

After the tabernacle was completely built, it was time for the children of Israel to move on toward the land that God had promised them. There were many more days of traveling, and some battles along the way, but one day the Israelites came up over a hot, dry hill and there before them was a view of green grass, fruit trees and the glint of blue water in the distance. Their promised land was near by! The people found a flat area to pitch their tents and Moses called a meeting of the people. They couldn't just walk into the land, for there were enemy nations living there. Moses needed to know how many cities there were, what kind of people lived there, if they were friendly or war-like. He needed to know what kind of plants and trees grew there, if the land was dry or if it had streams of water and places to plant crops. There was a lot to learn about this new land they were to inherit.

There were 12 tribes of Israelites that had descended from the 12 sons of Jacob (remember, Jacob's name was changed to Israel). So Moses chose one man from each of the 12 tribes and gave them instructions. The 12 men were to be like spies, for they would go into the land quietly and not let the people living there see them. They would spy out the land and see what the cities were like, what the people were like and what grew there, then come back and report to Moses and the people. So the spies packed some food, water and a blanket to sleep in, and started off for the land that God had promised them.

The spies went from flat farm land, past a rushing river, past orchards and vineyards clear to the mountains where there were pine and cedar trees. They saw big cities and little farms and different kind of people living there. All the spies agreed that this was a wonderful land. However, some of the cities looked strong and some of the people looked fierce. There were a few who were very tall and strong looking as well as many who were closer in size to the Israelites and friendly looking. After many days the spies came back to report to Moses and the people. When they returned they brought some fruit from the land. They had bags of red, juicy, pomegranates, rich brown figs and a cluster of grapes so big and heavy, that it took two men to carry! The people were amazed and overjoyed when they saw all the wonderful fruit from the promised land.



Pomegranates and Figs



The spies told all that they had seen. "The land flows with milk and honey," they said. Do you know what "a land of milk and honey means?" It means that it is rich with plants and flowers and bees that make honey and rich with farms and cattle for meat and milk. It's a land that will give lots of blessings of food to those who live there. Then 10 of the spies started frowning and telling what they thought were bad things. "However, the cities are walled and very strong and the people who live there are very powerful. It would be impossible to fight against these kind of people and cities!" All the Israelites started moaning and groaning at this report. The other 2 spies, named Joshua and Caleb quickly spoke up, "We should go immediately and enter the land, God will be with us and we can quickly conquer the strong cities."

Which report do you think the children of Israel believed? Often we tend to put bad things in our minds before good things. Below is a picture of part of a glass of milk. Now if you are a positive person who is looking at the good side of things, you would probably say,



"Oh look, there's a glass of milk that's half full, great...I'll have a good big, drink!

If you are a negative person who looks on the gloomy side of things, you would probably say, "Oh look, there's a glass of milk that's half empty, how disgusting, It will only take me a couple of gulps and it will be all gone and I'll still be thirsty! So - is the glass half empty or half full? It's all in how we look at things, isn't it?

God likes us to have a positive, happy way of looking at things but too often we tend to want to look at the gloomy or bad side of things.

Joshua and Caleb were ones who looked at the positive side. "God is for us, God promised us this land, we can conquer these people easily when God is with us." But the other 10 spies not only looked at the bad side, they even made it seem worse than it was. "We can't go into this land, why all the people are as tall as giants, we felt like grasshoppers next to them. This was a lie, for only a few of the people were very tall (they were probably about the size of some of our tallest basketball players). There is a verse that asks: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" The answer is ... NO ONE. This will be your memory verse for this lesson. It's an easy one to memorize and it will be something you can think of many times when things seem to go bad or when people seem to be against you.

Romans 8:31 "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

When you have learned this put a check mark in the gold box.

Joshua and Caleb knew that God would help them but the other spies had no faith in God.

The spies that had no faith kept talking about how bad this land was and soon most of the people were afraid. They began complaining, "Why did God bring us here just to kill us? Why didn't he kill us in Egypt or in the desert? Let's go back to Egypt, we can't stay here."

Joshua then stood up in front of the people and said, "This land is a very good land and if God is with us he will bring us into this land. We have no need to be afraid...don't rebel against God and don't be afraid of these people, they have no defenses because God will help us." Joshua and Caleb knew that they had the strongest army ever when God was on their side. But the Israelites were now afraid, they couldn't see God and they didn't trust in someone they couldn't see. They wanted to choose a new leader to take them back to Egypt where they had been miserable slaves. How silly and foolish they were!

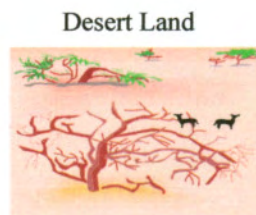
Do you ever wonder if God is really there when you have worries or troubles? We can't see God but we can see what he does for us and for our families and for those who believe in him. We can tell God is there by the beautiful things he has created and by the way he answers prayers.

The people had lost all their trust in God and they even picked up stones to throw at Joshua and Caleb because they were so angry. Suddenly there was a bright glow that grew brighter by the minute. The angry men threw down the stones and stared at the tabernacle which was glowing with the power of God. God spoke to Moses and said, "How long will these people refuse to believe in me? I can wipe them out and make a nation out of you and your family instead." Moses spoke quickly to God, "Please forgive the people, and don't destroy them all. You have been with us and the nations around know you are our God. Forgive the sin of these people." God replied, "I will forgive those who believe in me, but those who disobey and don't believe in me after all the miracles I've done in Egypt and in the desert, they will never enter the promised land, they will die in this desert."

Then God said, "Now you must turn back into the desert, for everyone over 20 years old will have to wander for 40 more years in the desert and only

Joshua and Caleb will enter the land with your children who are under 20 years old.

The 10 spies who refused to believe my words and turned the people against me will immediately die of a plague."



Moses reported all these words to the people, but do you know what? These foolish people now decided that they had seen a sign of God' in the glow of the tabernacle, that they would go into the land after all. However, it was too late! God had told them they must turn back from the promised land, and what God says, people better obey! "We sinned, we can see that now," the unbelieving people said. "But we don't need to go back to the wilderness, now we will go into the promised land, for we've seen God is here." Then the people began to buckle on their swords and get their shields ready.

"No, no," cried Moses. Didn't you hear what God told me? God commanded us to turn back into the desert, he is no longer with your army, he won't protect you if you disobey him now." Surely the people would have believed God by this time, don't you think? But sometimes people just don't learn...they think their own ideas are best and ignore God's words or they change God's words to suit their own ideas.

What do you think happened to the army of Israel as they marched out to conquer the first city they came to in the promised land? The stubborn men left the tabernacle and the priests and Moses and their families and marched into the land. They were met by a tough army who killed many of the men and chased the rest of them back out of the borders of the country. Without God's help they could never win.

The next day those who were left at the camp of Israel and the few soldiers that returned from the battle packed up the tabernacle and their tents and turned around and slowly began their march back into the desert they had come from. Because of the disobedience of part of the people the whole nation would now have another 40 years to wander in the desert before God would lead them back to the land he had promised to give them. As the children of Israel traveled in the desert, one day was much like another. The young children slowly grew up and married and had children of their own. The older people gradually grew older and died and were buried along the way. The teens helped herd the sheep and cattle and the little ones tried to make pets of lizards and horned toads that they found among the rocks.



For awhile the people made their daily sacrifices at the tabernacle and followed all of God's instructions. Aaron and his sons were the priests that helped the young ones learn about God's laws and took care of the things inside the tabernacle as God had told them to do. But one day three men got together and began to grumble about Moses and Aaron.

These men were named Korah, Dathan and Abiram. Korah was from the tribe of Levi, just as Moses and Aaron were, and although he was among the Levites who had been chosen to serve God in the tabernacle, he wasn't a leader, as Moses was, nor the High Priest, as Aaron was. Korah and his friends, Dathan and Abiram started talking to some of their friends. "Who does this Moses think he is," they grumbled. "Why does he and Aaron give us rules and expect us to listen to them." He pointed at the 250 men that had gathered around him and said, "Some of us are Levites, just as they are, we have as much right to be leaders as they do!" The men nodded and talked among themselves until they all became angry. Korah, Dathan and Abiram marched up to Moses and Aaron and demanded, "What makes you think you're so important? We have as much right to be leaders as you do!" The 250 men had followed along and they agreed, "yes ... right on...that's right...yah," they said. This astonished poor Moses. He and Aaron were just doing their regular jobs, why were these men so unhappy with them? They knew that they had been chosen by God, not by any man in the Israelite camp. Moses answered, "Tomorrow God will show who are his chosen ones. Each of you take your censers and put incense and a fire in them. Come before the tabernacle and we will let God show us who are the ones he has chosen to lead Israel."

Do you know what a censer is and what it is used for? A censer looks something like this picture. There's a fire in the bowl of the censer and good smelling incense is put on the fire. Does your mother have some candles that smell nice when she lights them? This is like the good smell of the incense. When lit there is a lovely smell to the smoke that raises up toward heaven. God says our prayers smell sweet to him, just like the incense smells.



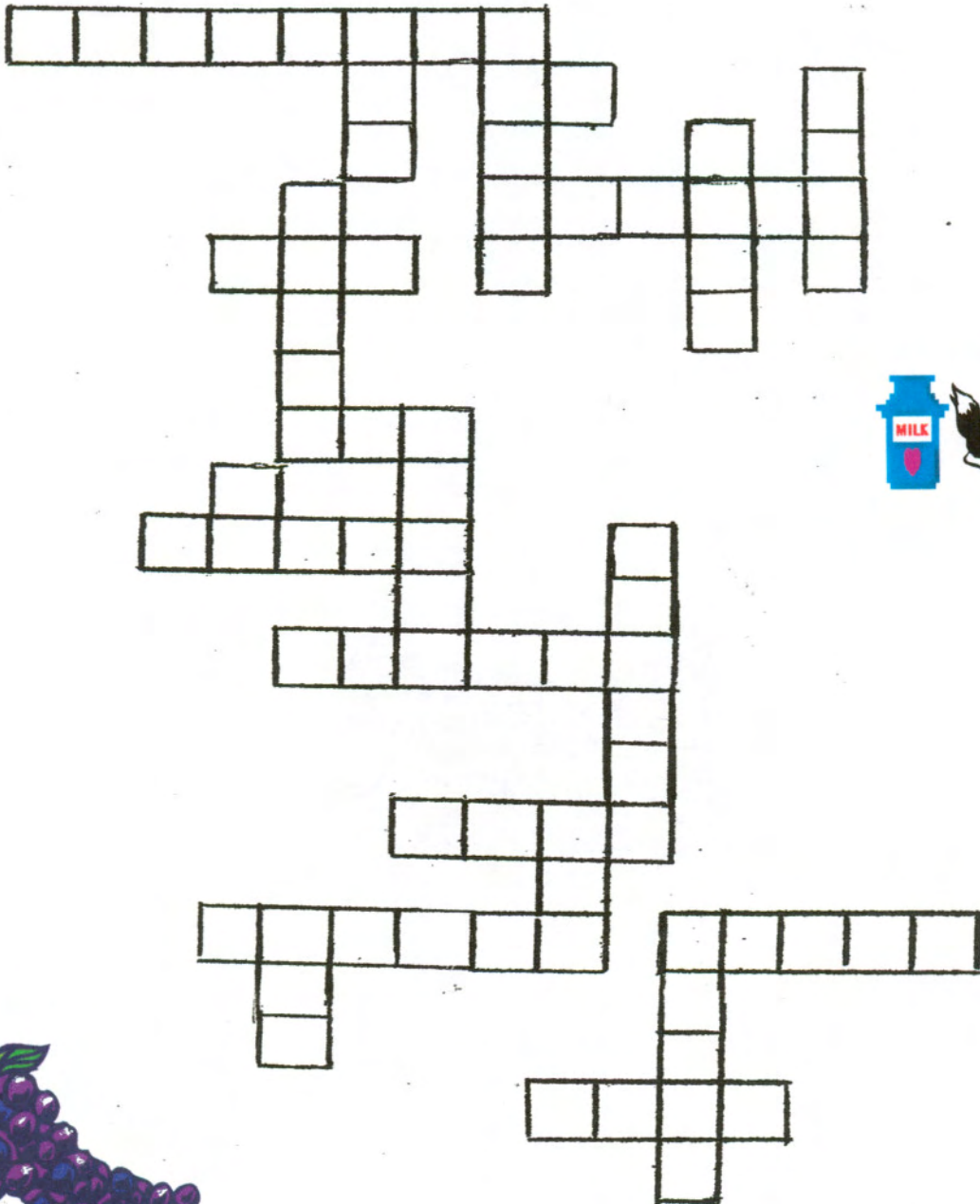
The next morning Korah and the 250 men came the tabernacle with their censers lit. Once again the tabernacle began to glow with the glory of God. Then Moses said to all the Israelites, "If these men die a natural death, then the Lord has not chosen me to lead you. But if something that has never happened before, happens to Korah, Dathan and Abiram, then you will know that God has chosen us to be your leaders. Then God said to Moses, "Move away from Korah, Dathan and Abiram. As they moved away, suddenly with a loud crack the earth split open right underd Korah, Dathan and Abiram and all their family. They fell down into the earth and then the split in the earth closed. This was definitely something that had never happened before! The 250 men holding censers had scrambled and fallen and the censers caught fire and burned them up as well. God said, "take the burned censers and hammer the metal thin. Put it on the altar to be a sign to the people."

1. How many spies were sent into the promised land?
2. How many brought back a good report?
3. What were the three kinds of fruit the spies brought back?
4. What does it mean when land is described as "A land of milk and honey?"
5. Why were the people afraid to go into the promised land?
6. If God is on our side do we need to be afraid of our enemies? (write memory verse here)
7. What did the people see when they wanted to throw stones at Joshua and Caleb?
8. Did the Israelite army obey God when he told them to go back into the wilderness?
What did they do? Went into the desert? Decided to fight a war? Stayed where they were?
9. How many years were the Israelites over 20 to wander in the desert?
10. Korah, Dathan and Abiram wanted to take over someone's job, who was it?
11. What kind of smell did censers have? (a) sweet (b) spicey (c) smokey
12. What strange thing happened to Korah, Dathan and Abiram?
13. What happened to the 250 people who followed Korah, Dathan and Abiram?
14. What happened to the censers of the 250 people?
15. When God gives an order is it wise to disobey and follow our own ideas?

PUZZEL PAGE

Fill in the blanks below with the following words. Circle the words that are not found in this lesson

2	3	4	5	6	8
AM	BAM	FIGS	CALEB	AFRAID	PROMISED
UP	CAN	LAND	DAVID	GRAPES	
	FOX	MARY	HONEY	ISRAEL	
	GOD	MILK	HURRY	JOSHUA	
		MOSES			
		SPIES			



The Israelite spies found many kinds of fruit in the promised land. We have a fruit maze below. Can you travel through the fruit to find the promised land? What fruit is this?



Start
Here

