

# FAMILY DEVOTIONAL YEAR 1

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# WELCOME TO Generations of Grace



This curriculum has been designed to deepen your own study of God's word so that you might be able to properly understand and accurately teach each lesson. It's our prayer that this curriculum would be a blessing to your ministry and home as God uses it to encourage your family.



## Share the Lesson

- Five-Day Devotionals Guides the family through the Generations of Grace lesson, a cross-reference passage, and a passage about Christ to lead the family through the whole counsel of God.
- Generations of Grace Passages Reinforces the lesson that your child learned in Sunday School.
- **Cross-Reference Passage** Points to another passage that reinforces the central truth of each week's lesson.
- Christ-Centered Passage Connects each week's lesson to Jesus Christ and to the gospel.
- Explain Helps parents clarify key truths from the passage for their children.
- Ask See what the children learned and help them remember key facts from the passage.
- **Discuss** Help parents counsel their children in real life based on the passage.

# **Additional Resources**

Use these additional resources to help support your lessons and to knit together the church and the home, ensuring that what is taught on Sunday matches what is learned throughout the week.

- Coloring Book
- Student Journal
- Craft Book
- Teacher Book
- Activity Book

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Israel was rebellious, so God burned the perimeter of the camp  ${ullet}$  Numbers 11:1–3

#### READ

Numbers 11:1-3

## EXPLAIN 🕑

#### The truth of Numbers 11:1-3

At the first sign of trouble and discomfort Israel was ready to go back to Egypt. However, to reverse course and return to Egypt would have been to reject the LORD. God had promised goodness and blessing (10:32), but the people responded with rebellion and grumbling (11:1-3). By grumbling, or <u>muttering bitter words</u>, the nation of Israel gave voice to their own sinful heart. God had graciously led them out of Egypt, but instead of responding with love and obedience, they responded with anger and disobedience. They preferred slavery and the false gods of Egypt to the true God who had freed them by His powerful hand. Moses immediately interceded for the people through prayer (11:2). God was gracious and burned only the perimeter of the camp, although His punishment could have been much more severe (cf. Nadab and Abihu, Lev 10:1–3). Numbers 11:1–3 marks the first of seven rebellions recorded in the book of Numbers. This brief but wicked act of unfaithfulness demonstrates the general pattern of Israel's rebellion: (1) sin of the people; (2) punishment by God; (3) prayer to God; and (4) salvation.

# ASK 🕜

- What did the Israelites do in Numbers 11:1? They grumbled about their perceived "misfortunes."
- Did the Israelites have any reason to complain?
   No. God gave them everything they needed.
- How did the Israelites reject God's provision? The people of Israel were not satisfied with what God had given them; they wanted more.
- 4. What did God do when He heard the Israelites' grumbling? His anger was kindled, and He sent fire to consume some of those living near the edges of the camp.

# DISCUSS 🧐

- 1. Talk about why the sin of grumbling is so offensive to God.
- 2. Describe how God's punishment was severe but also filled with mercy.

#### Israel was faithless, so God killed those who complained • Numbers 11:4-35

#### 

Numbers 11:4-35

#### EXPLAIN $\boldsymbol{\Theta}$

#### The truth of Numbers 11:4-35

Even after God demonstrated His own power and grace by burning the perimeter of the camp, the "rabble", the non-Israelites who left Egypt with Israel, complained, expressing their unhappiness with words (11:4; cf. Exod 12:38). Their discontent spread throughout the nation of Israel. By desiring what the LORD had not provided, they demonstrated a lack of faith in God. Therefore, the LORD promised to punish them by giving them such an abundance of quail 4. How did God punish those who complained that it would be as if it were coming out their noses. Moses himself also demonstrated a lack of trust (11:10-15; 22-23). The LORD responded to his first complaint by pouring out His Spirit on 70 elders of Israel (11:16-17, 24-25). The LORD responded to Moses' second complaint by sending an over abundance of quail. Using a wind, the LORD delivered a massive quantity of quail to the areas surrounding Israel's encampment (11:31). But before the people even had the chance to enjoy the meat, God struck them with a deadly disease. The anger of the LORD burned against the rebellion of those who had craved the meat (11:33).

# ASK 🕜

- 1. Did the Israelites and those with them have any reason to complain about food? No.
- 2. How had God previously provided for the people?

God had provided water, manna, and quail for the people on the way to Sinai (Exod 15:22-17:7).

- 3. What did God give the people because of their complaining about not having meat? God graciously provided quail.
- about not having meat? He punished the people with a severe plague.

## DISCUSS (

- 1. Talk about what it means to complain and what God thinks about complainers.
- 2. Identify different ways your family has complained in the last week and talk about ways you can keep from complaining in the future.

# DAY 3

#### Miriam and Aaron were prideful, so God struck Miriam with leprosy • Numbers 12:1-16

#### READ

Numbers 12:1-16

## EXPLAIN $\Theta$

#### The truth of Numbers 12:1-16

The next rebellion sprang up from within Moses' family. Miriam and Aaron, Moses' sister and brother, opposed his leadership on the basis of his wife's ethnicity. After the death of his first wife, Zipporah, Moses married a woman from Cush (Ethiopia). Miriam's opposition to Moses revealed her prideful heart. Miriam and Aaron were both spokespeople for God, but by challenging Moses' unique relationship with the LORD, Miriam and Aaron revealed the pride rooted in their hearts.

The LORD's words to Aaron and Miriam affirmed His unique relationship with Moses (12:6-8). First, God called Moses "My servant", giving him a title of the highest honor (Num 12:7; cf. Matt 25:21, 23). Second, God told Aaron and Miriam that He spoke with Moses "mouth to mouth", not in visions or dreams (12:6, 8).To communicate directly with the LORD was a unique privilege. Therefore the LORD immediately punished Miriam, striking her with leprosy (12:10). Aaron quickly repented of his sin and begged Moses to not hold Miriam's sin against her (12:11). Moses listened to his brother, asking the LORD to heal Miriam, and God graciously provided for her healing (12:13-15).

#### DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

# ASK 😯

- What did Aaron and Miriam do in Numbers 12:1? They spoke out against Moses. They were not trusting God's decision for Moses to be their leader.
- How did God describe Moses? God described Moses as a faithful servant (12:7). Moses was more humble than anyone else on the earth (12:3).
- What did Moses do when he saw that Miriam had been afflicted with leprosy? He prayed to God on her behalf. He had mercy on Miriam and wanted God to heal her.
- 4. What was God's answer to Moses' prayer? *God healed Miriam*.

# DISCUSS 🤉

- Miriam and Aaron were discontent with the job God had given them. Explain what this word means, using examples from your own life.
- Describe Moses' response to Miriam's sin. Talk about how you can respond like Moses when others sin against you.

# DAY 4

Israel's forgetfulness resulted in their rebellion • Psalm 106:13–15

# READ

Psalm 106:1-15

## EXPLAIN 🕑

#### The truth of Psalm 106:13-15

Psalm 106 rehearses God's mercy during Israel's history in spite of Israel's rebellion and sinfulness. Verses 13–33 remember the nation's wanderings in the wilderness. This section reveals that the reason for their complaining was their forgetfulness (106:13). Three days after crossing the Red Sea, Israel complained against God (Exod 15:22-25). Despite the great signs which God had done in Egypt and His provision between the Red Sea and Mount Sinai, Israel had not changed. Three days after leaving Sinai they continued their grumbling against God. The people doubted God's ability to sustain them and quickly complained against Him. They wanted meat and put God to the test. God gave them what they craved for, sending a massive amount of quail. However, He also sent a plague. There is a great sense of irony in that God gave them exactly what they asked for and it killed them. It is an important lesson for us to learn: we often forget God's blessings, craving for things that, in the end, never produce the outcome we had hoped for.

# ASK 😯

1. What were some of God's great works that the Israelites saw?

They saw the ten plagues, they saw God part the Red Sea, they saw God provide food and water for the people, and they saw God's glory over the tabernacle.

- 2. Why did the Israelites rebel against God? They forgot all the great works He had done.
- How quickly did Israel rebel against God after leaving Egypt? They complained three days after crossing the Red Sea (Exod 15:22-25).

## DISCUSS 🤦

- 1. Discuss ways you can actively remember God's blessings to your family.
- Talk about how we can learn from Israel's example (1 Cor 10:6).

Apostasy is deliberate defection from Christ • Hebrews 10:26-31

#### READ

Hebrews 10:26-31

## EXPLAIN <sup>(O)</sup>

#### The truth of Hebrews 10:26-31

This portion of Scripture deals with the sin of *apostasy*. This sin is an intentional falling away. or defection. from Christ. An apostate is someone who has heard and understood the gospel, and is on the verge of saving faith, but then rebels, turning away from Christ in rejection of Him and His word. Judas Iscariot is an example of this type of person. Apostates go on sinning, refusing to repent, demonstrating that they were never truly saved (1 John 2:19). They sin willfully, deliberately rejecting God. Their sin is habitual, not isolated acts of rebellion. There is no hope for this kind of sinner, because he has rejected the only sacrifice that can cleanse him from sin. There is only the fearful expectation of terrifying judgment (11:26-27). Sadly, this type of sinful rejection was displayed by many Israelites after their deliverance from Egypt. They witnessed the power of God but continually grumbled against the provision of God. However, God was merciful and patient with them, just as He is with all those who sin against Him.

# ASK 😯

- 1. What sin does this portion of Scripture address? *The sin of apostasy.*
- What is apostasy? An intentional falling away, or defection, from Christ.
- 3. Who are two examples of apostasy? Judas Iscariot and the nation of Israel.
- What does the apostate have to look forward to in the future?
   Only a fearful expectation of judgment.

## DISCUSS 🧐

- 1. Explain what it means to "willfully" and "habitually" sin against God.
- 2. Discuss why there is no hope for an apostate.

# **NEXT WEEK**

#### Israel rejects God's plan

Numbers 13:1-14:45



# <text><text>

# **DAY 1** Ten spies gave an evil report about the Promised Land • Numbers 13:1–33

## READ

Numbers 13:1-33

## EXPLAIN <sup>(2)</sup>

#### The truth of Numbers 13:1-33

The spies were sent into the land so that they might be witnesses who could give testimony to God's faithfulness, that God does exactly what He says He will do. God had promised Israel a land flowing with milk and honey (Exod 3:8, 17; 13:5; 33:3; Lev 20:24), and the spies were to give testimony that God's promise about the land was true. Their testimony to God's faithfulness in regard to the abundant produce of the land would be proof that God would be faithful in regard to driving out the people of the land. But they were afraid of the inhabitants of the land of Canaan. However, Caleb stood up and urged the people to trust God (13:30). He understood that since God's word was true concerning the nature of land, surely God's word was true concerning their victory in taking the land. But Israel desired to go back to Egypt (Acts 7:39), back to their false gods (Ps 78:58). The ten spies rejected the LORD by spreading an evil report (13:32-33; cf. Exod 23:1), and the people followed them in their rebellion.



1. What kind of report did the spies bring back?

They reported that the land was rich and good. However, the men thought that the people who lived in the land were too strong to be conquered.

2. Was this the right attitude for the men to have?

No. The men showed a lack of faith when they failed to believe that God would give them the land He had promised.

3. What was the Israelites' response to the negative report? They were afraid and wept. They questioned

why God had brought them out of Egypt. They desired a new leader to take them back to Egypt.

## DISCUSS 🤦

- 1. Make a list of promises that God has made to His children.
- 2. Discuss how God's faithfulness in the past gives us hope and confidence concerning what He will do in the future.

#### The nation of Israel rejected God • Numbers 14:1-10a

#### READ

Numbers 14:1-10a

#### EXPLAIN 🗿

#### The truth of Numbers 14:1-10a

Israel cried and wept after listening to the ten spies' evil report (14:1). Their sadness resulted in grumbling. First, they began to grumble against Moses and Aaron, saying that they should appoint a new leader to bring them back to Egypt (14:2–4). Second, they grumbled against the LORD, accusing Him of bringing them out of Egypt only to abandon them to die in Canaan (14:3). In response, Moses and Aaron immediately humbled themselves and interceded for the people (14:5), praving to God on their behalf. Joshua and Caleb also humbled themselves and urged the people not to rebel. They understood that if the LORD was with them that no one could possibly stand against them (Ps 118:5-7). Therefore they urged the people not to rebel against the LORD nor fear the people of the land (Num 14:9). The Israelites' rebellion against God was seen in their rejection of Joshua and Caleb. They desired to kill those who were faithful to the LORD (14:10a). Their rebellion was now complete. They had completely rejected God and His chosen leaders.

# ASK 🕜

- What did the spies report when they came back from their 40 day journey? The spies said that the land was very good but that the people were huge.
- 2. How did Moses and Aaron react when they saw the Israelites' sinful response? They fell on their faces before the people, preparing to pray to God on their behalf.
- What stopped the Israelites from stoning the four men? The Lord stopped them. He appeared in the tabernacle before the Israelites.

#### DISCUSS 🤦

- Discuss why Joshua and Caleb's report differed so greatly from that of the other spies.
- Explain what motivated Moses and Aaron to humble themselves and pray for the people.

# DAY 3

#### The LORD judged the nation of Israel • Numbers 14:10b-45

#### READ

Numbers 14:10b-45

## EXPLAIN 🗿

#### The truth of Numbers 14:10b-45

The LORD intervened to stop the murder of Israel's leaders (14:10b). He questioned Moses concerning the people, giving Moses the opportunity to pray for the people (14:11). Moses interceded for the people by appealing to God's glory (14:13–16). If God annihilated the Israelites after all that He had done to redeem them (14:14), then the Egyptians and other nations would think that God was too weak to bring His people into

the land (14:16). Moses also interceded for the people by appealing to God's character (14:17–19). The LORD responded by judging the people and demonstrating the full array of His character. He forgave the people (14:20), disciplined the people (14:21–23; 26–29; 30–35), blessed the faithful (14:24–25), and killed the spies who began the rebellion (14:36–38). The LORD forgave the people but there were still consequences for their sin. They would not see the land because they rejected God and His promise (Ps 106:24). The entire generation of rebellious Israelites would die in the wilderness (14:29).



- Did God allow the Israelites to kill Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb? No. God stopped them.
- 2. Did the Lord forgive Israel?

The Lord forgave Israel, but He still punished their sin. The entire rebellious generation would have to wander in the wilderness for 40 years before the younger generation could enter the Promised Land.

3. Did the people repent and accept the punishment God gave them?

No. They tried to conquer the city even though the Lord was not with them and were defeated (Num 14:44–45).

# DISCUSS 🤉

- 1. Describe how Moses interceded for the people.
- 2. Talk about the reality of sin's consequences.

# DAY 4

# The LORD calls people to worship with a believing heart • Psalm 95:1–11

# READ

Psalm 95:1-11

## EXPLAIN 🕑

#### The truth of Psalm 95:1-11

Psalm 95 is divided into two sections: (1) a positive call to collective worship (95:1-7b) and (2) a negative warning of corrective wrath (95:7c-11). The call to worship emphasizes the greatness of God (95:1-5) and the goodness of God (95:6-7b). The LORD is the great God who was Israel's rock. In the wilderness the LORD provided water from the rock (Exod 17:1-7; Num 20:1–13). The LORD is the great King above all gods (Ps 95:3). The LORD is the universal Creator and Ruler of the entire world (95:4–5). Not only is the LORD great, but He is good. The LORD cared for and provided for Israel (95:6-7b). Yet Israel rebelled against the LORD (95:8-9). They put Him to the test (95:9). As a result, the first generation of Israel who exited Egypt could not enter the Promised Land. Psalm 95 served as a warning for later generations of Israelites to not be characterized by such faithlessness. It also indicates that their remains a rest for those who believe in God and in His Messiah.

# ASK 😯

- 1. Why should the LORD be worshiped? Because He is a great and good God (95:1–7b).
- 2. How did the Israelites test the LORD in the wilderness?

They ignored His greatness and doubted His goodness. They complained and questioned why God had brought them out of Egypt. They desired a new leader to take them back to Egypt.

3. What was God's response to their rebellion in the wilderness?

The LORD made the entire rebellious generation wander in the wilderness for 40 years before the younger generation could enter the Promised Land.

4. How should one worship the LORD? One must worship the LORD with a believing heart and a heart of repentance (Ps 95:8).

# DISCUSS 🧐

- 1. Talk about the need for genuine faith in worship.
- 2. Explain what kind of "rest" awaits those who trust in Jesus for salvation.

One must believe in Jesus to enter God's rest • Hebrews 3:7-19

#### READ

Hebrews 3:7-19

#### EXPLAIN 🕑

#### The truth of Hebrews 3:7-19

This portion of Hebrews discusses an Old Testament lesson that the New Testament saints were supposed to learn from. The first generation of Israelites who came out of Egypt hardened their hearts, was disobedient, and defected from the faith. As a result of their rejection of God, they were not allowed to enter the Promised Land, God's rest in the land of Canaan. In 3:12–15, the author discusses the application of the lesson. The author exhorts his readers to be characterized by faith, to believe, and to respond to God's love and call of grace. In 3:16–19 he discusses the issue at the heart of the lesson-faith. One must have faith in Jesus to enter into God's rest. Unlike that first generation of Israelites who came out of Egypt, believers must be characterized by faith in order to enter God's rest. This refers to an individual's spiritual rest in the Lord. At salvation, every believer enters the true rest, the realm of spiritual promise, never again laboring to achieve through personal effort a righteousness that pleases God.

# ASK 😯

1. What did the first generation of Israelites after the Exodus do?

They hardened their hearts, were disobedient, and defected from the faith.

2. What happened as a result of their rejection of God?

They were not allowed to enter the Promised Land, God's rest in the land of Canaan.

- What is God's rest for believer's today? An individual's spiritual rest in the Lord (salvation).
- 4. How may we enter God's rest? Through faith in God's Son, Jesus.

## DISCUSS 🤉

- 1. Explain what it means for believers today to find their "rest" in God.
- 2. Make a list of other words that communicate the idea of faith and discuss why faith is essential to "rest" (salvation).

# NEXT WEEK

Israel rejects God's prophet and priest Numbers 16:1-17:11





# **DAY 1** Korah questioned the leadership of Moses and Aaron • Numbers 16:1-40

#### READ

Numbers 16:1-40

## EXPLAIN <sup>(2)</sup>

#### The truth of Numbers 16:1-40

Korah challenged Aaron's God given right to serve as priest (16:3). He claimed that all of Israel was holy and should be allowed to be priests (cf. Exod 19:6). Korah himself was not a priest, and he was jealous of his cousins who had been made priests by the LORD. Dathan, Abiram, and On, who were Reubenites, also joined Korah in his rebellion against God's appointed leaders. They clearly rejected God's promises, referring to Egypt as a land flowing with milk and honey (16:13–14). But Moses and Aaron interceded for the people, praying that God would only judge those who had rebelled (16:22). God was gracious and warned the people to move away from those who rebelled (16:23-30). But God was also just, fair and right. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, along with all their households, were swallowed up by the earth while the 250 men who offered incense were destroyed by fire (16:31-35; cf. 26:9-10). But even in the midst of judgment, God was merciful. Numbers 26:11 indicates that the sons of Korah were spared from God's judgment, having separated themselves from their father's house.



- 1. Who rebelled against Moses? The families of Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and On, along with 250 leaders.
- Why did Korah, Dathan, and Abiram complain? They did not want Moses and Aaron to be their leaders
- How did God punish the rebellious people?
   The earth opened up to consume them,
  - and God sent fire to destroy them.
- Who was spared from God's punishment? The sons of Korah who separated themselves from their father's house.

## DISCUSS 🦕

- Define "jealousy" and list any examples your family has recently witnessed.
- 2. Read and discuss one of the psalms written by the sons of Korah (Pss 42, 44–49, 84, 85, 87, 88).

#### The people rebelled against Moses and Aaron ● Numbers 16:41–50

#### READ

Numbers 16:41-50

#### EXPLAIN 🕑

#### The truth of Numbers 16:41–50

Even though the people had seen the ground split open and fire flash forth from the LORD, they grumbled against Moses and Aaron the next day (16:41). By rebelling against Moses and Aaron, the people demonstrated their rejection of God. God again came to the defense of His chosen leaders (16:45; cf. 12:4; 14:10b), threatening to annihilate the people (16:45; cf. Exod 32:10; Num 14:11-12; 16:21). But again Moses interceded for the people (Exod 32:11-14; Num 14:13-19; 16:45). He told Aaron to take up his censer, put fire in it from the altar, and offer incense on it to make *atonement* for the people, to repair their relationship with God (16:46). Aaron ran into the midst of the people and stood between the dead and the living to intercede for the people. The high priest would typically avoid all possible contact with the dead (Lev 21:11), but Aaron humbled himself, risking his own life for the sake of the people. Aaron's priestly work is a picture of Christ's priestly work when He would offer up His own life for the sake of the people (Heb 7:27).

# ASK 🕜

1. What was the reaction of the people the next day?

They were angry with Moses and Aaron and blamed them for killing the people.

2. What did God want to do about their rebellion?

God wanted to destroy the people.

3. What was Moses and Aaron's reaction to God's judgment on the people? Moses told Aaron to put fire from the altar in a censor and put incense on it. Aaron then ran among the people, between the living and the dead, to make atonement for their sin.

# DISCUSS 🧐

- 1. As a family, define the word "atonement" and discuss our own personal need for cleansing from sin.
- Explain how Aaron's priestly work is a picture of Christ's priestly work when He would offer up His own life for the sake of the people (Heb 7:27).

# DAY 3

#### The LORD affirmed Aaron's role as priest • Numbers 17:1-11

## READ

Numbers 17:1-11

## EXPLAIN 🕑

The truth of Numbers 17:1–11

God affirmed Aaron's role as priest by commanding Moses to get twelve staffs, one from each tribe, and to write the names of each leader on his respective staff, and to place all of them inside the Holy of Holies (17:1– 4). The LORD promised that He would cause a staff to sprout, demonstrating His choice for priest. Aaron's staff not only sprouted but also budded, blossomed, and produced ripe almonds (17:8). God vindicated Aaron and commanded Moses to place the staff before the Ark of the Covenant to serve as a reminder for the people (17:10–11). Aaron did not exalt himself to the priesthood. God chose him to occupy this special role (16:1–40; c.f. Heb 5:4), and God vindicated him when his authority was challenged by the people (17:1–11). Like Aaron before Him, Jesus did not exalt Himself to the position of great high priest (Heb 5:5). He was appointed as such by God (Heb 5:5–7). He functions as the perfect high priest who offered Himself for the sins of the people once for all (Heb 7:27).

# ASK 🕜

1. What did God tell Moses to do so that He could vindicate His leaders?

God commanded Moses to get twelve staffs, one from each tribe, and to write the name of each leader on his respective staff, and to place them inside the Holy of Holies.

- 2. How did God show the Israelites that Aaron was His chosen priest? God caused Aaron's rod to sprout, blossom, and produce ripe
- figs. 3. Why did God command Moses to place Aaron's staff before the Ark of the Covenant? To serve as a reminder for the people that God chose Aaron to be priest (17:10-11).

# DISCUSS 🧐

- 1. Discuss the reality that God gives different roles to different people (1 Tim 2:11-15).
- 2. Explain how Jesus functions as a perfect high priest for believers today (Heb 4:14-16).

DAY 4

Aaron's priesthood was flawed, but Jesus' priesthood is perfect • Hebrews 7:11-19

## 

Hebrews 7:11-19

## EXPLAIN $\boldsymbol{\Theta}$

#### The truth of Hebrews 7:11-19

God never intended for the Levitical priesthood to remain forever. It could only provide temporary access to God because "it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins" (Heb 10:4). Had the old sacrifices been able to completely remove sin and perfectly restore a person's relationship with God, they would not have ceased. However, since they could not restore permanent access to God, there had to be another priesthood. So when God brought about the New Covenant to replace the Old Covenant, He also established a different priesthood. This new priesthood, through Jesus, is superior to the Levitical priesthood because Christ's priesthood will never end. His priesthood was not obtained by virtue of the law of a physical requirement, but by virtue of His deity, "according to the power of an indestructible life" (7:16). Thus Christ could do what Aaron could not. He takes believes into the very presence of God and anchors us there eternally. In Jesus, our high priest, we are freed from all sin's debts, and we live forever in God our Savior.



1. Did God intend for the Levitical priesthood to last forever?

No. It could only provide temporary access to God because "it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins" (Heb 10:4)

2. Why is Jesus' priesthood superior to the Levitical priesthood?

Because Jesus' priesthood will never end. His priesthood was not obtained by virtue of the law of a physical requirement, but by virtue of His deity.

3. What can Jesus do that priests serving under the Levitical priesthood could never do? Jesus is able to take believers into the very presence of God.

# DISCUSS 🤇

- 1. Discuss why only Jesus' blood is able to take away our sins.
- 2. Compare and contrast Jesus and Aaron's priesthood.

Jesus' priesthood is superior to Aaron's priesthood • Hebrews 7:20–28

#### READ

Hebrews 7:20-28

## EXPLAIN 🕑

#### The truth of Hebrews 7:20-28

The author of Hebrews gives his readers four reasons why Jesus' priesthood is superior to Aaron's priesthood in order to strengthen their faith. First, Jesus' priesthood is superior because of God's oath (7:20-21). God never swore to Aaron that his priesthood would last forever. But He did swear to Jesus that His priesthood would remain forever (Ps 110:4). Second, Jesus' priesthood is superior because it is grounded in a better covenant (7:22). The New Covenant is better than the Old Covenant because it is complete. Third, Jesus' priesthood is superior because Jesus is a priest forever (7:23–25). Jesus has no successor. Thus Jesus is able to save forever anyone who draws near to God through Him. He always makes intercession for His people. Fourth, Jesus' priesthood is superior because Jesus is sinless and holy (7:26-28). Unlike Aaron who was weak and sinful (Exod 32:21-24; Num 12:1-16; 20:2-13), Jesus has no such weaknesses.

# ASK 🕜

 Why did the author of Hebrews give his readers four reasons why Jesus' priesthood is superior to Aaron's priesthood?

In order to strengthen their faith.

- 2. How is Jesus' priesthood superior to Aaron's?
  (1) God's oath; (2) Grounded in a better covenant; (3) Lasts forever; (4) Jesus is sinless and holy.
- Why is the New Covenant superior to the Old Covenant? The Old Covenant was temporary, but the New

The Old Covenant was temporary, but the New Covenant is complete.

## DISCUSS 🤦

- Discuss why Jesus' priesthood is superior to Aaron's priesthood.
- 2. Describe how Jesus' priesthood strengthens our faith.

# **NEXT WEEK**

God offers Israel healing from sin Numbers 20:2-13; 21:4-9



# SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON WEEK 35

**God offers Israel healing from sin** Numbers 20:2-13: 21:4-9



# DAY 1

Moses and Aaron rebelled against God 

Numbers 20:2–11

# READ

Numbers 20:2-11

## EXPLAIN 🕑

#### The truth of Numbers 20:2-11

For forty years Moses had faithfully led the people. Although there were times his faith was weak (11:11–15; 21–22), he had obediently led God's people. In Numbers 20, the children of Israel were again without water (cf. Exod 17:4). So this generation, just like their parents, gathered themselves together against Moses and Aaron (20:2-3). As they had done many times before, Moses and Aaron responded to the people's complaints by seeking the LORD (20:6; c.f. 14:5; 16:4). The LORD spoke to Moses, commanding him to take the staff, assemble the people, and speak to the rock with Aaron (20:7-8). Like He had done before at Horeb (Exod 17:1-7), God was going to provide water from a rock. Moses began by faithfully obeying God's word (20:9), but instead of speaking to the rock, Moses spoke harshly to the people, accusing them of being "rebels" against God (20:10). He struck the rock twice with his rod, and God graciously provided water for the people and their animals (20:11). However, Moses had failed to follow God's command; he struck the rock instead of speaking to the rock.



- What did the Israelites complain about? They complained that there was no food and water and said that God had brought them into the wilderness to die.
- 2. When the people complained, what did God tell Moses to do? God told Moses to get his rod, assemble the people, and speak to the rock. Then God would provide water from the rock.
- How did Moses disobey God? He struck the rock instead of speaking to the rock.

## DISCUSS 🤦

- Discuss with your family the importance of obeying every part of God's word.
- 2. Talk about God's faithfulness even when we sin.

WEEK 35

#### God punished Moses and Aaron for their rebellion ● Numbers 20:12–13

#### READ

Numbers 20:12-13

#### EXPLAIN 🗿

#### The truth of Numbers 20:12–13

The LORD's evaluation of Moses and Aaron's sin reveals the severity of their disobedience. They had failed to believe the LORD and to treat Him as **holy**, set apart and separate from sin, in the sight of the people. Moses' words demonstrate his self-centeredness, and his actions demonstrate his anger and frustration. As a result, Moses and Aaron would not be allowed to enter the Promised Land (20:12). A few months later, Aaron would die on Mount Hor (20:22). Moses would be allowed to view the land, seeing it from a distance (Deut 34:1-6). They both died in the wilderness, just like the first generation. Why did God include Aaron in His punishment since it was Moses who struck the rock? First, God's instructions were to both Moses and Aaron (20:8). Second, Aaron served alongside Moses, even helping him gather the assembly before the rock (20:10). Moses' words should have been enough for Aaron to stop his brother from striking the rock, but Aaron did nothing. This was his third time joining with those around him in rebellion against the LORD (Exod 32:21-24; Num 12:1-16).

# ASK 🕜

- Did Moses obey God? No. Moses struck the rock instead of speaking to it.
- 2. How did God punish Moses and Aaron? He told them that they would not enter into the Promised Land.
- 3. Why did God include Aaron in His punishment?

(1) God's instructions were to both Moses and Aaron (20:8); (2) Aaron served alongside Moses, even helping him to gather the people before the rock (20:10); and (3) Aaron did nothing to stop his brother from sinning.

## DISCUSS 🦕

- Define "holy" and provide examples of times when you've failed to treat God as holy.
- 2. Discuss how anger and frustration quickly lead to more sin.

# DAY 3

#### God punished the people's rebellion • Numbers 21:4-6

# READ

Numbers 21:4-6

## EXPLAIN $\odot$

#### The truth of Numbers 21:4-6

Instead of entering the Promised Land from the south, which would have been the most direct route from Kadesh, Israel was forced to enter from the east. This was because the king of Edom refused them passage along the King's Highway (20:14–21). The refusal meant that Israel would have to travel an additional 200 miles. As a result, the people became impatient (21:4). However, the extended journey was no excuse for Israel's impatience or complaint (21:5). They accused God and Moses of bringing them out of Egypt only to kill them in the wilderness. The people were questioning God's faithfulness to His promise. They did not consider the reality that God's promises may come through difficulty and suffering. God often uses suffering to produce holiness in the lives of His children (Jas 1:2–4; cf. Phil 1:29; Rom 8:28–30). In response to their lack of faith, God sent "fiery serpents" among the people (21:6). These serpents were venomous and many of the people died after being bitten.

# ASK 😮

- Why did Israel have to travel an additional 200 miles to reach the Promised Land? The king of Edom refused them passage along the King's Highway (20:14–21).
- 2. How did Israel respond to this delay? They became impatient and complained (21:4–5).
- 3. What was God's response to Israel's impatience and grumbling?

He punished them by sending venomous snakes. Many of those who were bitten died.

# DISCUSS 🤉

- 1. Explain why trials or disappoints are never excuses for sin.
- Discuss how God often uses suffering to produce holiness in the lives of His children (Jas 1:2-4; cf. Phil 1:29; Rom 8:28-30).

# DAY 4

God saved those who believed His word • Numbers 21:7-9

## READ

Numbers 21:7-9

## EXPLAIN 🕑

#### The truth of Numbers 21:7-9

In response to the people's lack of faith, God sent "fiery serpents" among the people (21:6). These serpents were venomous and many of the people died after being bitten. But this time, in response to God's judgment, Israel responded with repentance (21:7). They confessed their sin against the LORD, and asked Moses to intercede on their behalf. Moses, no longer angry with the people, responded with humility and prayed for the people (21:7). God mercifully, showing kindness to people who do not deserve it, provided a means of forgiveness. The LORD instructed Moses to create a bronze serpent and to mount it on a signal pole for the healing of those who were bitten (20:8). If anyone was bitten, he needed only to look at the serpent in order to live (20:9). This incident emphasizes the vital role of *faith*, or trust in God, in salvation. Those Israelites who had been bitten simply had to look to the serpent in order to be saved. They were healed by faith. By fixing their gaze upon the snake, the people demonstrated that they believed God's word.

# ASK 🕜

- What did the Israelites do when they saw people dying from the snakebites? They went to Moses and confessed their sin and asked Moses to pray to God on their behalf.
- What did God tell Moses to do? God told Moses to make a serpent out of bronze. Moses was to set this serpent up on a pole so the Israelites could look upon it and be healed.
- 3. What did the Israelites need to do in order to be saved?

God said that those who looked at the serpent would live. They needed to have faith in God and look up at the serpent.

# DISCUSS 🦕

- 1. Describe how the people responded to God's punishment of their sin.
- 2. Discuss the role of faith in salvation.

# As Moses lifted up the serpent, so too was Jesus lifted up ● John 3:9-21

#### READ

John 3:1-21

## EXPLAIN 🕑

#### The truth of John 3:13-17

Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a religious leader in Israel. However, even though he was an established teacher in Israel and very familiar with the Old Testament, he did not understand spiritual truths (3:4-9). Nicodemus was unwilling to accept Jesus as God and unwilling to admit that he was a helpless sinner. In desperate need of salvation, Jesus drew from the Old Testament to instruct this teacher concerning eternal life. Jesus referred to the story of Numbers 21:5-9 where the Israelites who looked at the serpent lifted up by Moses were healed. Just as the serpent was lifted up, so also was the Son of Man lifted up (3:14-15). The bronze serpent illustrates that salvation is by faith alone. While the serpent was lifted up to provide physical life, the Son of Man was lifted up to provide spiritual life (3:16). As God raised up the serpent so that anyone could be healed, God raised up Jesus so that anyone could be saved through Him (3:17). We must, like the Israelites, demonstrate that we believe God's word by looking to His Son for healing from sin.

# ASK 🕜

- 1. What did Nicodemus not understand? *He did not understand spiritual truths.*
- What Old Testament story did Jesus use to teach Nicodemus about eternal life? Jesus referred to the story of Numbers 21:5-9 where the Israelites who looked at the serpent lifted up by Moses were healed.
- 3. What does the bronze serpent illustrate? The bronze serpent illustrates that salvation is by faith alone.

# DISCUSS 🧐

- 1. Compare and contrast Moses' lifting up of the bronze serpent with Jesus being lifted up on the cross.
- 2. Discuss why everyone must be healed from sin.

# **NEXT WEEK**

God blesses Israel through Balaam Numbers 22:1-24:45



# SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON WEEK 36

# God blesses Israel through Balaam

# DAY 1

Balak wanted Balaam to curse Israel 

Numbers 22:1-40

## READ

Numbers 22:1-40

## EXPLAIN 🗿

#### The truth of Numbers 22:1-40

Balak, the king of Moab, was afraid that Israel would conquer Moab (22:4). He sent messengers to the false prophet Balaam, asking him to curse the Israelites, but Balaam refused (22:5-6, 13). So Balak sent additional messengers with the promise of enormous riches (22:15–17). That night, God gave Balaam permission to go, but He didn't give permission to curse the people. However, God became angry with Balaam as he went on his journey (22:22). When the angel of the LORD came to confront Balaam, only Balaam's donkey knew the angel was there. Three times the angel of the LORD appeared to his donkey, and each time Balaam beat his donkey (22:23-27). When Balaam finally saw the angel, the angel told him that the donkey had saved his life by turning aside these three times (22:33). The angel repeated God's command to go to Moab and told him to speak only what God commanded (22:35). Upon his arrival, Balaam confessed, "Have I now any power of my own to speak anything? The word that God puts in my mouth, that must I speak" (22:38).



- Why did Balak want Balaam to curse Israel? He was afraid that Israel would conguer Moab (22:4).
- What did Balak promise Balaam in exchange for cursing Israel? Balak promised Balaam enormous riches (22:15-17).
- What did God tell Balaam he could speak?
   Balaam could speak only what God commanded.

# DISCUSS 🧐

- 1. Talk about the wickedness of accepting a bribe.
- Discuss the dangers of hanging around those who desire to do evil.

#### God elected Israel and promised to bless Israel • Numbers 22:41–23:12

#### READ

Numbers 22:41-23:12

## EXPLAIN 🕑

#### The truth of Numbers 22:41-23:12

At the beginning of the next day, Balaam and Balak went to a high place. From here Balaam could see all the people of Israel (22:41). God met Balaam and "put a word in Balaam's mouth" (22:5). Balaam told Balak exactly what God had said to him. Balaam could not curse Israel, because they were God's *elect*, His chosen people (Exod 19:5-6). Instead, Balaam's first oracle blessed Israel by reaffirming God's choice. Israel was without equal among the nations (23:9). Balaam was so impressed with the magnificence of God's blessing of Israel that he desired to be blessed like Israel (23:10). Unfortunately, Balaam did not die the death of the upright; he was killed by the sword as part of Israel's revenge against the Midianites (31:8). Balaam is like those who see God's blessing in the Church and enjoy Christian fellowship for a time but never truly repent of their sins and therefore never share in God's blessing. It is terribly sad when such people depart from the faith, but the truth is they never were saved (Heb 6:1-8; 1 John 2:19).

# ASK 🕜

1. Why was the king of Moab afraid of Israel?

The king of Moab, Balak, had seen how Israel had destroyed the Amorites in Numbers 21:21–35.

- What did Balaam's first oracle teach Balak about God? God elected Israel and promised to bless Israel (22:41–23:13).
- 3. What did Balaam think about God's blessing?

Balaam was so impressed with the magnificence of God's blessing of Israel that he desired to be blessed like Israel (23:10).

## DISCUSS 🧐

- 1. Explain that God chose Israel as His special people.
- 2. Describe the type of person Balaam illustrates.

# DAY 3

#### God would make Israel to be a strong nation • Numbers 23:13-26

#### READ

Numbers 23:13-26

## EXPLAIN O

The truth of Numbers 23:13-26

Balak asked Balaam to try and curse Israel again, but this time from a different location. Balak offered sacrifices, and Balaam waited alone for God (23:15– 16). Balaam returned after God had told him what to speak and again blessed the people. Although Balak had been trying to persuade God to change His mind concerning Israel, Balaam said, "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent" (23:19). God's blessing of Israel was irrevocable. There was nothing Balaam could do to reverse God's blessing; Balaam's sorcery and divination were of no help against the true God (23:20, 23). The LORD was with Israel as her king (23:21b). Anyone opposed to Israel would be as helpless as a lion's prey because the LORD Himself was with Israel, strengthening the nation (23:24). After Balaam blessed Israel for the second time, Balak was infuriated (23:25).

# ASK 😯

- 1. What did Balak want Balaam to do? *Curse the people of Israel.*
- What did God teach Balak and Balaam through Balaam's second oracle? God would not change His mind. He would make Israel to be a strong nation (23:14-26).
- 3. Could Balak or Balaam do anything to stop God's blessings?

No. God does not lie or change His mind (23:19).

# DISCUSS 🤉

- 1. Make a list of the ways that God is different from man.
- 2. Explain how God's unchanging character is a blessing to all those who love Him.

#### God would give Israel both prosperity and victory • Numbers 23:27–24:14

## READ

Numbers 23:27-24:14

DAY 4

## EXPLAIN 🕑

#### The truth of Numbers 23:27-24:14

Balak stubbornly clung to the hope that God would change His mind, urging Balaam to try to curse Israel again (23:27). After Balaam looked up and saw Israel, the Spirit of God came upon him (24:2). Revealing the extent of His power, the Spirit of God actually spoke through the false prophet (24:3-9). Again Balaam blessed Israel. He proclaimed the beauty of Israel, likening Israel to valleys, gardens, cedars and aloes planted by the Lord (24:5-6). Balaam also prophesied about Israel's future king, whose "kingdom shall be exalted" (24:7). God had already promised Israel a king (Gen 17:6-8; 35:11; 49:10), and Balaam affirmed these promises, which ultimately are fulfilled in Jesus. Balaam also affirmed God's promise that whoever blessed Israel would be blessed and whoever cursed Israel would be cursed (24:9; cf. Gen 12:3). Balak understood that Balaam had just pronounced God's curse on him and warned Balaam to flee (24:10). However, before he left, Balaam had three more prophecies to utter from the LORD (24:20-24).

# ASK 😯

1. Did Balak continue to try to get God to change his mind?

Yes. He urged Balaam to try to curse Israel a third time (23:27).

- What did God teach through Balaam's third oracle?
   (1) Balaam proclaimed the beauty of Israel; (2) prophesied about Israel's future king (24:7); and (3) affirmed God's promise that whoever blessed Israel would be blessed and whoever cursed Israel would be cursed (24:9; cf. Gen 12:3).
- 3. What was Balak's response to Balaam's third oracle? Balak was angry and warned Balaam to flee (24:10–11).

# DISCUSS 🧐

- Discuss why it was pointless for Balak to try to get God to change His mind.
- Describe how God's promise that whoever blesses Israel will be blessed and whoever curses Israel will be cursed has been proven accurate through history (24:9; cf. Gen 12:3).

God would raise up the Messiah from Israel to rule the nations • Numbers 24:15–25

#### READ

Numbers 24:15-25

## EXPLAIN 🕑

#### The truth of Numbers 24:15-25

Balaam had prophesied of the coming king in his third prophecy, and he returned to that theme in his last prophecy (24:17). Although the king was not yet present, Balaam looked to the king's arrival in the future (24:17a). He referred to the king by two metaphors, the "star" and the "scepter." God already had promised that "the scepter shall not depart from Judah" (Gen 49:10). Like the scepter, the star was a symbol of royalty. The future king would have dominion over Moab, Edom, and Seir (24:19). Balaam was ultimately looking forward to Jesus, "the bright morning star" (Rev 22:16; cf. 2:28; 2 Pet 1:19). Jesus will fulfill this prophecy when He returns and establishes His millennial kingdom (Rev 19:11-20:6). Balaam also prophesied the defeat of the surrounding nations (24:20-25). The ever faithful God would not withhold His blessing from Israel; likewise, just as God promised, those who cursed Israel would be cursed themselves.

# ASK 🕜

1. What theme did Balaam return to in his fourth oracle?

The theme of a coming king.

- 2. Do you think Balaam could curse Israel? No. What God has blessed, no man can curse. God used Balaam to bless Israel.
- 3. What did God promise through Balaam's fourth oracle?

God would raise up the Messiah from Israel, and He would rule the nations (24:15–25).

## DISCUSS 🦕

- 1. Discuss what the "star" and the "scepter" represent about the coming King.
- 2. Read Revelation 19:11–21:8 and note the placement of the millennial kingdom among future events.