the LORD, the LORD will not be with you.

NARRATOR 1: But they presumed to go up to the mountaintop.

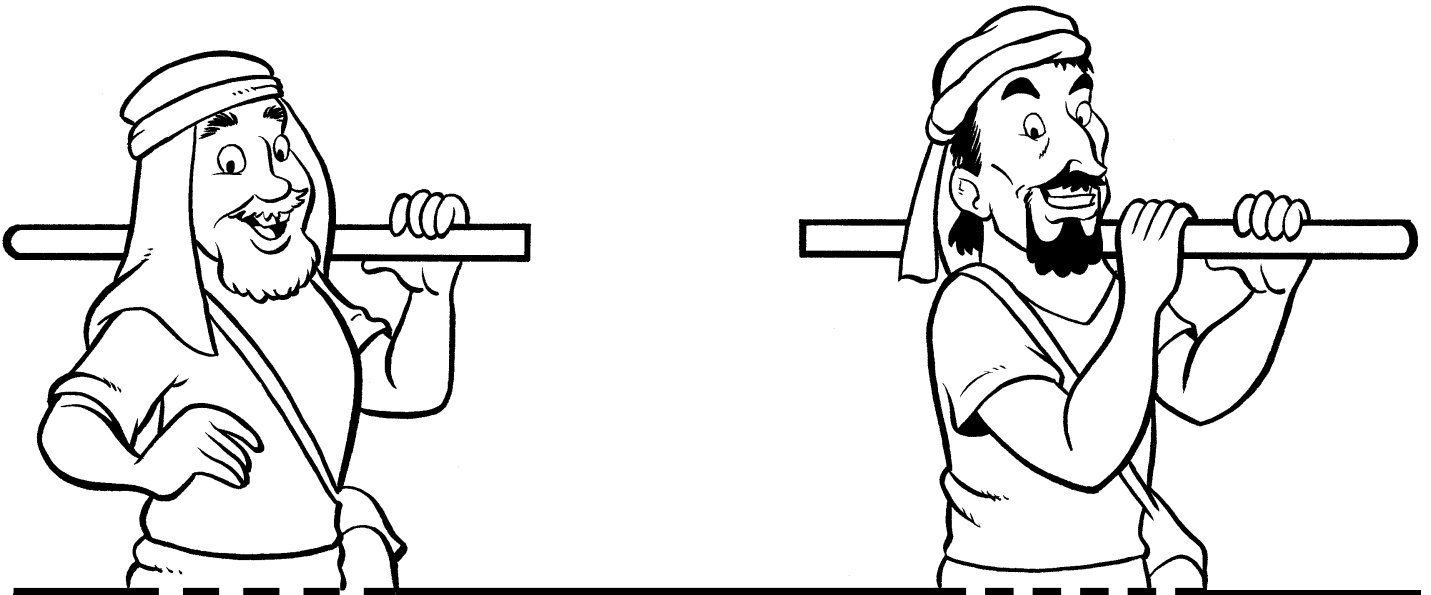
NARRATOR 2: Nevertheless, neither the ark of the covenant of the LORD nor Moses departed from the camp.

NARRATOR 3: Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who dwelt in that mountain came down

NARRATORS 1–3: and attacked them,

NARRATOR 1: and drove them back as far as Hormah.

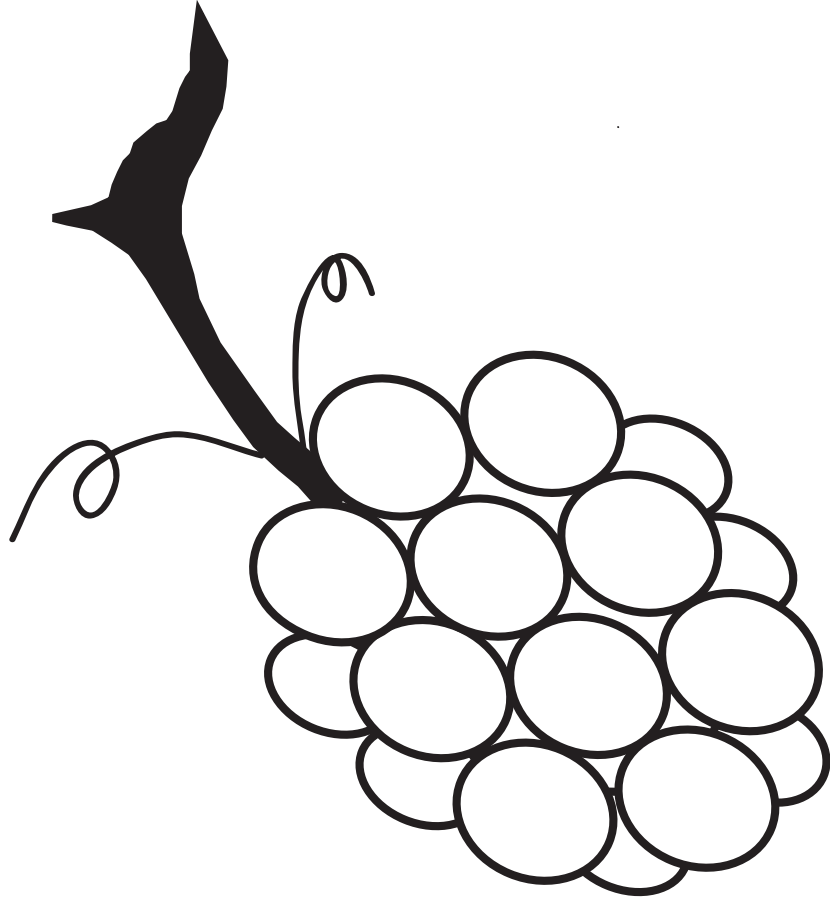
Fruit of the Land



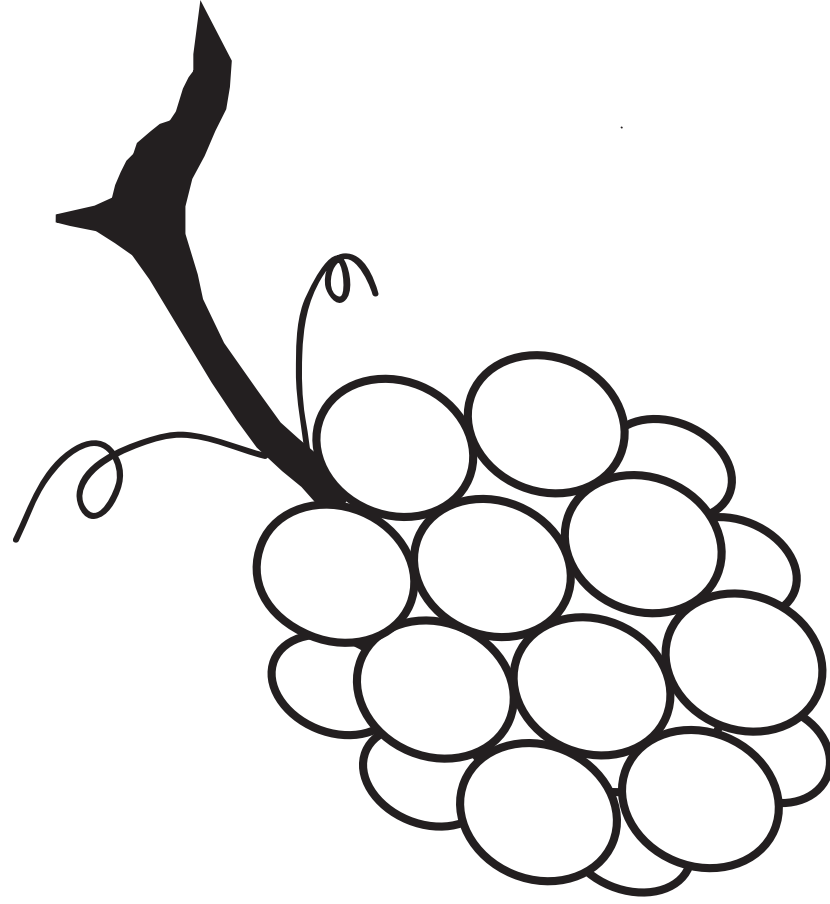
“Then they came to the Valley of Eshcol, and there cut down a branch with one cluster of grapes; they carried it between two of them on a pole. They also brought some of the pomegranates and figs”
(Numbers 13:23).

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.

Israel *Rejects* God's *Plan*



Numbers 13–14

Name _____

1. God told Moses to send 12 spies to the land of _____ (Num. 13:2).

2. The spies were to see if the land was _____ or _____ (Num. 13:19).

3. List three things the spies saw when they spied out the land.

4. What were the names of the two spies who wanted to take the land?

_____ and _____

5. Did the people trust the Lord to take them safely into the land? _____

6. What appeared when the people were about to stone Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb (Num. 14:10)? _____

7. How did God punish Israel's unbelief? _____

Faith or Fear

“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).

Do you believe that God can keep His promises? When Caleb and Joshua spied out the Promised Land, they believed God, but the other 10 spies did not believe God. As a result, the unbelieving spies shook with fear and gave a bad report to the rest of the people, but Caleb and Joshua responded in faith and gave a true report. How does God want you to respond to Him?

In the FAITH column below, write Caleb and Joshua’s responses, but place the sayings of the unbelieving spies in the FEAR column.

- “We are not able.”
- “We are able.”
- “They are like our bread.”

- “The Lord is with us.”
- “We are grasshoppers.”
- “They are giants.”

FAITH

FAITH

FEAR

When the people heard the report, how did they respond?

How did God want them to respond?

Faith or Fear

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FAITH

FEAR

When the people heard the report, how did they respond?

How did God want them to respond?

God wants you to respond to His word and promises in faith, too. So the next time you face a difficult challenge, remember and believe the Lord when He said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Then you can boldly say, "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear" (Hebrews 13:5-6).

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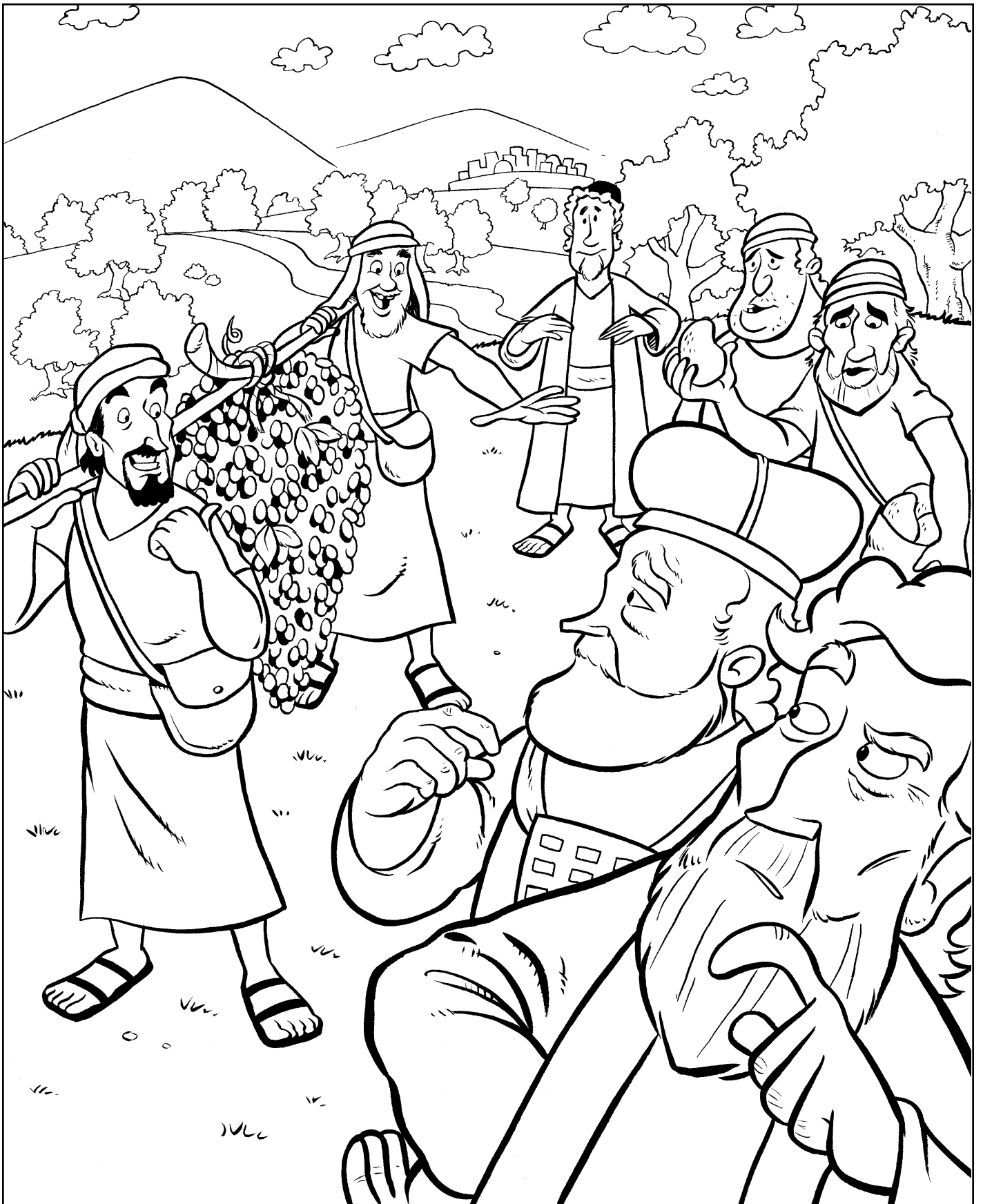
This week I will be facing this challenge:

I know that the Lord is able to

I know that the Lord is able to

When I am afraid, I will

When I am afraid, I will



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).

