



DEAF PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE

Numbers; Deuteronomy



JESUS

We can we find salvation only by turning to Jesus in faith.

In a nighttime conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus pointed to an Old Testament event to explain the need for a Savior. In the Book of Numbers, the Israelites rebelled against God. Judgment came in the form of poisonous snakes, and many people died as a result. God, however, provided a remedy for their sin. He directed Moses to make a snake image and mount it on a pole within the camp. If anyone who had been bitten looked at the bronze snake, he or she would be healed (Num. 21:6-9).

Jesus explained that God loved the world so much that He sent His only Son to save those who look to Him in faith. Like the Israelites who looked at the bronze serpent and were saved from the poisonous snakebite, it is only by turning to Jesus in faith that we are freed from sin and death.

“Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness” explained Jesus, “so the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life” (John 3:14-15). By “lifted up” He meant His death on the cross—the only remedy for our sin, and the only means to a right relationship with God.

Jesus Himself said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). He is waiting for you now.

- **Admit** to God that you are a sinner. Repent, turning away from your sin.
- **By faith receive** Jesus Christ as God’s Son and accept Jesus’ gift of forgiveness from sin. He took the penalty for your sin by dying on the cross.
- **Confess** your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. You may pray a prayer similar to this as you call on God to save you: “Dear God, I know that You love me. I confess my sin and need of salvation. I turn away from my sin and place my faith in Jesus as my Savior and Lord. In Jesus’ name I pray, amen.”

After you have received Jesus Christ into your life, tell a pastor or another Christian about your decision. Show others your faith in Christ by asking for baptism by immersion in your local church as a public expression of your faith.

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» MEET THE WRITER



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Explore
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DEAF PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE

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A WORD FROM THE TEAM LEADER

Numbers is filled with stories of the Israelites traveling toward the promised land. We discover detours and complaints along the way. Deuteronomy is made up of three sermons presented by Moses as he prepared the people to cross the Jordan and take the land. This book ends with the death of Moses, who was allowed to see the promised land but not step foot into it.

Certainly there are lessons we can learn from history, but there are some greater insights for us to consider when we think about the value of studying these two books. Fast forward 1,600 years or so from the death of Moses, and we find Jesus fasting for forty days before facing Satan in a battle royale (Matt. 4). In this battle, Satan presented three different temptations with Jesus responding by quoting three Old Testament passages—all from Deuteronomy (Deut. 8:3; 6:13; 6:16).

Fast forward again, and we find Jesus and Nicodemus discussing how to have eternal life (John 3). In the middle of that conversation, Jesus compared Himself to a snake lifted up by Moses in the desert. The story of the lifted snake comes from the wilderness wanderings of the Hebrews recorded in Numbers 21.

Our prayer is that as we look at the stories in Numbers and the messages of Deuteronomy, we will discover afresh our need for a Savior and encouragement for living a life that honors that Savior. These books were important to Jesus and should be to us as well, giving us deeper insights into His life and death and how we should live our lives as His people.

Humbly,

G. Dwayne McCrary

Team Leader

Adult Explore the Bible



INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS; DEUTERONOMY

The first five books in the Bible are known as “The Books of Moses.” The Hebrew name for these books is the Torah, which means Law. The Book of Numbers is the fourth of these books, and Deuteronomy is the fifth. The Hebrew name for Numbers is “in the desert.” In the Christian Bible it is called “Numbers” because there are many lists of numbers in it. The Hebrew name for the fifth book is “a copy of this law,” while Deuteronomy in the Christian Bible means “second law.”

WHO WROTE THE BOOKS OF NUMBERS AND DEUTERONOMY?

Numbers and Deuteronomy do not say who wrote them. Most Bible teachers believe Moses wrote the Torah. This includes the Books of Numbers and Deuteronomy. There are several reasons to believe Moses wrote these books: 1) Moses recorded events that happened; 2) Moses could write well, having received a good education while he lived in the palace of the Pharaoh; 3) Moses was the leader of the Israelites and saw most of the events in the desert; 4) Jesus said Moses was the author of the Torah (Matthew 19:8; John 5:46-47; Romans 10:5). There is evidence that others were involved in the final writing of these books. You can see this in places like Deuteronomy 1:1-5 and the story of the death of Moses in Deuteronomy chapter 34.

WHEN WERE THE BOOKS WRITTEN?

The books begin about one year after the Israelites escaped from Egypt. They cover the next thirty-nine years of Israelite history. Bible teachers do not all agree as to when the Hebrew people moved from Egypt to Canaan. Most place the exodus between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries BC. Moses would have written during this time. The books were given their final form some time later.

TO WHOM WERE THE BOOKS WRITTEN?

Numbers and Deuteronomy were both written for the Israelites.

WHY WERE THE BOOKS WRITTEN?

Moses wrote because God told him to do so. See for example: Exodus 17:14, Exodus 34:27, and Deuteronomy 31:19. The books were written to record what happened in the desert. By writing, Moses recorded the

history of the Hebrew people, the laws God wanted them to follow, and the way they were to live and worship.

KEY IDEAS IN NUMBERS AND DEUTERONOMY

God is holy, righteous, and sovereign. The God of Israel is the one true God—beside Him there is no other god. God has a covenant relationship with His people, and He is faithful to that relationship and His promises. Both books stress the importance of Israel living in total commitment to God. The books describe how Israel is to live and worship, and they offer strong warnings as to the consequences if Israel did not keep their agreement with God.

OUTLINES OF NUMBERS; DEUTERONOMY

NUMBERS

- I. The Consecration of Israel at Sinai (1:1–10:10)
- II. The Rebellious Generation in the Wilderness (10:11–25:18)
- III. Preparation of the New Generation (26:1–30:16)
- IV. Preparation for War and Entry into the Promised Land (31:1–36:13)

DEUTERONOMY

- I. Moses' First Address (1:1–4:49)
- II. Moses' Second Address (5:1–26:19)
- III. Moses' Third Address (27:1–30:20)
- IV. Moses' Final Days (31:1–34:12)

WORD LIST

Amalekites—A group of people who lived in the southern part of the country called Canaan

Ancestor—A member of a family from previous generations

Arrogant—To act proud; to think you know more than any other person

Bless—To say or do something good to a person; to ask God to be good to someone

Canaanites—A group of people who lived in the country called Canaan. Canaan is now called Israel. The Canaanites were the people who lived in Israel before the Hebrew people.

Capture—1. To catch a person to make that person a prisoner; 2. To take land or possessions that belong to another nation

Covenant—A special promise that God made with the Israelites

Curse—1. A declaration that something bad will happen; 2. The opposite of a blessing; bad things that God will do to people because they have been wicked

Descendant—A person in your family who will live after you

Fear—Includes a feeling of awe, deep reverence for God

Fertile—Land that can produce many crops because the soil is good

Frontlets—Little boxes containing the Law of Moses; Jewish men tie them to their foreheads or arms.

Grace—Something good given to us we do not deserve, like the salvation God gives to us

Idol—A false god; anything that people worship instead of the real God

Manslaughter—Means someone is killed accidentally

Penalty—Punishment for something a person did wrong

Phylacteries—Same as frontlets

Premeditated—Planned ahead of time

Promised Land—The region that God promised to give to Abraham's descendants; The promised land is the country that became Israel.

Prophecy/prophecies—Words and messages from God often predicting the future

Prophecy—To speak or to write God's words

Reject—Not to accept or not to believe in someone or something

Repent—To decide not to do bad things that you did before and to turn away from those things

Sanctuary—A place of safety

Settle—To decide to stay in a place and to make a home there

Shrine—Monument to someone where people can come and worship

Trial—The time when a person is in a legal court to decide if a person is guilty of a crime

Tribe—A group of people who live together and have the same ancestors

Victims—People who have crimes committed against them

Virgin—Someone who has never had sexual relations

Witness—Someone who sees an event and later tells about it; This could especially be in a court of law.

BIBLE READING PLAN

MONTH 1

- ☐ 1. Numbers 1:1-18
- ☐ 2. Numbers 1:19-46
- ☐ 3. Numbers 1:47–2:34
- ☐ 4. Numbers 3:1-39
- ☐ 5. Numbers 3:40-51
- ☐ 6. Numbers 4:1-20
- ☐ 7. Numbers 4:21-49
- ☐ 8. Numbers 5:1-31
- ☐ 9. Numbers 6:1-27
- ☐ 10. Numbers 7:1-29
- ☐ 11. Numbers 7:30-59
- ☐ 12. Numbers 7:60-89
- ☐ 13. Numbers 8:1-26
- ☐ 14. Numbers 9:1-23
- ☐ 15. Numbers 10:1-36
- ☐ 16. Numbers 11:1-35
- ☐ 17. Numbers 12:1-16
- ☐ 18. Numbers 13:1-25
- ☐ 19. Numbers 13:26-33
- ☐ 20. Numbers 14:1-25
- ☐ 21. Numbers 14:26-45
- ☐ 22. Numbers 15:1-21
- ☐ 23. Numbers 15:22-41
- ☐ 24. Numbers 16:1-21
- ☐ 25. Numbers 16:22-35
- ☐ 26. Numbers 16:36-50
- ☐ 27. Numbers 17:1-13
- ☐ 28. Numbers 18:1-18
- ☐ 29. Numbers 18:19-32
- ☐ 30. Numbers 19:1-22
- ☐ 31. Numbers 20:1-29

MONTH 2

- ☐ 1. Numbers 21:1-35
- ☐ 2. Numbers 22:1-21
- ☐ 3. Numbers 22:22-41
- ☐ 4. Numbers 23:1-30
- ☐ 5. Numbers 24:1-25
- ☐ 6. Numbers 25:1-18
- ☐ 7. Numbers 26:1-27
- ☐ 8. Numbers 26:28-65
- ☐ 9. Numbers 27:1-23
- ☐ 10. Numbers 28:1-31
- ☐ 11. Numbers 29:1-40
- ☐ 12. Numbers 30:1-16
- ☐ 13. Numbers 31:1-30
- ☐ 14. Numbers 31:31-54
- ☐ 15. Numbers 32:1-42
- ☐ 16. Numbers 33:1-27
- ☐ 17. Numbers 33:28-56
- ☐ 18. Numbers 34:1-29
- ☐ 19. Numbers 35:1-34
- ☐ 20. Numbers 36:1-13
- ☐ 21. Deuteronomy 1:1-18
- ☐ 22. Deuteronomy 1:19-46
- ☐ 23. Deuteronomy 2:1-37
- ☐ 24. Deuteronomy 3:1-29
- ☐ 25. Deuteronomy 4:1-43
- ☐ 26. Deuteronomy 4:44–5:21
- ☐ 27. Deuteronomy 5:22-33
- ☐ 28. Deuteronomy 6:1-25
- ☐ 29. Deuteronomy 7:1-26
- ☐ 30. Deuteronomy 8:1-20
- ☐ 31. Deuteronomy 9:1-29

MONTH 3

- ☐ 1. Deuteronomy 10:1-22
- ☐ 2. Deuteronomy 11:1-32
- ☐ 3. Deuteronomy 12:1-32
- ☐ 4. Deuteronomy 13:1-18
- ☐ 5. Deuteronomy 14:1-29
- ☐ 6. Deuteronomy 15:1-23
- ☐ 7. Deuteronomy 16:1-22
- ☐ 8. Deuteronomy 17:1-20
- ☐ 9. Deuteronomy 18:1-22
- ☐ 10. Deuteronomy 19:1-21
- ☐ 11. Deuteronomy 20:1-20
- ☐ 12. Deuteronomy 21:1-23
- ☐ 13. Deuteronomy 22:1-30
- ☐ 14. Deuteronomy 23:1-25
- ☐ 15. Deuteronomy 24:1-22
- ☐ 16. Deuteronomy 25:1-19
- ☐ 17. Deuteronomy 26:1-19
- ☐ 18. Deuteronomy 27:1-26
- ☐ 19. Deuteronomy 28:1-14
- ☐ 20. Deuteronomy 28:15-44
- ☐ 21. Deuteronomy 28:45-68
- ☐ 22. Deuteronomy 29:1-29
- ☐ 23. Deuteronomy 30:1-20
- ☐ 24. Deuteronomy 31:1-22
- ☐ 25. Deuteronomy 31:23-30
- ☐ 26. Deuteronomy 32:1-27
- ☐ 27. Deuteronomy 32:28-52
- ☐ 28. Deuteronomy 33:1-29
- ☐ 29. Deuteronomy 34:1-12

A topographic map is spread out on a dark, textured surface. A circular compass with a black face and white markings is placed on the map. A ruler is also visible, partially overlapping the map and the compass. The map shows various contour lines and numbers, indicating elevation. In the top left corner, there is a red banner with the text "Session 1" in white.

Session 1

GOD LEADS

God leads His people according to His will and purposes.

NUMBERS 9:15-23

Most believers say they want to know God's will. However, some believers have difficulty knowing how to find God's will. They may look for direction in unusual places such as a fortune teller. Some believers say they want to know God's direction, but they do not follow His direction when He shows it. To find God's directions, believers must pray, read His Word, the Bible, and obey His commands.

This week's Bible study begins about a year after God saved the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. God gave Moses directions out of Egypt and into the desert. During that time, the Israelites were camped in one place in the desert. Toward the end of that year, God gave Moses the Ten Commandments and other instructions about serving Him. God told Moses it was time to move. Moses led the people according to God's command. God was in the cloud that led the people on their journey. Our session this week explains how God led the Israelites. It also explains their response—"God commanded; the people obeyed."

NUMBERS 9:15-23

15 On the day the Holy Tent, the **Tent of the Agreement**, ^A was set up, **a cloud covered it.** ^B From dusk until dawn the cloud above the Tent **looked like fire.** ^C **16** The cloud stayed above the Tent, and at night it looked like fire. **17** When the cloud moved from its place over the Tent, the Israelites moved, and wherever the cloud stopped, the Israelites camped. **18** So the Israelites moved at the LORD's command, and they camped at his command. While the cloud stayed over the Tent, **they remained camped.** ^D **19** Sometimes the cloud stayed over the Tent for a long time, but the Israelites obeyed the LORD and did not move. **20** Sometimes the cloud was over it only a few days. At the **LORD's command** ^E the people camped, and at his command they moved. **21** Sometimes the cloud stayed only from dusk until dawn; when the cloud lifted the next morning, the people moved. When the cloud lifted, day or night, the people moved. **22** The cloud might stay over the Tent for two days, a month, or a year. As long as it stayed, **the people camped,** ^F but when it lifted, they moved. **23** At the LORD's command the people camped, and at his command they moved. **They obeyed the LORD's order that He commanded through Moses.** ^G

- a. Some other Bible translations use the words Tabernacle, Tent of Testimony, or Tent of the Covenant. The Israelites had built this special tent at God's command (see Exodus 25:8) to be a special place to worship Him.
- b. The cloud over the Tabernacle represented the presence of God. (See Exodus 40:34.)
- c. Moses did not say the cloud became a fire, but the cloud looked like fire. It was still the presence of God, but looking like fire made His presence visible at night.
- d. The cloud showed God's presence was with the Israelites day and night.
- e. The movement of the cloud was God's command to the people to move or stay.
- f. The purpose of the cloud was to lead the Israelites. God can and does lead His people in a great many ways. Many of His ways are totally unexpected.
- g. The Israelites did not know how long they would stay in one place. They trusted God to lead them. This passage can be summed up: "God led, and the Israelites obeyed." Many times in their wandering the people did not obey. This time they did.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. How does God lead His people?
2. God led the Israelites with a cloud. In your opinion, why did He use the cloud?
3. How do you think God leads His people today?
4. The Tent of Agreement was the place where God was present. How do we know God is present in our world today?
5. Where do you think you can know His presence?
6. God told the Israelites to move. They obeyed Him quickly. They did not wait to move. Do you think most Christians move quickly when God calls them to do something? Why do you think that?
7. How can we know for sure when God is leading us to do something for Him?
8. Why should believers ask God to lead them in everything they do?
9. What was the clear sign that Israel obeyed God? What is the clear sign that Christians obey God today?

BIBLE SKILL: *Finding and comparing verses.*

The cloud in the Old Testament showed how God was present with His people. Clouds are important in the New Testament also. Read these verses that explain God was present with His disciples because clouds were with Jesus, His Son. Draw a line from the verse to words found in the verse.

Acts 1:9	a voice came from the cloud
Mark 14:62	a cloud hid him from their sight
Mark 9:7	Jesus is coming with the clouds
Mark 13:26	and coming on clouds in the sky
Revelation 1:7	Son of Man coming in clouds

IN MY CONTEXT

- God kindly offers His presence to His people.
- God offers His leading to His people.
- Believers honor God when they obey His leadership.

What are some ways God offers His presence to you today? How do you know it is God when He is present with you?

In what ways have you seen God lead you in the past? How is He leading you today? How do you know it is God who is leading you?

How does your obedience honor God? Make a list of things you should do to be sure you are following God's leadership.

MEMORY VERSE

At the LORD's command the people camped, and at his command they moved. They obeyed the LORD's order that he commanded through Moses. – Numbers 9:23

DAY ONE

Read Numbers 9:15-16, paying attention to ways God reveals His presence.

John and Jan are a Deaf couple who felt God might be leading them to be missionaries. They were not sure how they would know where He was leading them. They decided to read passages in the Bible that explained how God led His people in the past. They prayed continually and waited for God to lead them.

In the Old Testament, the cloud was a symbol of God's presence. Exodus 24:15-17 explains that about a year earlier Moses went up on Mt. Sinai. God called him into the cloud that covered the mountain. That was the place Moses met God. He was in God's presence in the cloud.

God gave the cloud to the people as a way to know He was with them. The Israelites saw His presence in the cloud during the day and in the fire during the night. They did not need to beg or ask for a sign of God's presence. He offered His presence to them freely. He led them to safety as they followed the cloud. God lovingly offers His presence to His people today. John and Jan knew God led the Israelites in the past. They knew His presence in their lives would lead them today.

Think of a time you knew God was truly leading you. Write a few words about that time.

DAY TWO

Read Numbers 9:17-18, underlining the verse showing obedience.

The Deaf couple, John and Jan, decided they must be aware of things that might show God's leading. John and Jan prayed for a way God would show them the things He wanted them to do. They promised God they would do whatever He led them to do.

Moses explained to the Israelites that they knew how God was leading them. They had the cloud. It was probably difficult to move. They had everything they owned with them. They needed to prepare their families,

animals, tents, and possessions. Whenever the cloud lifted above the Tent, they got ready to move. It required a lot of work to get ready. They needed to follow the cloud wherever it led them.

One thing is very clear in these verses. When God said to move, the people moved. When God said to stop, they stopped. They obeyed God's leading. They did something. They moved, or they stopped! God did not hide His instructions to move or to stay. He offered a way for the Israelites to know His commands. He offers direction to us today. John and Jan decided they could not just sit still. They knew they must do something to find God's will.

How do you think God leads you today? Do you know something God wants you to do? How do you know?

DAY THREE

Read Numbers 9:19-20, thinking about following God's instructions.

Maybe you know the phrase "in step." It means to move or do things in the right order. Have you seen a parade? The parade may have music bands or troops of soldiers. The people in those groups must step at the right time and at the right distance. They move all together at one time.

We often use "in step" to mean working together to do the right thing at the right time. American Sign Language can use the sign for "harmony" to show this idea.

In step describes the actions of the Israelites. It did not matter what time the cloud moved. It did not matter how long the cloud stayed in one place. They did not move until the cloud moved. They did not get ahead of God. They were in step with God's presence in the cloud.

John and Jan did not want to get ahead of God's leading. They tried to be patient. They did not want to do anything God was not leading them to do. God expects His people to pay attention and follow His leadership.

Have you ever tried to know what God was leading you to do? How did you seek His leading?

DAY FOUR

Read Numbers 9:21-22, waiting for God's instructions.

God did not move at the same time each day. He did not move on the same day of the month. The people did not know if they would need to move in the day or in the night. The Israelites did not know when He would tell them to move. They did not try to guess what God would do next.

The Israelites trusted God to lead them in the way that was best for them. They were in the desert. They did not know their way through the desert. If they tried to guess where or when His presence would lead them they could be lost. They might die in the desert. Look at the map on the last page of this book to see where God led His people.

John and Jan learned to take one step at a time. God did not show them His whole plan for their lives. They learned they must follow God's leadership when He reveals it to them.

Why is it important to wait for God to lead you?

Why is it hard to wait?

KEY DOCTRINE: *The Only God*

There is one and only one living and true God. The believer cannot accept the beliefs of other people that all gods are the same. Only God is holy and perfect. God cannot even look on sin. God has no weaknesses. He does not make mistakes. Because He is holy and perfect, we owe Him the highest love, respect, and obedience. We must not love anything or anyone more than we love God. We must respect Him above all other things. We must obey Him completely.

DAY FIVE

Read Numbers 9:23, remembering to honor God through obedience.

This verse reminds us that God expected the Israelites to obey His command. He expects the same thing from us today. Our experience in obeying God's command helps us understand two things. First, we find comfort and peace as we obey Him. Our spirits are at rest if we know we have given control to God. Second, if we do not obey God's commands, we will worry and feel sad. We will often feel guilty.

Why does that happen? God's presence is in obedience. He is pleased with our obedience, and we can feel His presence. Disobedience causes the opposite feelings. When we disobey Him, we cause a distance between us and God.

The Deaf couple, John and Jan, saw a missionary talk about his work. They felt God led them to see the missionary. God spoke to their hearts, and they decided to obey His call to become missionaries. They honored God, as do we, because they obeyed.

If you do not obey God, how does that dishonor Him? What can you do that will rightly honor God today?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Numbers 9:15-23. Meet with one or two members of your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

How do you think the presence of God affects your life on a daily basis?

How can you be sure you are following God's leadership closely? What do you need to change in your life so that you may truly follow God?

What are some ways you can honor God today? What can you and your small group do that will show that you honor God?



GOD JUDGES

God will judge people who refuse to trust Him and His promises.

NUMBERS 14:5-19

Everyone sins—both believers and non-believers. We know the judgment of believers and non-believers is different, but are their sins different? Their actions may be different, but the basis of their sin is the same. The basis of everyone's sin is refusal to trust God. In our session last week, we learned how God led the Israelites. Today we will see what happened when Israel did not trust God.

Moses sent twelve men to spy on the land across the Jordan River. This was the land God promised to the Israelites. Two spies came back and reported to the people that the land was good, but the people there were big. The ten other spies said the Israelites could not win over those people. At this report, the people became angry. They were angry at Moses and Aaron and at God. After years of rebellion, God was prepared to judge and destroy His rebellious people. Yet, even at this moment of judgment, Moses asked God for grace and forgiveness. God responded with forgiveness. All of us must see that rebellion against God leads to God's righteous judgment.

NUMBERS 14:5-19

5 Then Moses and Aaron bowed face down in front of all the Israelites gathered there. **6 Joshua** **A** son of Nun and **Caleb** **B** son of Jephunneh, who had explored the land, **tore their clothes**. **7** They said to all of the Israelites, “The land we explored is very good. **8** If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land and give us that **fertile** **D** land. **9** Don’t turn against the LORD! Don’t be afraid of the people in that land! We will chew them up. They have no protection, but the LORD is with us. So don’t be afraid of them.” **10** Then all the people talked about killing them **with stones**. **E** But the glory of the LORD appeared at the Meeting Tent to all the Israelites. **11** The LORD said to Moses, “How long will these people ignore me? How long will they not believe me **in spite of** **F** the miracles I have done among them? **12** I will give them a terrible sickness and get rid of them. But I will make you into a great nation that will be stronger than they are.” **13** Then Moses said to the LORD, “The Egyptians will hear about it! You brought these people from there by your great power, **14** and the Egyptians will tell this to those who live in this land. They have already heard about you, LORD. They know that you are with your people and that you were seen **face to face**. **G** They know that your cloud stays over your people and that you lead your people with that cloud during the day and with fire at night. **15** If you put these people to death all at once, the nations who have heard about your power will say, **16** ‘The LORD was not able to bring them into the land he promised them. So he killed them in the desert.’ **17** “So show your strength now, Lord. Do what you said: **18** ‘The LORD doesn’t become angry quickly, but **he has great love**. **H** He forgives sin and law breaking. But the LORD never forgets to punish guilty people. When parents sin, he will also punish their children, their grandchildren, their great-grandchildren, and their great-great-grandchildren.’ **19** By your great love, forgive these people’s sin, just as you have forgiven them from the time they left Egypt until now.”

- a. Joshua later became the leader of Moses’ army. Joshua trusted that God could give Israel the promised land.
- b. Caleb was from the tribe of Judah. Caleb was the other spy who also trusted God.
- c. In Old Testament times, people tore their clothes as a way to show sadness or sorrow.
- d. Land that is good for farming. The Israelites were in the desert for forty years. God would give them land to grow their own food.
- e. Stones were sometimes used as weapons to kill people. The Israelites wanted to kill Joshua and Caleb, not just hurt them.
- f. “In spite of,” can be signed “it did not matter.” God had done hundreds of miracles for Israel while they were crossing the desert including feeding them every day.
- g. Some Bible translations say “eye to eye.” This kind of wording gives God the body parts of humans. God does not have body parts because He is Spirit. God can do without a body the actions that humans need bodies to do. So in a way God is “face to face” or “eye to eye.”
- h. See Exodus 34:6-7.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. What does it mean that God will judge people for their sins?
2. Who were Joshua and Caleb? How did they show their trust in God?
3. Their report was positive. How can believers give positive reports about God?
4. Why did they say they could win the battle? How did God's promises give them confidence?
5. Did the people believe Joshua and Caleb? Why not? Why do people not trust God?
6. How did Moses and Aaron react to the people?
7. What did God say when the people rebelled against Him? How does God deal with people who sin today?
8. How did God say He would judge the rebellious people?
9. Does God judge people today? Why do you think that?

BIBLE SKILL: *Comparing Verses*

Compare Moses' description of God in Numbers 14:18-19 with his description of God in Exodus 34:6-7. Make a list for each passage. Compare the two lists. Do they list the same things? How are they different?

Numbers 14:18-19

Exodus 34:6-7

IN MY CONTEXT

- Faithful followers of God challenge and encourage others to show faith in God.
- God holds people accountable for their rejection of Him.
- People facing God's judgment need to know that God is gracious and will forgive those who turn from their rebellion to trust in Him.

How can you challenge other believers to show their faith in God? Discuss with your group the things you could do to help other believers learn to show their faith in God.

What does it mean when we say, "God holds people accountable?" How does God hold you accountable? Discuss your thoughts with your Bible study group today.

What do you need to know about God's forgiveness? When have you experienced forgiveness from God?

MEMORY VERSE

If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land and give us that fertile land. – Numbers 14:8

DAY ONE

Read Numbers 14:5-7, noticing the different ways people respond.

Remember, in last week's session we discussed the act of "keeping in step"? The Israelites were no longer keeping in step with God's leading. In fact, they made many missteps. "Misstep" means a wrong step. The people said they wanted to go back to Egypt. How did they think life would be there? The Egyptians blamed them for the death of their firstborn sons. Much of Egypt was destroyed by the plagues God sent on them. It was ridiculous for the Israelites to want to return to Egypt. Their complaining was an act of rebellion against God.

Moses and Aaron did not argue with the people. Instead, they humbled themselves before the Lord and the people. They were all standing in front of the Tent of Meeting. God was present there also.

Joshua and Caleb gave a good report about the land. They had faith God would protect them. They expected the people to agree with them. That did not happen. The people continued to complain and cry out. The people rebelled against God. Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb did not rebel. They were all humble in front of God.

What do you complain about in your life? How is a humble response to God better than a complaining response to Him?

DAY TWO

Read Numbers 14:8-9, considering the challenge.

Caleb and Joshua did not respond to the people with anger. They responded by tearing their clothes. They were hurt and sad because of the people's attitude. They were not afraid of the people.

Caleb and Joshua gave the Israelites a challenge. They told the people to show their faith and confidence in God. They explained the land they explored was very good. The two spies reminded the Israelites that even though the people in the land were giants and had a strong army, they did not have anyone else to protect them. But the Israelites had the Lord God to protect them.

The two men showed their confidence in the Lord when they said they

(the Israelites) would chew the enemy up. Some translations say “swallow them up” or “devour them.” Joshua and Caleb meant they would not just overcome the enemy; they would destroy the enemy completely. Joshua and Caleb challenged the Israelites to trust God to take care of them. This is exactly what believers need to do today.

How do your Christian brothers and sisters challenge and encourage you? How do you challenge and encourage other believers to show their faith in God?

DAY THREE

Read Numbers 14:10-12, finding what it means to be accountable for our actions.

The people were really angry at Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb. The more these four leaders showed godliness, the angrier the people became. The people wanted to kill them with stones. The Israelites were not interested in being faithful to God. Instead, like they had done before, the people committed sin. What was their sin? They failed to trust God. Failure to trust God is the same as rebelling against God.

God did not allow the people to hurt Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb. He had already chosen them to be leaders. Instead, God protected the men by showing His glory in an open way. All the Israelites saw God’s glory.

God was angry with the people because of their rebellion. He reminded them of the miracles He did when they left Egypt but even this did not change the people. Finally, God told Moses He was tired of the people ignoring Him. He was ready to punish their rebellion. God was ready to hold the people accountable for their rebellion. We must never forget that even though God loves us, He always holds His people accountable for sin. God will punish people who refuse to trust Him and His promises.

Have you ever done anything that would make God angry? How did you feel after you did that thing? What did you do when you realized you sinned against God?

DAY FOUR

Read Numbers 14:13-14, looking for how Moses asked for God's grace.

These verses seem a little strange because Moses seems to be explaining to God how He should think about things. Moses appears to be arguing with God to help God change His mind. Of course, God already knew everything Moses told Him. Moses said that if God punished the Israelites the Egyptians would find out. The Egyptians remembered the things that happened to them when they tried to prevent Moses and the Israelites from leaving Egypt. But now, if they heard of God's punishment, they would tell the other nations.

How would the other nations react when they heard the news? Wasn't Israel the nation that had seen God "face to face"? Of course, no person saw God's face. They saw God's presence in the cloud, and they heard God's commands through Moses. The Egyptians knew about the cloud that was always with the Israelites. If God destroyed His own people wouldn't that look bad for God? What we need to see here is that Moses was asking for God's grace. It was an odd way to ask, but it was a good request. Even when we face God's judgment, we can know that God's face toward us is grace and mercy.

How did Moses ask God for grace? How do you ask God for His grace both for you and for other people? How have you seen His protection in the past?

KEY DOCTRINE: *God's Character*

God rules with loving care over everything He has made. He rules with justice and mercy. He is all powerful, loving, and wise. God is Father in truth to those who become His children through faith in Jesus Christ. He acts as Father in His feelings and actions to all people.

DAY FIVE

Read Numbers 14:15-19, looking for why God gives grace.

Moses seemed to be trying to protect God's reputation. The truth is, no one needs to protect God's reputation. God said He would destroy the people. Moses said if He destroyed His people the other nations would mock Him. They would say He was not powerful enough to fulfill His promise to give them a promised land.

But at last Moses made his real request. His real request was for God to show mercy and forgiveness. He based his request on God's character and His faithfulness. Moses did not say the Israelites were right. He did not say they did not deserve judgement. He knew they were wrong and God would be fair if He punished them. Moses asked God to show His grace to the Israelites. Moses asked God to give forgiveness to the people. This is the key to understanding this passage. Moses asked God for grace. Grace is at the heart of God's character. If you read verse 20 you will see that God gave forgiveness to the people. God is right when He punishes sin. Yet, God's character is to forgive sinners.

Do all people deserve God's grace and mercy? Why do you think He offers grace and mercy?

How has God shown you His grace and mercy?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Numbers 14:5-19. Meet with one or two members of your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

Discuss together some ways you can challenge other believers to talk about their faith in God.

What can you do to help people know they are accountable when they reject God?

Practice explaining how God is gracious and willing to forgive people who turn to Him and trust in Him. Who can you tell this week about God's forgiveness?

GOD REQUIRES

God requires the leaders of His people to follow Him fully.

NUMBERS 20:1-13

Do you believe people can “get away with” the sins they do? We know non-believers will be punished at God’s final judgment for their refusal to follow God’s plan for their salvation. But what about believers? Does God hold them accountable for disobeying Him?

From the time Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, God continued to give Moses and Aaron instructions. He told them how to build the Tent of Meeting. He instructed them how to make offerings and worship Him. He established the work of priests in their worship. God told them where and how they must worship Him. However, God demanded complete obedience to His leadership.

God told Moses to speak to a rock and bring forth water. Instead, Moses hit the rock with his wooden staff. Water still came from the rock. God still took care of His people. But Moses’ act of hitting the rock came from his own plan or perhaps from his own frustration with the people. It was a clear act of disobedience. God punished Moses. So, our lesson today shows us clearly that God holds us all accountable for sin.

NUMBERS 20:1-13

1 In the first month all the people of Israel arrived at the **Desert of Zin**, **A** and they stayed at **Kadesh**. **B** There **Miriam** **C** died and was buried. **2** There was no water for the people, so they came together against Moses and Aaron. **3** They argued with Moses and said, “We should have died in front of the LORD **as our brothers did**. **D** **4** Why did you bring the LORD’s people into this desert? Are we and our animals to die here? **5** Why did you bring us from Egypt to this terrible place? It has no grain, figs, grapevines, or pomegranates, and there’s **no water to drink!** **E**” **6** So Moses and Aaron left the people and went to the entrance of the Meeting Tent. There they bowed facedown, and the glory of the LORD appeared to them. **7** The LORD said to Moses, **8** “Take your **walking stick**, **F** and you and your brother Aaron should gather the people. Speak to that rock in front of them so that its water will flow from it. When you bring the water out from that rock, give it to the people and their animals.” **9** So Moses took the stick from in front of the LORD, as he had said. **10** Moses and Aaron gathered the people in front of the rock, and Moses said, “Now listen to me, you who turn against God! Do you want us to bring water out of this rock?” **11** Then Moses lifted his hand and hit the rock twice with his stick. Water began pouring out, and the **people and their animals drank it**. **G** **12** But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “**Because you did not believe me, and because you did not honor me as holy before the people, you will not lead them into the land I will give them.**” **H** **13** These are the waters of **Meribah**, **I** where the Israelites argued with the LORD and where he showed them he was holy.

- a. Sometimes called the Desert of Sin. It is south of Beersheba and south west of the Dead Sea. It is a place of so little rain that almost nothing grows.
- b. Sometimes called Kadesh Barnea. The Israelites spent a lot of time camped at Kadesh.
- c. Moses’ and Aaron’s sister. See Exodus 2:4 and Exodus 15:20.
- d. Korah led a rebellion against Moses. Korah and his whole family were swallowed up by an earthquake. (See Numbers 16:1-35).
- e. This is the second time the Israelites accused Moses of taking them to the desert to die (Ex. 14:11). Being without water was serious for a large crowd of people in a desert.
- f. Probably the same stick God used to give miracles to the Israelites during their escape from Egypt.
- g. There was enough water for all the people and their animals.
- h. Moses’ sin was rebellion and trying to make himself like God.
- i. Meribah means “complaining” or “quarreling.” It is in the Wilderness of Zin.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Why must leaders of God's people obey Him fully?
2. Why did the people complain when they stopped near Kadesh?
3. Do we ever complain when we do not get the answers we want from God? What should our attitude be when God has different plans for us?
4. Why did Moses and Aaron go into the Meeting Tent before God?
5. What did God tell Moses to do?
6. How should believers act during times when we feel tired, sad, or disappointed?
7. What was Moses' sin? Do we ever commit that sin? What do we do when we realize we sinned?
8. How did God hold Moses accountable? Do we believe God will hold us accountable for our actions and decisions? Why do you think that?
9. What was the name of the water place? Why do you think that name was given to this place?

BIBLE SKILL: *Locate places using a map.*

Often it is helpful to see where places are located. It helps us understand the events that happen in verses we study. On the map in the back of this book, locate and circle these places.

1. Mount Hor
2. The Wilderness or Desert of Zin (Sin)
3. Plains of Moab
4. Kadesh-barnea
5. Mount Nebo

IN MY CONTEXT

- Life continues even during our times of grief and change.
- God provides His people ways to solve the difficult times of life.
- God expects His people, especially His leaders, to honor Him with obedience.
- God holds His followers accountable for their actions.

What are some times in your life when you have gone through grief and change? How did you make it through those times? In what ways did God help you?

What are some times in your life when God provided a solution for your problem?

Why do you think God expects His leaders to be especially obedient to His instructions? How do you see leaders in your church obeying God?

What are some ways God has held you accountable for your actions and thoughts?

MEMORY VERSE

But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not believe me, and because you did not honor me as holy before the people, you will not lead them into the land I will give them.”
– Numbers 20:12

DAY ONE

Read Numbers 20:1-2, looking for why Moses felt overwhelmed.

The Israelites wandered around in the desert for forty years. God did not allow them to go into the promised land because they rebelled against Him. God punished them by forcing them to wander for the rest of the forty years. Most Bible teachers believe the events that happened in this chapter of Numbers were near the end of the forty years of wandering.

While they were at the place near Kadesh, Miriam died. She was buried in the wilderness. Miriam was Moses' and Aaron's sister. She was older than Moses and probably was the same girl who rescued him when he was a baby. (Read Exodus 2:1-10.) She was also a leader of the people. It was a time of grieving for Moses and Aaron.

During that time the people were grumbling. Moses was close to being overwhelmed. Moses was not able to get away from the people for some time to grieve. Life's activities continued even when he was grieving. Life goes on for believers today, no matter what we go through. We should still continue to serve God in whatever way He desires.

Think of a time when you had too much going on in your life. How were you able to serve God through those hard times?

DAY TWO

Read Numbers 20:3-5, finding how blaming Moses was also blaming God.

They wandered around the desert for forty years and now they were back to the place they started. It was the same place they were angry at Moses because they did not have water about a year after they left Egypt. (See Exodus 17:1-7.)

It was not Moses' fault they were in the desert without food or water. They were the ones who had not trusted God and had rebelled against Him. They had refused to go and take the land God promised them. Most of the people who started out with Moses when they were twenty years or older were already dead. The people who were complaining in these verses were too young to remember the first time God used Moses to bring water from a rock.

The people did not care that Moses and Aaron were grieving about the death of their sister, Miriam. Moses knew that life must go on even when he was facing great sorrow in his own life. Still, the people accused Moses of bringing them out of Egypt so they would die in the wilderness. When they said that against Moses, they were also blaming God.

When the Israelites blamed Moses for trying to kill them, why was it the same as blaming God? How do people today blame God for their problems?

DAY THREE

Numbers 20:6-8, finding an example of God giving answers to problems.

Moses did not answer the people immediately. He and Aaron went to the Tent of Meeting to ask God for help. The two men humbly bowed low to the ground. God showed He was pleased with their humility by showing His glory to them. Moses and Aaron knew only God could show them how to solve the water problem. They depended on God, and He told Moses what to do. God told Moses to speak to the rock and then there would be water.

God's solution to the water problem may have seemed strange to Moses. Often God solves our problems in ways we don't expect. A Deaf couple was very active in the Deaf Ministry in a large hearing church. They were happy with their lives except for one thing—they were not able to have children. The church started a foster care program. The Deaf couple joined the program. They completed the program, and their first child came to live with them. They continued to raise foster children for the next fifty years. God answered their prayers in a different way. They had children in their lives. God provided an answer for their difficulty.

Do you believe God can give believers answers for their difficulties? Why or why not? When has God answered your difficult problems?

DAY FOUR

Numbers 20:9-11, identifying how the leaders did not obey God.

Moses and Aaron gathered the people around them. Moses took his walking stick and went to the rock. God had told him to speak to the rock, and the rock would bring out water. But Moses was angry with the people. He called them rebels. Because he was angry, he hit the rock twice.

The people did not sin against Moses and Aaron. They sinned against God. Moses felt they were complaining about him. Moses was tired of their complaining. His heart was sad because his sister died. The people did not care about Moses' sadness. Maybe Moses was overwhelmed with frustration.

Notice, Moses said, "Do you want us to bring water out of this rock?" He did not give credit or glory to God. He told the people he would bring water from the rock. He hit the rock twice because of his anger. Even though Moses disobeyed Him, God provided water. It gushed from the rock. Read Exodus 17:1-7. About forty years earlier Moses was in the same situation. Moses' response was different the first time. He obeyed God's instructions. God expects His people to obey Him. Especially, He expects His leaders to obey Him in everything they do.

Why do you think God expects full obedience from His leaders? What can we do when we know we have not obeyed God?

KEY DOCTRINE: *Obedience to God*

Human history happens according to God's purposes and by His grace. He has plans for believers. He expects true and complete obedience. Believers rebel against God when they do not completely obey His leadership. We can know His will by faithfully following His commandments. He is pure love and leads us in His love.

DAY FIVE

Read Numbers 20:12-13, thinking about how God held Moses accountable.

Moses led the people faithfully for forty years. Then he made a huge mistake. He disobeyed God.

God spoke to Moses and Aaron and told them they would not enter into the promised land. He gave them two reasons for His decision. First, they did not believe Him. God told Moses to talk to the rock. It seems Moses did not believe speaking to the rock was enough. God said He was punishing Moses because of his unbelief. Second, they did not honor God. They did not act like they thought God was holy in front of all the people to see. Because of this sin they both died in the desert before the people went into the land God promised them.

At the end of verse 13, Moses wrote that the name of that place was Meribah. He wanted to remind people of the punishment for arguing with God. God holds us accountable for our actions. God requires all of us, and especially the leaders of His people, to follow Him fully.

What do we mean when we say God holds believers accountable for their actions? What are some ways God has held you accountable for things you have done or said?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Numbers 20:1-13. Meet with one or two members of your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

What should you do when you face hard times in life? Discuss with your small group how you have experienced God's help in the past.

Why does God expect leaders to honor and obey Him no matter what happens in life? How can you help leaders in your church honor and obey God?

Why do you think God holds His leaders accountable for their actions? When has God held you accountable for your actions?



GOD SAVES

Jesus came to earth for the purpose of saving all people who turn to Him.

MATTHEW 1:18-25; NUMBERS 21:6-9

The Israelites continued to wander around the desert. God led them around the land of Edom and the Canaanite country. However, the Canaanite king, Arad, attacked them and captured some of the Israelites. The people prayed for help. The Lord listened and helped them defeat the Canaanites. But immediately after this victory, the people raised a great complaint against God. God punished them by a plague of poisonous snakes.

People are always turning away from God. In the New Testament, Paul says it this way: “all have sinned” (Romans 3:23). God, who is perfectly holy, rightly punishes sin. However, the humans of the world can know God’s grace and forgiveness.

In Numbers 21, God’s grace came through a bronze snake on a pole. To all the humans of the world, God’s grace comes through Jesus whose birth story is in today’s lesson. The final picture of God’s grace and forgiveness comes through Jesus who, like the bronze snake, was lifted up on a cross to give salvation to all who look to Christ in faith.

MATTHEW 1:18-25;

NUMBERS 21:6-9

18 This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. His mother Mary was **engaged** ^A to marry Joseph, but before they married, she learned she was pregnant by the power of the Holy Spirit. **19** Because Mary's **husband**, ^B Joseph, was a good man, he did not want to disgrace her in public, so he planned to **divorce her secretly**. ^C **20** While Joseph thought about these things, an angel of the Lord came to him in a dream. The angel said, "Joseph, descendant of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because the baby in her is from the Holy Spirit. **21** She will give birth to a son, and you will name him **Jesus**, ^D because he will save his people from their sins." **22** All this happened to bring about what the Lord had said through the **prophet**: ^E **23** "The virgin will be pregnant. She will have a son, and they will name him **Immanuel**," ^F which means "God is with us." **24** When Joseph woke up, he did what the Lord's angel had told him to do. Joseph took Mary as his wife, **25** but he did not have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to the son. And Joseph named him Jesus.

6 So the LORD sent them poisonous snakes; they bit the people, and many of the Israelites died. **7** The people came to Moses and said, "We sinned when we grumbled at you and the LORD. Pray that the LORD will take away these snakes." So Moses prayed for the people. **8** The LORD said to Moses, "Make a bronze snake, and put it on a pole. When anyone who is bitten looks at it, that person will live." **9** So Moses made a bronze snake and put it on a pole. Then when a snake bit anyone, that person looked at the **bronze snake and lived**. ^G

- a. Engagement was a contract usually starting about a year before the wedding.
- b. Engaged couples were called husband and wife even though they were not married yet.
- c. Because of the marriage contract, engagements could only be broken by divorce.
- d. The Greek name, Jesus, is the same as the Hebrew name, Yeshua (Joshua). In both languages the name Jesus means "the Lord shall save."
- e. See Isaiah 7:14.
- f. Some translations use the name Immanuel or Emanuel. Both mean "God with us."
- g. Jesus explained to Nicodemus He would be lifted up on a cross so people can have faith in Him and live. (See John 3:14-16.) Jesus compared the bronze snake story to His own crucifixion.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Why do we need saving? From what?
2. Why did the angel tell Joseph to name the baby “Jesus”?
3. What did the Old Testament prophet say people would call the baby? What did this name mean?
4. Why did Joseph decide to go ahead and marry Mary?
5. In the Old Testament, why did God send poisonous snakes to kill the Israelites?
6. What was God’s plan to save the people if the snakes bit them?
7. What did the people need to do so they would not die after the snakes bit them?
8. How does the story of the bronze snake relate to salvation through Jesus?

BIBLE SKILL: *Finding names that mean the same thing.*

Jesus had several other names in both the Old Testament and New Testament. Look up these verses to find some of those names. Write the name of Jesus you find in the verses.

Luke 1:35 _____ Matthew 1:23 _____

1 John 4:15 _____ John 4:25 _____

Matthew 25:31 _____ Isaiah 7:14 _____

John 1:41 _____ John 1:29 _____

John 3:14 _____

IN MY CONTEXT

- God gives salvation through His Son.
- Believers show their faith in God by obeying Him.
- There is only one way people can have salvation. They must turn to Jesus in faith.

What does “salvation” mean? Discuss with your group how God provided salvation to the Israelites. Discuss how God provides salvation through His Son today.

How do you show your obedience to God? What things have you done in this past week that show your obedience to God?

Why is faith in Jesus the only way to be saved? Share with someone in your group your story of salvation. Who can you tell about salvation in Jesus this week?

MEMORY VERSE

“She will give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” – Matthew 1:21

DAY ONE

Read Matthew 1:18-19, looking for the choices Joseph had to make.

Mary's family promised to give her to Joseph to be his wife. They were engaged. In New Testament times, engagement was different than it is today. Engagement was a contract. The contract was usually made about a year before the wedding. If the man wanted to end the engagement, he had to sign a paper to say the two were no longer engaged. It was a kind of divorce statement. He had to give the reason he wanted to end the engagement.

Before they were married, Joseph found out Mary was pregnant. He thought Mary was unfaithful to him. He had two choices: 1) he could sign a divorce statement telling the reason for the divorce; 2) he could go ahead with the wedding even though he knew the baby was not his baby.

Joseph did not want to embarrass Mary in public. He decided to have a private divorce. He would not tell anyone his reasons for the divorce. His problem was he did not know all the facts. The angel explained everything to him later. But even at this point in the story we see that Joseph was a kind and thoughtful man. He wanted to protect Mary as much as he could.

When have you had to make a hard decision?

How did learning all the facts make your decision easier?

DAY TWO

Read Matthew 1:20-23, underlining the meaning of the name Jesus.

Matthew says Joseph thought about the decision he was making. He probably worried about it a lot. He even dreamed about his decision. One night an angel came to him in a dream. The angel explained about the baby Mary was carrying. The angel encouraged Joseph not to be afraid to take Mary for his wife. Then came the big surprise. The baby did not have a human father. He was from the Holy Spirit.

The angel told Joseph the name he should choose for the baby. The name was "Jesus." Jesus is an important name because it means "God saves." The prophecies in the Old Testament said these things would

happen. Isaiah 7:14 says that a virgin would become pregnant and her child would be Immanuel—God with us. What was happening to Mary was the fulfillment of that prophecy.

There is only one reason Jesus came to earth. He came to earth to offer salvation to people who accept Him. His reason for coming was to be Savior. Matthew described the final and only way God provides salvation. Salvation is through His Son, Jesus. He provides salvation to people who believe and obey Him.

Do you believe Jesus is the only way to be saved? Why or why not?

How can you explain to other people about salvation through Jesus?

DAY THREE

Read Matthew 1:24-25, finding the connection between faith and action.

Joseph did the two things the angel told him to do. First, he married Mary. Second, he named the child Jesus. These actions show Joseph's faith in God. There is no doubt that Mary was a virgin when she became pregnant. The Bible clearly states she was a virgin. Joseph waited until after Jesus was born to have sexual relations with his wife, Mary. Both Mary and Joseph are examples of obedience and faith in God.

Believers today show their faith in God by obeying Him. They show their faith through their actions. There is a story about a little town that had a stream running through it. Horses and buggies could cross the stream by going through the shallow water. During rainy season the stream was so deep people needed to use boats to go across.

Finally, some younger men in town built a little bridge. Several older men said they really liked the bridge. One day people noticed the older men were still using little boats when the water was deep. They asked the men why. One older man said they loved the bridge. They believed it was a good bridge but they were sure the boats could hold them and get them across the water. They said they had faith the bridge was good, but their actions did not show their faith.

How do you show your faith in God?

DAY FOUR

Read Numbers 21:6-7, drawing a circle around the first step toward salvation.

Not long after their victory over the Canaanites, the Israelites started to grumble and complain again against God and Moses. This was the seventh time during their journey that they complained against God and Moses. This time their grumbling was even more serious. They complained about the food God gave them. The manna God sent to them was a holy gift to them. It was heavenly bread. But they called it “terrible food.” They said they hated the food God gave them. God’s judgment came hard against them. He sent poisonous snakes that bit them. Many Israelites died.

Most Bible teachers think the snakes were carpet vipers. There is no cure for their poison. The snake bite causes terrible, high fevers. People were in pain all over their bodies from the bites. The pain from the snake bites caused the people to repent. They admitted that grumbling and complaining was a sin against God. They begged Moses to pray God would take away the snakes. Moses showed mercy to His people. He prayed for them. It is important to see the first step for them to have salvation was to repent and turn back to God.

Why do you think God requires people to repent from their sins before they can be saved?

KEY DOCTRINE: *Jesus is God’s Son*

Christ was and is always the Son of God. He took on a human body. He was born of the Virgin Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus was perfect. He obeyed God’s will. Jesus was a real person. He opened the way for people to be saved from sin through His death on the cross. He rose from the dead. He went up to heaven. He is in heaven now. He brings people to God so their sins can be forgiven. He will return in power and glory. He will judge the world. He is always with believers to the end of the world.

DAY FIVE

Read Numbers 21:8-9, finding God's plan for salvation.

God told Moses to make an image of the snake and put it on a pole. When the snakes bit people Moses told them to look up at the snake image. God would heal them. Usually they would be disgusted to look at such a terrible image. They believed snakes were unclean. However, they knew they had to trust God and obey whatever He said to do. It is important to understand the Israelites did not worship the snake. They looked at the snake. Why? Because God told them to look at it. It is important to understand it was faith in God that healed them. The snake did not heal the people. Faith in the snake did not heal the bites.

In the same way, Jesus' died on the cross to pay for our sins. It is not the wooden cross that saves us today. It is faith in the One who died on the cross. In the New Testament, Jesus compared His own crucifixion on the cross to the snake on the pole. Read John 3:14-16. Jesus said He would be lifted up like Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness. We must believe in God's Son, Jesus, to save us. Salvation is available only through faith in Jesus.

Why does God provide only one way for people to be saved today?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Matthew 1:18-25 and Numbers 21:6-9. Meet with one or two members of your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

Discuss with your group how God provides salvation. Who can you tell this week about why Jesus came to earth?

What obedient actions can you take this week that will show your faith in God? Discuss this with your small group.

Discuss with group members how to explain to others that there is only one way people can be saved. Who can you tell about Jesus this week?



GOD CALLS

God calls His followers to represent Him and His purposes in this world.

NUMBERS 22:22-35

God may speak to believers in many different ways. In today's lesson, God spoke through a donkey. Today God often speaks through the Bible. The important thing is we need to see His message and make His message clear to others.

The Israelites traveled through several countries. They defeated the countries that would not let them pass. One of those countries was Moab. Balak was king of Moab. He heard about God giving the Israelites power to defeat all their enemies as they traveled. Balak was afraid. Balak believed in magic, fortune tellers, and people who put curses on others.

Balak sent for a famous magician and prophet from a distant land whose name was Balaam. Balaam was not an Israelite. Balak paid Balaam to curse Israel, but God told Balaam not to do it. God allowed Balaam to meet with Balak. On the way to Balak is when God gave His message through a donkey.

NUMBERS 22:22-35

22 But God became angry because **Balaam** **A** went, so the **angel** **B** of the LORD stood in the road to stop Balaam. Balaam was riding his donkey, and he had **two servants with him**. **C** **23** When the **donkey saw the angel** **D** of the LORD standing in the road with a sword in his hand, the donkey left the road and went into the field. Balaam hit the donkey to force her back on the road. **24** Later, the angel of the LORD stood on a narrow path between two vineyards, with walls on both sides. **25** Again the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, and she walked close to one wall, crushing Balaam's foot against it. So he hit her again. **26** The angel of the LORD went ahead **again**, **E** and stood at a narrow place, too narrow to turn left or right. **27** When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam. This made him so angry that he hit her with his stick. **28** Then the LORD made the **donkey talk**, **F** and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to make you hit me three times?" **29** Balaam answered the donkey, "You have made me look foolish! I wish I had a sword in my hand! I would kill you right now!" **30** But the donkey said to Balaam, "I am your very own donkey, which you have ridden for years. Have I ever done this to you before?" "No," Balaam said. **31** Then the LORD let Balaam see the angel of the LORD, who was standing in the road with his **sword drawn**. **G** Then Balaam bowed face down on the ground. **32** The angel of the LORD asked Balaam, "Why have you hit your donkey three times? I have stood here to stop you, because what you are doing is wrong. **33** The donkey saw me and turned away from me three times. If she had not turned away, I would have **killed you by now**, **H** but I would have let her live." **34** Then Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, "I have sinned; I did not know you were standing in the road to stop me. If I am wrong, I will go back." **35** The angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with these men, but say only what I tell you." So Balaam went with **Balak's** **I** leaders.

- a. Balaam was a prophet from the town of Pethor near the Euphrates River, about 400 miles from Moab.
- b. The angel was there to give God's message to Balaam and remind him God was in control of everything.
- c. Three people were traveling; none of them saw the angel.
- d. None of the people saw the angel, but the donkey did see the angel. The idea is that in this case an animal was more aware of God than the people were.
- e. The angel moved ahead of Balaam three times. In Hebrew thought, three was the number for God. The number of times suggested God was speaking to Balaam.
- f. This story is not legend or myth. This is a story about one time when it really happened.
- g. "Drawn" here means the sword was in his hand ready to use.
- h. The angel was there to punish Balaam by death for his disobedience. The donkey not only gave God's message to Balaam; the donkey had saved his life.
- i. Balak was king of Moab. Moab was east of the Dead Sea.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. How can believers represent God and His purposes in the world?
2. Why was God angry at Balaam?
3. How did God get Balaam to pay attention to Him?
4. What did the donkey do three times to save Balaam's life?
5. What would that angel have done had the donkey not turned aside? Why was God ready to punish Balaam by death?
6. Why did God allow only Balaam to see the angel?
7. How did Balaam show humility to the angel?
8. What was the sin that Balaam had done? Why does God punish sin?
9. What did God tell Balaam to say to the King of Moab?

BIBLE SKILL: *Use concordances, Bible dictionaries, or the back of a study Bible.*

In the Bible we read about angels doing different activities. Use a Bible concordance, a Bible dictionary, or the back of your Bible to find the verses about the duties of angels. Write the verse reference by what the angels did.

1. Rescued Lot from Sodom _____
2. Announced Jesus' birth to Mary _____
3. Rescued Peter from prison _____
4. Took care of Jesus _____
5. Will bring judgment _____

IN MY CONTEXT

- God gives us boundaries to help keep us within His will.
- God can communicate to humans through whatever ways He chooses.
- As humble servants of God, His people must be careful to share God's clear message to others whatever it may cost.

What do we mean when we talk about boundaries? What kinds of boundaries has God put in your life? How do His boundaries protect you?

What would you do if God spoke to you like He spoke to Balaam? How do you know when God communicates with you?

How does God use you to give His message to others? What is the most important message you have from God that you need to share?

MEMORY VERSE

But Balaam answered, "I have come to you now, but I can't say just anything. I can only say what God tells me to say." – Numbers 22:38

DAY ONE

Read Numbers 22:22, finding what Balaam did that was wrong.

The story about Balaam in Numbers 22–25 is a long and difficult story. Balaam was not from Israel but he was a kind of prophet and at times spoke for God. The Bible does not say Balaam was a true believer. He worshiped other gods also. He knew about spiritual things but did the work of a magician. Magicians were often paid a lot of money to curse someone's enemies. Nevertheless, in this story, God chose to speak through Balaam. The clear lesson from this story is God can use whatever messenger He chooses to make His will known.

The angel tried to stop Balaam because he was sinning. Balaam hoped God would allow him to curse the Israelites so he could get more money. God allowed Balaam to go with Balak's men, but Balaam's real reason for his journey was still wrong. God let Balaam know he was wrong. God wanted Balaam to understand He would only allow Balaam to bless the Israelites.

It does not matter who we are. God expects believers and nonbelievers to obey Him when we hear His message.

How do you think God can use you to give His message to other people?

DAY TWO

Read Numbers 22:23-27, listing three times the donkey saw the angel.

Balaam's donkey was a lowly farm animal. Even so, the donkey could see the Lord's angel but Balaam, the famous magician, could not. Balaam was "blind" to true spiritual things. Balaam's donkey saw the Lord's angel three times. She refused to go around the angel three times. The first time, the donkey went off the road and into the field. The second time, the angel stood in a very narrow path between two vineyards with stone walls on each side. The donkey had no place to go because the road was very narrow. The third time, the donkey just gave up and laid down

under Balaam. The donkey was tired of trying to do the things Balaam told her to do.

This story is not really about a donkey. It is about a man who hoped to do something God told him not to do. Why God communicated so clearly with someone like Balaam we do not know. Still, Balaam knew God's desire, but Balaam wished to do otherwise. God set boundaries. When Balaam could not go through on the narrow roads, he blamed the donkey. Behind the donkey's actions was God not allowing Balaam to do evil.

When God put limits on something you wanted to do, how did you respond to Him?

DAY THREE

Read Numbers 22:28-30, paying attention to what the donkey said.

After the third time the angel appeared, Balaam was so angry he wanted to kill the donkey. That is when God put words in the donkey's mouth. The donkey wanted to know what she did to make Balaam so angry. He was upset because she made him look foolish. He still did not understand God was speaking. He was more concerned with his own pride.

The donkey asked a second question. She asked if she had ever done anything like this in the past. The point of the question was to make Balaam think that perhaps God was behind the donkey's actions.

The Bible does not say Balaam was surprised to hear the donkey talk to him. In countries that worshiped idols, there were often stories of talking animals. They believed some animals were gods. Perhaps Balaam was not surprised to hear his donkey talk. He should have been surprised. The words might have come from the donkey's mouth, but the message was from God.

It is important to understand that God can use anyone or anything to give His message to humans. He can do whatever He wants. If He wants to speak through a donkey, He can.

How does God communicate with you? How do you know when God speaks to you?

DAY FOUR

Read Numbers 22:31-33, thinking of how God speaks.

After the donkey talked to Balaam, God allowed him to see the angel and understand God's message. These verses give us four points.

1) Balaam saw the angel with the sword in his hand. He explained to Balaam that he was there to stop Balaam from going any further. He would kill Balaam if he tried to get past the angel. 2) Balaam was afraid and fell to the ground. Clearly Balaam has bowed in humility and sorrow. When Balaam talked to his donkey, he showed pride. When he saw the angel, that changed quickly. He became humble and full of fear. 3) Then the angel told Balaam that the donkey saved Balaam from death. Each time the donkey refused to go any further, she saved Balaam's life. 4) The angel told Balaam that Balaam's attitude was wrong. Balaam was behaving in a way that made God angry. He was arrogant and self-centered. He wanted money more than he wanted to obey God.

Today, we probably will not have a donkey talk to us. Still, God lets us know what He wants us to do. He has many ways to speak to us. He expects us to listen and obey His instructions.

When God speaks to you, how should you respond to Him?

KEY DOCTRINE: *Evangelism*

Every believer and every church has a duty and a blessing to seek and make disciples of all people in all nations. It is the duty of every believer to make clear the message of salvation through Jesus. Believers give the gospel message based on three things: 1) the command of Jesus to make disciples, 2) their love for God, and 3) their love for lost people.

DAY FIVE

Read Numbers 22:34-35, underlining what we should do with God's message.

Immediately, Balaam confessed his sin. He was willing to turn and go home. The angel told Balaam to go with Balak's men. Even though God did not want him to go, God allowed him. Sometimes God allows us to do things that He does not approve.

Robert was a young Christian Deaf man. Robert promised God he would manage his money well and give his tithe to God. Robert loved to water ski and decided to buy a ski boat. When he asked God about this, he felt God was telling him to save his money. He really wanted the boat, so he bought it. Robert's finances were soon in trouble. God did not tell Robert he could have the boat. He permitted him to have the boat even though it brought trouble.

God permitted Balaam to continue to Moab. He could only say the things God told him to say. As God's servants, we must be sure to make God's message clear. Whether a donkey, a prophet, or us, we must give God's message to others.

When has God trusted you with His message? Did you share it like He wanted you to do?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Numbers 22:22-35. Meet with one or two members of your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

Discuss boundaries God may be putting in your life. How can you help each other obey God's boundaries in your life?

How can each of you in your small group help each other understand what God wants you to know?

How can you be truly committed to share God's message with others no matter what it may cost you?



GOD COMMISSIONS

God's people must support and help prepare the next generation to serve as leaders.

NUMBERS 27:12-23

A large hearing church ordained three Deaf men to be deacons. The other deacons communicated with them through an interpreter. Even though they could not communicate directly with the new deacons, they saw the way God used the three godly Deaf men. They knew God would continue to bless the Deaf men and the whole group of deacons. It is clear that God blesses the people He calls to be leaders when they obey Him.

Moses led the Israelites for forty years. In today's lesson, Moses was near the end of his life. God chose Joshua to be the next leader because he was a godly man. Leadership passed from Moses to Joshua through a special service of worship. Moses had trained Joshua for years. Now Joshua would be the leader for God's people.

NUMBERS 27:12-23

12 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Climb this mountain in the **Abarim** **A** Mountains, and **look at the land** **B** I have given to the Israelites. **13** After you have seen it, you will die and join your ancestors as your brother **Aaron did**, **C** **14** because you both acted against my command in the Desert of Zin. You did not honor me as holy before the people at the waters of **Meribah.**” **D** (This was at Meribah in Kadesh in the Desert of Zin.)

15 Moses said to the LORD, **16** “The LORD is the God of the spirits of all people. May he choose a leader for these people, **17** who will go in and out before them. He must lead them out like sheep and bring them in; the LORD’s people must not be like sheep without a shepherd.” **18** So the LORD said to Moses, “Take Joshua son of Nun, because my Spirit is in him. Put your hand on him, **19** and have him stand before **Eleazar** **E** the priest and all the people. Then give him his orders as they watch. **20** Let him share your honor so that all the Israelites will obey him. **21** He must stand before Eleazar the priest, and Eleazar will get advice from the LORD by using the **Urim.** **F** At his command all the Israelites will go out, and at his command they will all come in.” **22** Moses did what the LORD told him. He took Joshua and had him stand before Eleazar the priest and all the people, **23** and he put his hands on him and gave him orders, **just as the LORD had told him.** **G**

- a. The highest point in the Abarim Mountains was Mount Nebo. From that point Moses could see all the land God gave the Israelites. (See Deuteronomy 32:49; 34:1.)
- b. Mount Nebo is in the present country of Jordan. From Mount Nebo on a clear day a person can see into Israel.
- c. Aaron died on Mount Hor a short time after he helped Moses when Moses hit the rock instead of talking to the rock. Eleazar, Aaron’s son became high priest.
- d. The place where Moses hit the rock instead of talking to it. (See Numbers 20:12.)
- e. Eleazar was Aaron’s son and now was the high priest.
- f. Urim was one of two objects used to determine God’s will or His answer to questions. It was the duty of the high priest to take care of them. The other object was the Thummim. No one knows exactly what they looked like or what happened to them.
- g. Moses obeyed God’s command, even though he knew he would soon die.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. What can our Deaf study group do to help and encourage the next generation of leaders?
2. Why did God call Moses to go to the top of Mount Nebo?
3. God did not let Moses go into the promised land. Why?
4. How do you think you would feel if you, like Moses, knew exactly when you would die?
5. What qualified Joshua to be the next leader of Israel after Moses?
6. How can church members be sure there will be leaders for the church when the older leaders are gone?
7. How did God say He would let Joshua know what to do? How did this object lead Israel?
8. How does God let leaders today know what He wants them to do?
9. What was important about Moses placing his hands on Joshua when he was appointed the next leader of Israel?
10. What did Moses do after appointing Joshua as the next leader? Why was this action of Moses important?

BIBLE SKILL: *Urim and the Thummim*

Moses referred to the Urim in today's lesson. The Urim had a partner piece called the Thummim. Use a good Bible dictionary or encyclopedia and learn about the Urim and the Thummim. Answer the questions below.

1. What were the Urim and Thummim used for? _____
2. What did the Urim and Thummim look like? _____
3. What are some verses in the Bible that tell us about the Urim and Thummim?

4. Why does the Urim and Thummim show up in the New Testament?

IN MY CONTEXT

- All people must face the truth that they will die someday no matter who they are.
- Godly leaders must plan for the future of God's work.
- God calls out people to lead His people.

Why do most people not think about their own death? What can you do to become prepared for your own death? What spiritual preparation can you make?

Why is it important for the church to have godly leaders? What can your Bible study group do to help make sure your church will have godly leaders in the future?

How does your church find God's leaders? How can your church know who God is calling to lead His people?

MEMORY VERSE

**"He must lead them out like sheep and bring them in; the LORD's people must not be like sheep without a shepherd."
– Numbers 27:17b**

DAY ONE

Read Numbers 27:12, imagining what it is like to look to the promised land.

About eight hundred years before Moses lived, God made a promise to Abraham. He promised Abraham that He would give Abraham's descendants a land. God described this land to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:18; 17:8). It was the land generally known as Canaan. There were several different groups of people that lived in Canaan and called it their home land.

God was not going to let Moses lead the people into the promised land, but God was going to let Moses see the place. God told Moses to go up to the top of the Abarim mountain range. The highest mountain in the Abarim range is Mount Nebo. From there Moses could see the whole promised land. Straight west from Mount Nebo is the Jordan River valley. Just beyond the Jordan is the central Israel hill country and present day Jerusalem. From Mount Nebo, on a clear day, one can see Israel from north to south. Moses must have been thrilled to see this land.

Why do you think God let Moses see the promised land?

DAY TWO

Read Numbers 27:13-14, looking for how we should think about death.

God was gracious to let Moses see the promised land. God said earlier, Moses would never go into the promised land because of what happened in the Desert of Zin. (See Numbers 20:12.) God reminded Moses it was because Moses did not obey Him at Meribah.

Most of the adults who left Egypt with Moses were already dead. Only Moses, Joshua, and Caleb were still alive. The rest of the Israelites were born after Moses led the people out of Egypt or had been young when they departed. Just like the rest of the people his age, Moses died before he could enter the promised land. You can read about the death of Moses in Deuteronomy 34.

Moses was the leader of the Israelites for forty years. We do not like to think about our leaders dying. The Israelites probably felt the same way. The truth is that we all will die unless Jesus comes back before we die. Even rich and powerful people die. Even good and godly people die. You and I will die too. Because we know Jesus, death no longer has victory over us and has lost its sting. (See 1 Corinthians 15:55.)

How can believers be prepared for death?

DAY THREE

Read Numbers 27:15-17, underlining Moses' request.

Moses did not ask God to let him live and go into the promised land. He asked God to choose a new leader for the Israelites. He knew that the Israelites must face many challenges as they moved into the new land. Moses knew the people needed a strong leader who would take care of them. Writers in both the Old Testament and New Testament compared people to sheep. They compared their leaders to shepherds. Leaders and shepherds have a lot in common:

1. Leaders lead their people. They do not push them.
2. Leaders guide their people into safe places.
3. Leaders try to provide the things their people need.
4. Leaders try to protect their people from enemies.
5. Leaders take care of all their people, not just a few people.
6. Sheep and people become disorganized without leaders.

People also need a leader who focuses on the future of God's work. Moses knew the Israelites would face many challenges as they obeyed God's leadership. He knew the people needed someone to guide them. That is why current leaders must always be preparing the way for future leaders. God's people still need leaders to think about and prepare for the future.

How is a church leader like a shepherd? What do you think is the most important work they do?

DAY FOUR

Read Numbers 27:18-21, finding how God led Joshua.

The person God chose to lead after Moses died was Joshua. Joshua was a good person for this job for four reasons.

1. The Lord's Spirit was on Joshua.
2. He had been Moses' assistant for a long time (Numbers 11:28).
3. He had already led the Israelites in a battle against the Amalekites. (See Exodus 17:9-13.)
4. He had been in Canaan and was one of only two spies who reported back believing Israel could defeat the Canaanites.

God told Moses to put his hand on Joshua in front of Eleazar, the high priest and in front of all the people. This showed the people that Joshua was their new leader. The people were to obey and respect Joshua. Joshua would receive God's instructions through Eleazar the priest. Eleazar would receive God's instruction through an object called the Urim. The priest used this object with another object called the Thummim. We do not know what these objects were. We do know that the words "Urim and Thummim" mean "perfect lights." The priest used them to ask God about important decisions. In this way, God guided Joshua. Joshua needed God's help, and God gave it.

What do you think believers should do when choosing a new leader?

What kind of character should a leader have?

KEY DOCTRINE: *The Holy Spirit leads believers*

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. The work of the Holy Spirit is to lead believers. He leads in many areas and in many ways. These are a few of the works of the Holy Spirit: He makes God's Word clear to believers so they can understand truth; He helps believers grow in Christian character; He teaches and gives power to believers.

DAY FIVE

Read Numbers 27:22-23, underlining the main point.

Moses was not thinking about the fact he would soon die. He was thinking about what would happen to God's people. They needed someone who loved and obeyed God as they went into the land God promised them. Moses was not jealous because someone else would be the leader. He was obedient.

Moses showed the people Joshua was God's choice by putting his hands on Joshua. In the Old Testament, "laying on of hands" had several different meanings. Two of those meanings are:

1. To give a blessing. (See Jacob blessing his grandsons, Genesis 48:12-19). The American Sign Language sign for blessing is a good picture of giving blessings with our hands.

2. To set someone apart for a special work. When a church ordains a pastor or deacons, leaders of the church put their hands on them to show God chose them for a special work. God calls leaders. Believers must support and help prepare the next generation to serve as leaders.

Have you ever been to a ceremony that involved laying on of hands? What did the laying on of hands represent?

Why do you think it is important for us to know God chooses people to become our leaders?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Numbers 27:12-23. Meet with one or two members of your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

Why is it important to remember we will all die someday? How can you help others be prepared?

What can you and your small group do to help your church prepare for the future of God's work?

How does your church identify leaders God is calling to lead your church? What has God called you to do in the life of your church?



GOD EXPECTS

God expects His people to keep their promises and commitments.

NUMBERS 32:20-32

In Bible times, people made promises “in the eyes of God.” God was the witness to agreements. Other people were also witnesses and would try to be sure people kept their promises. The most important promises believers make are the promises made to God.

The Israelites were getting ready to enter the promised land. Two tribes, the Gadites and the Reubenites, wanted to settle and farm on the east side of the Jordan River. The Israelites already controlled much of that land. It was a grassy land that was good for cows and sheep.

The Reubenite and Gadite tribes went to Moses to ask him to allow them to stay on the east side of the Jordan River. Moses strongly reminded them God gave this land to them. It was a serious sin if they refused to enter it. The Reubenites and Gadites promised their men would enter the promised land with the other tribes. They promised to fight with the other tribes to defeat the Canaanites. They were ready to keep their commitment to God and the people of Israel.

NUMBERS 32:20-32

20 So Moses told them, “You must do these things. You must go before the LORD into battle **21** and cross the **Jordan River** **A** **armed**, **B** until the LORD forces out the enemy. **22** After the LORD helps us take the land, you may return home. You will have done your duty to the LORD and Israel, and you may have this land as your own. **23** “But if you don’t do these things, you will be sinning against the LORD; know for sure that you will be punished for your sin. **24** Build cities for your children and pens for your animals, but then you must do what you promised.” **25** The **Gadites** **C** and **Reubenites** **D** said to Moses, “We are your servants, and we will do what you, our master, command. **26** Our children, wives, and all **our cattle will stay** **E** in the **cities of Gilead**, **F** **27** but we, your servants, will prepare for battle. We will go over and fight for the LORD, as you, our master, have said.” **28** So Moses gave orders about them to Eleazar the priest, to Joshua son of Nun, and to the leaders of the tribes of Israel. **29** Moses said to them, “If the Gadites and Reubenites prepare for battle and cross the Jordan River with you, to go before the LORD and help you take the land, give them the land of Gilead for their own. **30** But if they do not go over armed, they will not receive it; their land will be in **Canaan** **G** with you.” **31** The Gadites and Reubenites answered, “We are your servants, and we will do as the LORD said. **32** We will cross over into Canaan and go before the LORD ready for battle. But our land will be east of the Jordan River.”

- a. The Jordan River was west of the desert the Israelites wandered for forty years. The promised land of Canaan was across the Jordan River to the west.
- b. Armed means to have weapons and be ready for war.
- c. Gad started the tribe called the Gadites. He was the seventh son of Jacob. His mother was the maid of Jacob’s first wife, Leah.
- d. Reuben was Jacob’s oldest son. His mother was Jacob’s first wife, Leah. Reuben started the tribe called the Reubenites.
- e. The Gadites and Reubenites had many cattle and sheep. The area east of the Jordan River was good land for animals.
- f. Gilead was the area the Israelites camped on the east of Jordan before crossing into the promised land.
- g. Canaan is the name of the promised land. The land was named for the Canaanites who lived in the land when Israel arrived.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Why is it important for believers to keep their promises and commitments?
2. What was Moses' response to the request to stay east of the Jordan River?
3. What requirements did Moses give the two tribes who wanted to stay?
4. How can believers help each other to follow through on their promises and commitments?
5. Why did Moses lead the Gadites and Reubenites to make their agreement in public? What are some ways believers today make public commitments to God?
6. What commitment did the Gadites and Reubenites make to Moses and to the Hebrew people?
7. Why do you think God punishes people who do not keep their commitment to Him?

BIBLE SKILL: *Looking for people*

Find the names of the sons of Jacob who became the tribes of Israel.

1. _____ first son – Genesis 29:31-32 (Mother: Leah)
2. _____ second son – Genesis 29:33
3. _____ third son – Genesis 29:34
4. _____ fourth son – Genesis 29:35
5. _____ fifth son – Genesis 30:18
6. _____ sixth son – Genesis 30:20
7. _____ first son – Genesis 30:6 (Mother: Bilhah)
8. _____ second son – Genesis 30:8
9. _____ first son – Genesis 30:11 (Mother: Zilpah)
10. _____ second son – Genesis 30:13
11. _____ first son – Genesis 30:24 (Mother: Rachel)

He did not have a tribe. His two sons were half tribes:

- _____ and _____ – Genesis 48:1,9-13
12. _____ second son – Genesis 35:18

IN MY CONTEXT

- Believers must be aware of the costs of failing to fulfill God's purposes.
- Humble submission to others in authority leads to God's blessing.
- Believers hold each other accountable for fulfilling their commitments to God.

When believers do not live in a way that agrees with God's purpose, what does it cost them? When have you personally learned this spiritual lesson?

Discuss as a group the value of humble submission to God's authority. In what ways do you need to submit to God's authority?

How do you think members of your group can hold each other accountable to fulfill your commitments to God? Discuss this as a group.

MEMORY VERSE

"...know for sure that you will be punished for your sin."
– Numbers 32:23b

DAY ONE

Read Numbers 32:20-22, finding three things required by Moses.

Moses was wise. He took time to think about their request. They told Moses they liked the land where they were. They wanted to be sure Moses understood their request was not because they were afraid of the people they would fight. They told him they would fight alongside the other tribes.

He agreed, but he reminded them about what they promised to do. He told them to show their faith in God by doing three things: 1) they must send their fighting men across the Jordan with the Israelites into battle; 2) they must stay in the battle until it was won completely; 3) they must depend on God for the victory. They must also depend on God to protect their families they left behind. They asked Him to treat them differently from the other tribes. Sometimes there are good reasons for special treatment.

A Deaf group in a hearing church needed to have a special place to sit in the worship service. They needed special lighting. When they asked church leaders for these special things, they explained why they needed them. The church leaders were happy to help the Deaf ministry become comfortable and worship together.

Do you think it is all right to ask your spiritual leaders to treat you differently from other believers in your group?

What are some ways you think you should have special treatment?

DAY TWO

Read Numbers 32:23-24, looking for God's warning.

Moses gave them a warning and a blessing. If they fulfilled their duties in battle they would have blessings. If they failed to keep their promises they would have sinned and God would punish them. Moses did not say what the punishment would be, but he suggested it would be a serious punishment. At least one consequence of not keeping their promise would be they would have to move across the Jordan River and live

in Canaan with the rest of the Israelites. If they failed to keep their promises they could not live east of the Jordan River.

Believers must understand the cost of failing to keep their commitments to God. They must also know that God intends for believers to fulfill God's purposes. The purpose for the Israelites was to have a secure land in which to plant the Jewish faith. God's purpose today is to call all people to Christ Jesus. Believers today do not go to war to gain new lands. The war believer's fight today is a spiritual war. God's purposes in this world today are spiritual. God gives each believer responsibilities to fulfill His purposes.

Do you think God gives believers warnings today? How does God give those warnings today?

DAY THREE

Read Numbers 32:25-27, identifying agreement with Moses.

The Gadites and Reubenites said Moses was their master and they were his servants. They did not rebel against Moses' authority. They were humble. They agreed to Moses' requirements. They agreed to leave their families and animals in Gilead. They promised to join the other Israelites in taking the promised land. If they were humble and submitted to Moses' authority, they would receive blessings. The blessing was that they would stay in Gilead on the east side of the Jordan and own that land. They understood Moses was God's chosen leader. When they obeyed Moses, they were also obeying God.

They repeated back to Moses that they accepted his requirements and would obey him. They submitted to his leadership. Believers today honor God when they submit to the authority of God's chosen leaders. When Christians submit to the authority of God's chosen leaders they do not give up responsibility for using right judgment or following the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Christians have both tasks: to know God's Word by obeying it and following godly leaders. All Christians relate directly to God through Christ. Still, God blesses believers who submit to His leaders.

How do you show respect for your church leaders? How do you submit to them?

DAY FOUR

Read Numbers 32:28-30, noticing the blessing and the warning.

Moses called the leaders of Israel together to inform them of the promises the Gadites and Reubenites made. He told them about the blessing that would come if they kept their promise. He also told them about the punishment they would have if they did not keep their promise. Moses and the two tribes of Gad and Reuben made promises. It was an agreement like a treaty or a covenant. Each person gave their agreement in front of all the Israelite leaders. Theirs was a public statement. The leaders were witnesses to the agreement. They knew what was expected of Moses, the Gadites, and the Reubenites.

Moses knew he would die before they all got to the promised land. He gave instructions about this agreement to Eleazar, Joshua, and the other leaders. He wanted the leaders to be sure the two tribes completed their agreement. In the future, when Moses was gone, Joshua and the new leaders would continue to hold the Gadites and the Reubenites accountable for the promise they made. When you and I make promises to God, we should remember this story and keep our promises to God.

How do your spiritual leaders let members of your group know about decisions they may make?

KEY DOCTRINE: *The Scriptures*

Men under the Holy Spirit's control wrote the Bible. God is the author of the Bible. God makes Himself known to people through the Bible. The Bible is fully true. There is no error in its teaching. The Bible is the highest rule of life. The only way believers can understand and explain the Bible is through Jesus Christ.

DAY FIVE

Read Numbers 32:31-32, thinking about how baptism shows our commitment to Christ.

The Gadites and Reubenites announced their agreement to all the leaders who gathered to hear Moses' commands to them. Their announcement was made public. The other Israelites would know if they did not keep their agreement with Moses. The Gadites and Reubenites were accountable to the leaders of the Israelites after Moses died.

The public agreement was a ceremony. Everyone present understood its meaning. For believers today, baptism is a way to make a public statement about our commitment to God. It is our statement that we have decided to give our lives to Jesus. It is a statement that we will obey and serve God. When we go under the water, we are showing that our old lives of sin are dead and gone. When we come out of the water, we show that we have a new life in Christ. Believers who make a commitment to God must be accountable to someone. Believers must hold each other accountable for fulfilling their commitments to God.

Write a few words about promises or commitments you made to God. How have you kept those promises?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Numbers 32:20-32. Meet with one or two members of your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

What do you need to change in your life to live in a way that honors God and follows His purposes?

Why do you think it is so hard to be humble and to submit to people in spiritual authority over us? What steps can you take this week that would show humility and submission?

Discuss with your small group what it means to be accountable to the commitments you make to God. What can you and your small group do to hold each other accountable this week?

GOD VALUES LIFE

God values human life and expects His people to value it as well.

DEUTERONOMY 5:17; 19:4-13

Do you ever become tired of people on television or on the Internet trying to convince people some sins are all right? They say abortion is OK. They say sex before marriage is normal. They say all people are guilty until they can prove they are innocent. Or they say the highest value is personal freedom. Almost never does our culture turn to God for answers. As believers, the only place we can find the true answers is in God's Word. He gave us rules to live by. Some of the rules may be hard to understand, but they are always fair.

Today's session teaches us God's view of human life. God made people in His own image. Whatever else that might mean, it means people are of great value. The laws and rules we see in Deuteronomy help us understand what God thinks about this subject. Really, there should be no doubt. One of God's laws teaches us to never murder. Today we will study about God's command that all human life is sacred. We should protect life from pre-birth to old age.

DEUTERONOMY 5:17; 19:4-13

17 “You must not **murder** ❶ anyone.”

4 This is the rule for someone who kills another person and runs to **one of these cities** ❷ in order to save his life. But the person must have killed a neighbor without meaning to, not out of hatred. 5 For example, suppose someone goes into the forest with a **neighbor** ❸ to cut wood and swings an ax to cut down a tree. If the ax head flies off the handle, hitting and killing the neighbor, the one who killed him may run to one of these cities to save his life. 6 Otherwise, the dead person’s relative who has the duty of punishing a murderer might be angry and **chase him**. ❹ If the city is far away, the relative might catch and kill the person, even though he should not be killed because there was no intent to kill his neighbor. 7 This is why I command you to choose these three cities. 8-9 Carefully obey all these laws I’m giving you today. Love the LORD your God, and always do what he wants you to do. Then the LORD your God will enlarge your land as he promised your ancestors, giving you the whole land **he promised to them**. ❺ After that, choose three more cities of safety 10 so that innocent people will not be killed in your land, the land that the LORD your God is giving you as your own. By doing this you will not be guilty of allowing the death of innocent people. 11 But if a person hates his neighbor and, after hiding and waiting, attacks and kills him and then runs to one of these cities for safety, 12 the **elders of his own city** ❻ should send for the murderer. They should bring the person back from the city of safety and hand him over to the relative who has the duty of **punishing the murderer**. ❼ 13 Show no mercy. You must remove from Israel the guilt of murdering innocent people so that things will go well for you.

- a. Murder means to kill someone because you meant to kill them. The Hebrew word is not the same as kill like what might happen in an accident.
- b. God set aside cities to be safe places for people who accidentally killed someone. God commanded them to divide the lands He gave them into three sections. God told them to choose safe cities in each section.
- c. Neighbor means any person who is not a relative. Usually it was a person who also lived nearby.
- d. God gave protection for an innocent person from angry relatives of the person who was killed.
- e. God promised their ancestor, Abraham, much more land than they would conquer at first. God gave them a requirement in order to possess the larger land. They must love the Lord their God and faithfully obey Him.
- f. This is not a relative that hunts down the murdered and gets revenge. This is an action by leaders of government rightly punishing an intentional murderer.
- g. Moses emphasized the cities would not protect guilty persons.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. What makes human life so valuable?
2. What does it mean to murder?
3. How is murder different from accidental killing?
4. What is the major requirement for a person to run to the cities of safety?
5. Who do these verses say should be responsible for punishing a person who kills someone on purpose? Is that true today?
6. Who is responsible for deciding punishment in today's world?
7. What were God's requirements for success for the Israelites?
8. Why is it important to protect people who are innocent?
9. What are the responsibilities of believers to ensure all life is sacred? How can we accomplish this responsibility?

BIBLE SKILL: *Matching statements and verses.*

Below are Bible verses about murder. Read each verse. Draw a line from the verse to the words that are in the verse.

1 John 3:15	God made humans in His own image.
Exodus 20:13	You have heard it said...you must not murder anyone.
Genesis 9:6	You must not murder anyone.
Matthew 5:21	Everyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer.

IN MY CONTEXT

- God forbids premeditated murder.
- God provides grace and protection.
- God's people must work for justice.

How can you explain the idea of “premeditated murder” to a Deaf friend? As a believer in Jesus, why is it so important that you understand this law?

Discuss with your group how God provides grace and protection today. How can you help other people know God's grace and protection?

What do you think justice means for Christians? How can you help innocent people have true justice in the world today?

MEMORY VERSE

You must not murder anyone. – Deuteronomy 5:17

DAY ONE

Read Deuteronomy 5:17, looking to understand the word “murder.”

In Deuteronomy, Moses reminded the Israelites of the commands God gave him on Mount Horeb (also called Mount Sinai). This included the command not to murder. Murder means to make a plan and then kill someone on purpose. When someone kills another person accidentally, it is called manslaughter. Manslaughter is not murder. When one person kills another by accident this is a terrible thing. But it is not the same as murder.

There are other times when killing is not murder or manslaughter. Sometimes a death happens because of self-defense. The Bible permits governments and elected authorities to punish by putting someone to death. That is known today as capital punishment or punishment by death (Deuteronomy 13:5,9; Exodus 21:12,14-17). Killing in times of war is tragic, but it is not the same as murder (Deuteronomy 7:2; 20:13,17). Murder is never permitted.

God created human beings in His image. If a person murders another person, it is a sin against God Himself (Genesis 9:6).

How do you explain the idea of murder? How do abortion, euthanasia, and assisted suicide break this command from God?

DAY TWO

Read Deuteronomy 19:4, finding why God made cities of safety.

God gave instructions about cities of safety. (See Deuteronomy 19:1-3.) God told Moses to divide the land into three sections. He should choose a city in each area to be a city of safety. The cities must be in places where a person could run to them quickly. Any person from any tribe could run to a city of safety.

The purpose of these cities was to protect someone who killed another person by accident. Verse 4 is clear—the safe city was not available for someone who committed a murder. It was for someone who accidentally killed another person. The custom of that time was the family of the

dead person could chase the innocent person, and they could kill him in revenge for their family member's death.

Moses wanted the people to understand that this custom was not right. If the death was an accident, the family should not do a revenge killing. They could not go into the cities of safety to get the innocent person. In all situations, God forbids premeditated murder. God created humans in His image. It is the main reason God does not allow murder.

Why is murder wrong? How can you help protect innocent life today?

DAY THREE

Read Deuteronomy 19:5-7, thinking about God's grace.

Moses gave an example of accidental killing. Moses' example tells about a death that happened when an ax head came off the handle and killed another man. In this example there was no intent to kill. This was not murder but an accident.

A young Deaf woman was driving home from work. She obeyed the speed limits and other traffic laws. A car went through a red light in front of her. She tried to put on her brakes but could not stop in time. Her car hit the smaller car on the driver's side door. The man in the smaller car was killed. The Deaf woman's car accidentally killed the other driver. The police came and investigated the accident. They said it was not her fault.

Today law enforcement and the courts decide if a person is guilty of murder. The courts will or will not give punishment. In Old Testament times, it was the responsibility of the family leader to give punishment to a person who killed a member of his family. The cities of safety were established to protect innocent people. They were an example of God's grace in action.

How does God show grace and protection in our world today?

DAY FOUR

Deuteronomy 19:8-10, underlining two requirements to receive all the land.

Long before Moses' time, God promised Abraham much more land than just Canaan. God promised Abraham that his descendants would have the land from the river of Egypt to the River Euphrates (Genesis 15:18). Fulfilling this promise depended on the Israelites' obedience to God. First, they must love the Lord their God. Then they had to obey all His commands. History shows us they were not able to conquer all the land because they did not keep the promise they made to God.

If God did give this extra land to them, they must choose three more cities of safety. That would be a total of nine cities of safety. They never chose three more cities. God did not give them the rest of the land because they did not obey Him.

The purpose of the new cities was the same as the purpose of the first six cities. A person who killed another person by accident could go to the cities to be safe. God provided these cities as places of grace and protection. They protected the one doing the accidental killing and the dead person's family from being guilty of a revenge murder.

How can we put together a plan to protect human life in future generations?

KEY DOCTRINE: *The life of a person is sacred.*

God created people in His own image. They have thoughts, feelings, and action. A person is very important to God because God made them in His image. Every person has great worth. Even the lives of pre-born babies, very old people, and very sick people are important to God. Every person is worthy of respect and Christian love. It is a sin to take the life of another person. God expects a person who kills another person out of hate to be punished.

DAY FIVE

Read Deuteronomy 19:11-13, learning God's value for justice.

The cities of safety were for an innocent person who killed another person by accident. The innocent person did not mean to hurt him. If a person hated someone and murdered him, that person should not be safe in a city of safety even if he fled there.

The Law of Moses ensured proper justice. If a true murder happened, the cities of safety would not stop true justice. You can see how the law protected everyone in this case. The city leaders where the murder happened would judge guilt or innocence. In case of murder, the leaders could send for the killer and bring him back to justice.

The verses in this session help us understand how God feels about life and about justice. Justice means doing the right thing for all people. Justice today could mean doing right for innocent babies. Justice could also be working for right race relationships. All God's people must work together for justice. We must be sure guilty people are punished. We must be sure innocent people are protected.

What are two ways you can work for justice for innocent people?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Deuteronomy 5:17; 19:4-13. Meet with one or two members of your study group to find ways to live what you have learned. You might meet by VP if you need to.

Discuss together why God is against murder. What are some cases of murder that happen in our culture today?

How would you explain God's grace and protection to your Deaf friends who are not Christians? How does God provide grace and protection today?

What can you and your small group do to help victims and innocent people?



HONORING GOD

When God's people listen to His Word, follow His Word, and teach His Word, they honor God.

DEUTERONOMY 4:1-9

Have you ever wondered why governments, clubs, churches, and other groups have rules? God knew human beings needed guidelines to help them live successfully. From the beginning in the garden, there have been rules. With Moses, the laws and rules were finally written down.

Almost forty years had passed since Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt. During those forty years they wandered through the desert. In today's verses, Israel had finally arrived again in the valley facing the town of Beth-Peor. They were about to enter the promised land. But would Israel follow God? Would the Commandments and rules for life guide them as a people?

If the Hebrew people wanted to live on in the new land, they would have to follow God. By listening to His law, obeying His law, and passing His law on to their children, the Jews would honor God. Nothing has changed. Christians today must still listen to God, obey Him, and lead their children into faith. These are the truths we learn from today's text.

DEUTERONOMY 4:1-9

1 Now, Israel, **listen** **A** to the laws and commands I will teach you. Obey them so that you will live and so that you will go over and take the land the LORD, the God of your **ancestors**, **B** is giving to you. **2** Don't add to these commands, and don't leave anything out, but obey the commands of the LORD your God that I give you. **3** You have seen for yourselves what the LORD did at **Baal Peor**, **C** how the LORD your God destroyed everyone among you who followed **Baal** **D** in Peor. **4** But all of you who continued following the LORD your God are still **alive today**. **E** **5** Look, I have taught you the laws and rules the LORD my God commanded me. Now you can obey the laws in the land you are entering, in the **land you will take**. **F** **6** Obey these laws carefully, in order to show the other nations that you have **wisdom and understanding**. **G** When they hear about these laws, they will say, "This great nation of Israel is wise and understanding." **7** No other nation is as great as we are. Their gods do not come near them, but the LORD our God comes near when we pray to him. **8** And no other nation has such good teachings and commands as those I am giving to you today. **9** But be careful! Watch out and don't forget the things you have seen. Don't forget them as long as you live, but teach them to your **children and grandchildren**. **H**

- a. To listen means more than to hear. It means to pay attention, and it suggests obedience.
- b. God had promised this land to Abraham, the father of the Hebrew people. (See Genesis 15:18-21.)
- c. The town or valley where people worshiped the false god, Baal.
- d. The false god people thought would help them have children and also good crops. The word "Baal" is the Canaanite word for "Lord."
- e. They were not killed by the sickness God sent to the rebels who disobeyed Him. The Baal Peor story is in Numbers 25.
- f. Genesis 15:16 indicates that Israel took the land but only when the natives of the land had descended into deep sin. Taking the land gave Israel a home land, but it also cut off the deep sin of the Canaanites.
- g. Knowing what is right. Being able to make good judgements and decisions. Having a full code of law set Israel apart from all the neighboring countries.
- h. Every generation of people who follow God must intentionally raise their children and grandchildren to know the Lord.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. How does keeping and teaching the Word of God honor Him?
2. Why do you think God gave the Israelite people His law?
3. Why did the Israelites have to wait forty years to be able to enter the promised land. Does God make believers wait for things today? Why?
4. What were some of the requirements for people to enter the promised land?
5. What happened at Baal Peor? Why was it wrong for Israel to follow Baal?
6. If the Israelites obeyed God's commands, what would other nations think about them?
7. What was the difference between the God of Israel and the gods of the other nations?
8. Why do you think Moses needed to give the Israelites a warning? What was the warning?
9. Why must believers teach other people about God? Why must we teach our children and grandchildren about the Lord?

BIBLE SKILL: *Read Deuteronomy 11:19-20.*

These two verses tell us when we should teach our children God's law. Believers today should follow the same instructions to tell about salvation through faith in Jesus. List the five times these verses say we should teach about God's Word.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

IN MY CONTEXT

- Godly leaders teach God's Word to others and trust them to faithfully follow it.
- God's people honor Him through their obedience to Him.
- Believers must teach God's truth to future generations.

Discuss as a group the duties of godly Bible teachers. How can you honor God by faithfully following the instruction of your godly Bible teachers?

How does obedience to God give honor to God? How well are you doing in your obedience to God? What makes you think this way?

Why is it important for you to be involved in passing on the faith? What can you do to teach God's truth to future generations?

MEMORY VERSE

But be careful! Watch out and don't forget the things you have seen. Don't forget them as long as you live, but teach them to your children and grandchildren. – Deuteronomy 4:9

DAY ONE

Read Deuteronomy 4:1-2, looking for the role of godly teachers.

When Moses told the people to listen, he meant more than just hear. He meant for the Israelites to listen, pay attention, and then obey. Moses was teaching the laws and commands but they were not his laws and commands. They were the laws and commands that came from God. And, Moses was not teaching a few of his favorite laws and commands. He was giving them the whole law that came from God.

Moses did not make the laws and commands, but he did teach them. He knew how important it was for the Israelites to follow them. Only if they followed the law could they take over the land God had promised to Abraham. Only if they followed the full law, adding nothing and taking away nothing, could they satisfy God.

Like godly teachers from the past up to today, Moses was doing the instructor's duty; he was faithfully giving to the people the message God wanted them to have. Teachers are important people. They do not take away our duty to study on our own, but they obey God by helping us obey God. Godly teachers always pass on God's Word.

Why must we always pay attention to God's Word? How do your godly teachers help you to know, understand, and follow Him?

DAY TWO

Read Deuteronomy 4:3-5, finding what godly teachers do.

Moses reminded the Israelites what happened at Baal Peor. At that time some of God's people started worshiping the false god, Baal. They were involved in sexual sin with the people who lived there. God sent a disease on the people. God sent the disease because they rebelled against Him through Baal worship. The disease killed 24,000 Israelites. The people who followed the Lord did not die. (See Numbers 25:1-9.)

The people needed to remember the lesson of Baal Peor. They could follow the example of the ones who rebelled at Baal Peor, lose the land, and die. Or they could obey God, take the land, and live. It is important for godly teachers to warn God's people about the results of sin. It is also

important for them to encourage God's people to faithfulness. Moses did both; he warned and encouraged.

Moses did one more thing that godly teachers do; he trusted the people to follow God's law. You can see this in verse 5. Moses said he had taught the law, now they could obey the law. This was how Moses put the burden on the people to take the step of being faithful.

How does your teacher warn and encourage you? How does your teacher help you take the step of being faithful?

DAY THREE

Read Deuteronomy 4:6, thinking about what honors God.

God gave the Israelites instructions about how to live so they could enjoy their lives in their new land. In addition to having good lives, though, when God's people obeyed His laws, other nations saw God's character. Through the lives of the Israelites, the other nations could see that God was a loving, understanding, just, and merciful God.

In Old Testament times, saying a person was wise was a great compliment. Judges and the tribal leaders wanted people to know they were wise. Even the enemies of Israel respected a person with wisdom. To say that people have understanding means the same as saying they are wise.

Most non-believers will not pick up a Bible to learn about Jesus. They will learn about Him from the lives of believers. The non-believer will not be interested in Jesus if believers' lives are weak and they are not faithful. If our lives are faithful to Jesus, others will see the wisdom of loving Jesus. We bring honor to God when we obey Him.

How do people see Jesus in you? How does this honor God?

DAY FOUR

Read Deuteronomy 4:7-8, seeing the differences between the true God and false gods.

Moses explained the difference between the one true God and false gods. Moses gave two differences. First, Israel's God would come to them. False gods could not come to their people. They were not real. They could not hear, and they could not answer prayer.

God heard their prayers. God also showed His presence in the pillar and cloud. God led the Israelites through their desert travels by the cloud in the day and pillar of fire at night. He was always with them.

The second difference was the great laws God gave them. The laws were clear and wise and showed the Israelites how to live. The reason for the law was not to burden Israel but to set the Israelites apart from other nations. The laws were a rule for God's people to live by. When they obeyed God's rule, Israel would become wise and great. They would please God.

God's blessing on Israel would cause the other nations to seek Him. It would cause them to want to learn about Him. Then they would find God near and His laws just. Obeying God honors Him by drawing the lost people of the world to faith in God.

What is the difference between the true God and all false gods?

KEY DOCTRINE: *Sharing Christ with Others*

Every follower of Christ and every church has the responsibility from God to make disciples of all nations. Because everyone needs to come to Christ the duty to share Christ rests on all Christians. Jesus commanded us to preach the gospel to all nations. We win people to Christ by the words we speak about Jesus and by our Christian lifestyle.

DAY FIVE

Read Deuteronomy 4:9, making a list of things to remember.

Here are some of the things Israel had seen: 1) The Israelites saw God deliver them from Egypt, 2) God revealed Himself to them, 3) They saw how He met with them at Horeb (Sinai), 4) They saw when God gave the wonderful laws they should follow, 5) They saw how He led them all the way during forty years in the desert. They must not forget the things they saw.

Moses told them to be careful to remember and obey all God's laws. He told them to teach God's law to their children and to their grandchildren. He meant to teach future generations—to teach all people. The laws were necessary for them to live in the promised land.

If they did not teach them to their children and grandchildren, they would lose their trust in God. If they did not remember and teach, they would have no future in the promised land. Teaching our children and grandchildren is a way to keep alive our own memory of being in God's presence. Believers must teach God's truth to future generations.

What things can you do to teach other people about God? If you have children and grandchildren, how are you teaching them?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Deuteronomy 4:1-9. Meet with one or two members of your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

Discuss how your godly teachers have taught you God's Word and helped you to faithfully follow it.

What does honoring God look like in your life? What are some ways you can help each other in your small group to honor God through obedience this week?

What are some ways you can teach others about God?



LOVING GOD

When we love God with all our heart, soul, and strength, we will obey Him.

DEUTERONOMY 6:1-13

Have you ever visited a country where the laws and rules were different from your country's laws? Perhaps you have been in a country where they drove on the left side of the road. Maybe you have visited a place that did not allow Christians to have their own churches. It is hard to know what to do when you don't know the rules.

The Israelites did not have a set of rules or laws until God gave them to Moses. God gave Moses His law to teach the Israelites how to live in their new land. But there were so many laws. What was most important? The number one lesson is what we learn in this week's session. We learn about the most important of His commands.

This command of greatest importance gave the people the key to how they should live. The number one rule from God is that we love Him. The love we should have for God is a love that shows up by our loving God with all our lives—our heart, our soul, and our strength.

DEUTERONOMY 6:1-13

1 These are the commands, rules, and laws that the LORD your God told me to teach you to obey in the land you are crossing the Jordan River **to take**. **2** You, your children, and your grandchildren must respect the **LORD** your God as long as you live. Obey all his rules and commands I give you so that you will **live a long time**. **3** Listen, Israel, and carefully obey these laws. Then all will go well for you, and you will become a great nation in a **fertile land**, just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, has **promised you**. **4** Listen, people of Israel! The LORD our God is the only LORD. **5** Love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. **6** Always remember these commands I give you today. **7** Teach them to your children, and talk about them when you sit at home and walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. **8** Write them down and tie them **to your hands** as a sign. Tie them on **your forehead** to remind you, **9** and write them on your **doors and gates**. **10** The LORD your God will bring you into the land He promised to your ancestors, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and he will give it to you. The land has large, growing cities you did not build, **11** houses full of good things you did not buy, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees you did not plant. You will eat as much as you want. **12** But **be careful!** Do not forget the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt where you were slaves. **13** Respect the LORD your God. You must worship him and make your promises only in his name.

- a. To take means to conquer through a war or battle.
- b. When "LORD" is in small capital letters like this it means the Hebrew Bible says "Yahweh" in this place.
- c. Does not necessarily mean old age. It may mean the ability to live and to stay in the land.
- d. Most English Bibles here have the words, "a land flowing with milk and honey."
- e. The promised land, or Canaan. The land was first promised to Abraham.
- f. Many Bible teachers say it means during your daily activities. Many Jewish people fulfill this command by wearing special leather wrapping on their hands during prayer time.
- g. Can also mean to always be aware of God's law. Many Jewish people fulfill this command by wearing a special leather box on their forehead with Scripture verses inside the small box.
- h. Means as you come and go. Many Jewish people fulfill this command by nailing a small box on their door frame with a Scripture verse inside the small box.
- i. Means "Warning! watch out!"

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. How does love lead to obedience?
2. What does it mean to love God with all your heart, mind, and strength?
3. Why did God give laws and commands to the Israelites?
4. Why did God command the Israelites to teach the laws to their children, grandchildren, and other people they met?
5. What promise came with obedience to this command? What does this promise mean?
6. How can obedience lead to long life in the land?
7. What kind of land were the Israelites going to have in the future?
8. What did God say about when and how to teach the law to one's children and grandchildren?
9. What warning did God give to Israel about forgetting the Lord?
10. Why do believers today need to pay attention to God's warning?

BIBLE SKILL: *Finding the same words.*

Depending on the Bible translation you use, the words "fertile land" or "land flowing with milk and honey" are used 38 times in the Bible.

Use the back of your Bible, a concordance, or Bible dictionary to find at least six (6) verses with these words.

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

IN MY CONTEXT

- People who obey God will experience His blessings.
- Believers must love God with all their being.
- Believers show their love for God by telling everyone about Him.
- Believers must continue to love God even in the good times.

How do you think God blesses believers who are obedient to Him? How have you seen Him bless you when you are obedient?

What can believers do to show they love God with all their heart, soul, and strength?

Why do you think we must tell others about our God? With whom can you share Jesus this week?

Why is it easy for people to forget about God during their good times? How can the Deaf Bible study group encourage each other to never forget God?

MEMORY VERSE

Love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. – Deuteronomy 6:5

DAY ONE

Read Deuteronomy 6:1, learning where the law came from.

The Old Testament sometimes talks about the laws, commands, and rules or the Law of Moses. The truth is, they are not Moses' laws. They are God's laws. God gave Moses the order to teach His commands, rules, and laws to the people. Moses did not create them himself. Moses did not teach the people just the Ten Commandments of Exodus 20. There were many additional instructions from God. Most of the additional laws expanded or explained the meaning of the Ten Commandments.

God told Moses to teach the people the things He wanted them to know and do. Moses taught the Israelites the rules they must follow. The Israelites were to obey all these laws and rules when they entered the promised land across the Jordan River. The Canaanite people who already lived across the Jordan River had their own laws. God required the Israelites to live by a different set of laws than theirs. The Israelites must live by the laws, rules, and commands that God gave them through Moses. These laws were part of the proof that Israel was a different people—the people of Yahweh.

Why is it important to remember that the law actually began with God and not Moses?

DAY TWO

Read Deuteronomy 6:2-3, underlining what it means to respect the Lord.

In verse 2, the New Century Version uses the word *respect*. Many other Bible translations use the word *fear*. The fear of the Lord does not exactly mean terror or fright. It is a deep reverence for God. Sometimes the people lost their reverence for God. When they did, life went badly for the Hebrew people. The respect or fear of the Lord includes a feeling of awe for His greatness. It includes love for Him and obedience. It also includes giving great honor to God and seeking to understand who God is and what He does.

Moses gave four results that would come from obeying the law. When they obeyed God: 1) They would fear and respect Him; 2) The nation

would live long; 3) Their lives would be good as the nation grew; 4) God would give them a rich and fertile country—a land that is very good for farming.

Believers must understand an important fact. Obedience to God's law does not guarantee wealth or a life without pain. However, God does promise blessings to believers who obey Him. Those blessings may come on earth or they may come in the heavenly kingdom when we are with God. But they will come.

**How would you explain the words “respect God” to your Deaf friends?
How do you show respect for God in your life?**

DAY THREE

Read Deuteronomy 6:4-5, finding why this is the most important commandment.

The Israelites call these verses the “Shema.” The first word in verse 4 is Shema, in the Hebrew language. It means “pay attention” and could be signed “you understand this.” Moses told the Israelites to pay close attention to the first statement because it is the foundation for all the commandments. “The LORD our God is the only LORD” is a confession of faith. The Israelites were taught to make this confession of faith daily. Many Jews today still say these words every day.

Read Mark 12:28-34. Jesus emphasized this command. He said the most important commandment was to love God. But what is this love like? Some Deaf people might use the sign that can mean “cherish” to sign this verse. That is a good sign. Both Moses and Jesus described the total nature of this love. It involved the total of one's heart, soul, and strength. Once we have given God all of our heart, soul, and strength we have given Him everything. There is only one God and Israel knew this. We Christians also know this. We must love the Lord our God completely and obey Him because we love (cherish) Him.

What does it mean to love God with all of your being? How can you show that your heart, soul, and strength belong to Him?

DAY FOUR

Read Deuteronomy 6:6-9, learning two ways to share the commands of God.

In these verses, Moses explained how the command to love God must affect the lives of His people. The verses look at two ways—the teaching of the law to our children and the sharing of the law even through everyday things.

First, they were to teach their children His commands every day. They should do this as they talked with them or as they walked with them along the way. Moses told parents to teach their children when they went to sleep and when they woke up the next morning. The last thing the children should see at night and the first thing they should see in the morning was about loving the one true God.

They were also to teach the commandments by the way they dressed and how they decorated their houses. Moses said to tie the commandments on their foreheads and hands. Moses probably did not mean to actually tie the laws to their bodies. He was using a picture to show they must always think about the Lord's commands and keep them close. Writing them on your doors and gates is also likely a word picture which means to keep His law with you on all your comings and goings.

What are some ways you can remind yourself to be faithful to the one true God?

KEY DOCTRINE: *God*

There is one and only one living and true God. He is a wise and a Spirit. He is the Maker, Savior, and Ruler of everything. God is holy and perfect. We owe Him the highest love, respect, and obedience. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He makes Himself known to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit each have the personal nature of God. They are three persons but one God.

DAY FIVE

Read Deuteronomy 6:10-13, finding an important truth for us to know today.

The Lord promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob He would give a country to their descendants. The Lord fulfilled that promise when the Israelites went across the Jordan River and took control of the promised land. The Israelites were to love God above all else and share Him with everyone. These were two things of greatest importance.

The promised land had tremendous wealth. The land had everything the Israelites needed—homes, water, and plenty of food. All these things were a gift of God's love for them. But having so much also created a danger. The danger was they might forget the Lord. Living in a land with so many good things could easily draw them away from God. It was necessary for them to be careful to remember the Lord who had cared for them and protected them.

This is an important truth to know today. Believers must love God when we are in trouble. But believers must be sure to continue to love God and passionately follow Him even when times are easy and good.

What can you do to make sure that when all is going well you are continuing to be faithful to Jesus?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Deuteronomy 6:1-13. Meet with one or two members of your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

Discuss with your small group how you see God bless you today when you obey Him.

How can you and your small group become people who love God with all your heart, soul, and strength? What would need to change in your life for this to happen?

What would your life look like if you remembered to love God and share His Word with others in good times and in bad times?



GOD REVEALS HIMSELF

God provides messengers to represent Him in this world.

DEUTERONOMY 18:15-22

During election times in free countries, we often see the word “validate” or validation. These words mean to prove something is true. When the election is over, a government official validates the results of the votes. The official says the vote count is true. In today’s session, we will learn about how God validates His messengers. God shows how to know if a prophet or messenger is truly saying the things God tells him or her.

How does God “validate” the message that He gives His people? It was God’s plan to continue giving His message. In fact, God promised another prophet like Moses. We Christians believe that this promise finally was fulfilled in Jesus—the greatest prophet from God. But there would be many people before Jesus who would speak God’s message. God gave the Hebrew people help to know which people really spoke for God and which people did not. The test was simple; Did the words spoken by the prophet come true? Many false teachers would (and still do) claim to speak for God, but God’s truth sooner or later becomes perfectly clear.

DEUTERONOMY 18:15-22

15 The LORD your God will give you **a prophet like me**, **A** who is one of your own people. Listen to him. **16** This is what you asked the LORD your God to do when you were gathered at **Mount Sinai**. **B** You said, “Don’t make us listen to the voice of the LORD our God **again**, **C** and don’t make us look at this **terrible fire** **D** anymore, or we will die.” **17** So the LORD said to me, “What they have said is good. **18** So I will give them a prophet like you, who is one of their own people. I will tell him what to say, and he will tell them everything I command. **19** This prophet will speak for me; anyone who does not listen when he speaks will **answer to me**. **E** **20** But if a prophet says something I did not tell him to say as though he were speaking for me, or if a prophet speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet must be killed.” **21** You might be thinking, “How can we know if a message is not from the LORD?” **22** If what a prophet says in the name of the LORD does not happen, it is not the LORD’s message. That prophet was speaking his own ideas. **Don’t be afraid of him.** **F**

- a. The Hebrew people later interpreted this to be speaking of the Messiah. John the Baptist in John 1:21 knew he was not this prophet but Jesus was.
- b. The mountain where God gave Moses His commandments which included the Ten Commandments.
- c. When God met with Moses on Mount Sinai, the people were afraid. (See Exodus 20:18-19.)
- d. When God gave the law on Mount Sinai the presence of God descended on the mountain as smoke and fire. (See Exodus 19:18.)
- e. The person who does not pay attention to and follow God’s prophet must explain their actions to God, for the message did not come from the prophet but from God.
- f. False prophets often say terrible things will happen to people who do not support them. Do not be afraid of their prophecies.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. How does God communicate with His people today?
2. Why did God promise to give prophets to His people even after Moses was gone?
3. Why was it important to listen to the words of God's prophet? Did the Hebrew people do a good job of listening to the prophets after Moses? Why or why not?
4. What happened at Mount Sinai that made the people afraid to be in God's presence again?
5. What did God mean in verse 17 when He agreed with the Israelites who confessed their fear of God's presence?
6. How should the people have felt when God promised to put His words in the mouth of the prophet? How do you feel when you see a word from God?
7. How could the people know when there was a true message from God?
8. What was supposed to happen to a prophet who spoke falsely?
9. How should we respond to false teachers and preachers? How should we respond to those who speak truth?

BIBLE SKILL: *Find supporting statements.*

Write the things said about Jesus as the perfect Prophet in the New Testament.

Peter said: _____ (Acts 3:21-23).

Stephen said: _____ (Acts 7:37).

Philip said: _____ (John 1:45).

Jesus said: _____ (John 5:46).

Jesus said: _____ (John 7:16).

IN MY CONTEXT

- Without Jesus Christ as our mediator our sin would stop us from approaching God.
- God chooses messengers who faithfully share His message.
- Godly messengers will be validated by God in time.

Discuss as a group what a mediator does. How could you explain the work Jesus does as a mediator between sinful people and our holy God?

What is the work of a faithful messenger? What message does God have for you to share with the Deaf people in your community? How can you be faithful as a messenger?

How do you know if someone is a true messenger for God? What can you do to encourage those in your church who share a true message from God?

MEMORY VERSE

This prophet will speak for me; anyone who does not listen when he speaks will answer to me. – Deuteronomy 18:19

DAY ONE

Read Deuteronomy 18:15, looking for God's messengers.

Moses knew he was near his own death. He told the Israelites God would choose another prophet like himself. After the next prophet was gone, God would call another prophet. God continued to call new prophets. He would not leave His people alone. The prophet of the Lord was special. The true prophet did not decide he would become a prophet. Instead, God called the prophet. God gave him the wisdom and knowledge needed to give God's message.

The prophets God called had to be from God's chosen people. This makes perfect sense. We would not expect a Muslim to bring God's message to the church. The Jews were to expect a Hebrew to bring them God's message. All the prophets throughout the Old Testament were descendants of Abraham.

Today God still speaks to His people. He speaks through the Bible, and He speaks through His messengers—people who teach and preach God's Word. Just as the Hebrew people of God were to listen to His message through the prophets, we must listen to God's message through the people He calls to speak for Him today.

Who are God's messengers today? Why do you still need someone to bring you God's message?

DAY TWO

Read Deuteronomy 18:16-17, searching for the role of a mediator.

Forty years before this time the people had gathered at Mount Sinai. They had been greatly frightened by the presence of God at the mountain. They asked Moses to listen to God and bring His message to them. Moses was like a mediator between the people and God. A mediator is someone who is between two people or groups to bring them together.

Moses reminded the Israelites of their desire for someone who could deliver God's message to them. The people knew they were unworthy to approach God. That is why they needed a mediator at Mount Sinai.

So Moses became their prophet and mediator at that time. Because the people were always unworthy, God continued to send mediators to bring the people back to God. The confession of unworthiness pleased God. That they wanted a representative for God pleased Him too.

God always provided someone to be a mediator between God and His people. In New Testament times, that mediator is Jesus Christ. Without Him, we could never know God. By His death and resurrection Jesus continually brings us into the presence of God today.

How would you explain the work of a mediator? How were the prophets like mediators? How is Jesus our greatest mediator between us and God?

DAY THREE

Read Deuteronomy 18:18-19, looking for how Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Moses.

What does “a prophet like Moses” mean? It means: 1) The prophet will come from Israel; 2) He will not make up his own message; 3) He will say only the things God puts in his mouth; 4) The people must listen to him. These things were true of Moses and were true of the other true Old Testament prophets. However, God was planning for the perfect Prophet to come.

The Lord said He would send a special prophet. The special prophet would be like Moses. There were many prophets who spoke for God like Moses, but the special prophet predicted by Moses was Jesus. No other prophet did all that Moses did. Moses led the people out of Egypt. He gave Israel God’s law. He was unique in Hebrew history. Jesus alone gives us salvation. He gives us God’s grace. He was unique in all history. He is our final prophet. We don’t need anyone else. He alone is our mediator between us and God. Only through Him can we approach God.

Even though we do not need prophets, God still chooses messengers who faithfully deliver His message. The Lord expects us to pay attention to the truths He sends through His messengers.

Why do people need Jesus as their Mediator? How is Jesus the ultimate revelation of God to humans?

DAY FOUR

Read Deuteronomy 18:20, learning what to do about false prophets.

Moses predicted there would be prophets like him and finally the special prophet, Jesus. However, there would also be false prophets. A prophet might come and tell a message that did not come from God. He might pretend it was from God but the message was actually only his own personal opinion. Even worse, a prophet might come claiming a message from a false god. If people believed him in either case, they would be believing a lie. Moses said that such a false prophet must be killed.

There are people today who call themselves prophets. They preach about things they say the Lord tells them. Some of them may be truthful. Some others may be making up things they say the Lord is telling them to preach. For the truthful messengers, the things God told them to say will happen. He will reward them in their heavenly home. In today's world, we cannot kill a false messenger. God will give them the punishment they deserve when they stand before Him. We must be spiritually wise so we can turn away from the false messenger but pay attention to the one that is true.

What do you think you should do about a person giving false teachings?

KEY DOCTRINE: *The Scriptures*

The Holy Spirit controlled God's prophets and leaders in the Old Testament and the writers of the New Testament as they wrote the Bible. The Bible is a book where God makes Himself known to people. It is God's perfect teaching book. God is its author. Salvation is its purpose. It is fully true. There is no error in it. It is the highest rule of life for all human actions, belief, and judgment. Knowing Jesus Christ is the only way we can understand and explain the Bible.

DAY FIVE

Read Deuteronomy 18:21-22, underling questions to identify a true messenger.

Suppose a person said they had a message from God. It might have been hard to know whether or not his prophesy was from God. God gave the Israelites a way to know if he really was a prophet of God. Maybe the prophet would say something will happen. If it did not happen then it was not from God. The prophecy was false and so was the prophet. A few years ago, a preacher said he knew the exact day when Jesus would come back to earth. He taught his people to get rid of everything they owned. Many of his followers gave away everything they owned and went with him to a place where he said Jesus would return.

As we all know, Jesus did not come back on that day. The preacher said he counted wrong. He said Jesus would come at another date. That did not happen either. His followers were left with nothing. They believed a false prophet. God does not ask us to punish people like that preacher. God will judge him for his works and words.

What are some things you can do to know if a messenger is true? What can you do to be sure you give a true message?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Deuteronomy 18:15-22. Meet with one or two members of your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

Share with your small group how you came to have a relationship with God in Christ Jesus.

How can we be sure we tell the true message from God to others? Who do you know that needs to see the story of Christ? How can you tell them this message this week?

How do you think God reveals truth to His messengers? Discuss ways of testing the truth of a messenger.



CHOSEN

True life is found only when we live according to God's purposes.

DEUTERONOMY 30:1-10,19-20

God explained things that would happen to the Israelites if they did not obey His law and the covenant they made with Him. He described the blessings that would come to them if they loved Him and obeyed the covenant. Their love for and obedience to God must be complete. The blessings He listed were wonderful. The punishment or curses He said would come from disobedience were terrifying. The difference in blessings and curses would be their choice.

Moses strongly encouraged Israel to make the right choice. Moses said, "Now choose life!" God still offers choices. We can choose to disobey God, and life turns in terrible ways. Or we can choose to obey God and live. That does not mean Christians face no hard times. We do. But when we turn to the Lord and faithfully love and follow Him, we experience His blessings. We find, just like Israel long ago found, that life is only really good when we choose God and His purposes.

DEUTERONOMY 30:1-10,19-20

1 When all these blessings and **curses I have described** **A** happen to you, and the LORD your God has sent you away to other nations, think about these things. **2** Then you and your children will return to the LORD your God, and you will obey Him with your whole being in everything I am commanding you today. **3** Then the LORD your God will give you back your **freedom**. **B** He will feel sorry for you, and He will bring you back again from the nations where He scattered you. **4** He may send you to the ends of the earth, but He will gather you and bring you back from there, **5** back to the land that belonged to your **ancestors**. **C** It will be yours. He will give you success, and there will be more of you than there were of your ancestors. **6** The LORD your God will prepare you and your descendants to love Him with your whole being so that you will live. **7** The Lord your God will put all these **curses** **D** on your enemies, who hate you and are cruel to you. **8** And you will again obey the Lord, keeping all His commands that I give you today. **9** The Lord your God will make you successful in everything you do. You will have many children, your cattle will have many calves, and your fields will produce good crops, because the Lord will again be happy with you, just as He was with your ancestors. **10** But you must obey the Lord your God by keeping all His commands and rules that are written in this **Book of the Teachings**. **E** You must return to the Lord your God with **your whole being**. **F**

19 Today I ask heaven and earth to be witnesses. I am offering you life or death, blessings or curses. Now choose life! Then you and your children may live. **20** To choose life is to love the LORD your God, obey Him, and stay close to Him. He is your life, and He will let you live many years in the land, the land He promised to give your ancestors **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**. **G**

- a. God spoke through Moses to describe the curses that would happen if the Israelites were disobedient and broke their promise to Him. See Deuteronomy 28:20-68.
- b. Each time the Israelites disobeyed God, He allowed the nation that defeated them to take the Israelites as servants.
- c. Since Abraham, God's people lived in the promised land at different times.
- d. Curses were the punishment for disobedience.
- e. The Book of Deuteronomy.
- f. Heart, soul, mind, and body.
- g. Some of the ancestors God promised to give the land.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. How can people find true life and purpose for their lives?
2. What do you think was the worst thing that could happen to the Israelites?
3. How could the Israelites avoid the curses from God? Today, how do people avoid punishment from God?
4. What does it mean to obey God with all your heart and soul?
5. Why do you think freedom was important to the Israelites?
6. Do you think spiritual freedom is more important than physical freedom? Why do you think that?
7. What choice did God ask the Israelites to make?
8. What choice did Israel need to make to choose life?
9. What choice does God ask people to make today?

BIBLE SKILL: *Listing some of God's blessings to the Israelites.*

Read Ezekiel 36:24-28, and write the blessings to the Israelites.

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1. I will take _____ | 8. I will take out _____ |
| 2. I will gather you _____ | 9. I will give _____ |
| 3. I will bring _____ | 10. I will put _____ |
| 4. I will sprinkle _____ | 11. I will help you _____ |
| 5. I will cleanse _____ | 12. You will live _____ |
| 6. I will teach _____ | 13. You will be my people, and I _____ |
| 7. I will put _____ | |

IN MY CONTEXT

- God wants to bring holy people back into a good relationship with Himself.
- God is happy when His people love and obey Him.
- God honors people who choose to love Him.

Discuss as a group why you think God is always working to bring people back into right fellowship with Himself. What would you need to do to have your relationship with God made right?

What are some things you can do to make God happy? How can you more clearly show your love and obedience to God?

How does God honor those who decide to love and follow Him? How can you follow Christ today?

MEMORY VERSE

Today I ask heaven and earth to be witnesses. I am offering you life or death, blessings or curses. Now choose life! Then you and your children may live. – Deuteronomy 30:19

DAY ONE

Read Deuteronomy 30:1, looking for what brings blessings and curses.

Moses prophesied that the Israelites would have blessings and curses in the future. Years earlier God made an agreement with the Israelites. This agreement is called the covenant. The Lord promised to give blessings to the people if they obeyed His commands and laws. However, if they broke their promise to God and disobeyed Him, He would send curses on them. Curses here does not mean bad words. Curses means separation from God. In addition to being separated from God, curses involved punishment for sin.

Moses reminded them about the things that happened to them in the past. He prophesied the same things would happen in their future. The worst thing that would happen was they would be scattered into other nations. They would be separated from God.

Moses reminded them the curses happened because they did not keep their covenant with the Lord. All the blessings and the curses were still in the covenant. If they obeyed the covenant, they would receive blessings. If they did not obey the covenant, they would receive the curses. Their own actions determined if they received blessings or curses.

How can a person be sure they will receive God's blessings? How do your actions determine if you receive God's blessings?

DAY TWO

Read Deuteronomy 30:2-3, finding the final way to come back to God.

Disobedience to the covenant would lead to exile. Obedience would lead to restoration. In verse 1, Moses told them to think about these things. Verses 2-3 would happen if thinking brought repentance. If they returned to the Lord, He would bring them back to the promised land. This promise included people who were taken away to other nations to become slaves. God chose the Israelites to be His special people. He always wanted them to come back to Him. He gave them ways to return to Him and be His holy people. If you read the history books in the

Bible you will see how this very thing happened. God's people turned from Him, were carried into exile, and then, by God's blessing, returned to Israel.

Later, God gave people the perfect way to come back to Him. That perfect way is through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus is the way God works to restore people to Himself. God made a new covenant with people through Jesus. The responsibility of people now is to love Jesus and follow Him. Because Jesus is the Son of God, loving and following Jesus means we have returned to God.

Have you ever felt alone and separated from God? What caused you to feel that way?

DAY THREE

Read Deuteronomy 30:4-5, thinking about what God is doing today.

Every time Israel came back to God He showed them mercy by keeping His promise and bringing them back to the promised land from all the nations where He had scattered them. Many times, throughout history, Israel lost their homeland. For almost two thousand years they did not have their own nation. Israel was lost to Rome and later to the Ottoman Turks. They lost the promised land to other nations.

Jewish people never stopped wanting the homeland God promised them. After World War II, in 1948, Israel became a nation again. Israel is now a strong and successful nation. We do not know what all God is doing. Still, the return of the Jews to the promised land is a remarkable thing. We can pray that God will draw the people of Abraham and David to His Son, Jesus Christ.

It is not easy to know what the return of the Jewish people to Israel means or what God will do in Israel in the future. It is clear, though, that returning to God is always a matter of our hearts and our wills. God acts in history in big ways. Someday all the nations of the world will disappear. Yet, every person who comes to Christ will live forever!

What is the homeland for the believer?

How can a person be sure they have a spiritual homeland?

DAY FOUR

Read Deuteronomy 30:6-10, underlining how to love God with your whole being.

Moses focused on the Israelites loving God with all their being after they returned to Him. Then God would place a curse on the enemies of Israel while blessing Israel. Moses said God will be pleased and happy to bless His people. When the Israelites returned to the Lord, He would reverse the curses they suffered and He would give them blessings. God Himself would do this work in the hearts of His people to make these things happen. He would create a group of faithful people who would worship Him from generation to generation.

God always intended for the whole person to respond to Him, but what does this look like in a person's life? Obedience to God's law is clearly a part. However, in Romans 2:28-29 Paul gave a new definition of what it means to be a person acceptable to God. This was not based on family history but based on a change in heart. Paul called it "circumcision...in the heart by the Spirit." When the Holy Spirit cuts out of our being that which rebels against God and replaces that with the Spirit of Christ we are the kind of person God wants.

What are some things you need to change to love God with your whole being?

KEY DOCTRINE: *God the Father*

God makes Himself known to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God, as Father, rules with loving care over everything He has made. He loves people, animals, and all creation. Human history happens according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become His children through faith in Jesus Christ. He acts as a Father in His feeling and action to all people.

DAY FIVE

Read Deuteronomy 30:19-20, signing the choice God gave Israel.

Life is full of choices. Some choices are simple and easy to make. Other choices are very serious. Moses gave the Israelites a choice to make. It was a very serious choice. Moses challenged the people to choose to love and obey God. God called witnesses to see His offer to Israel to choose between life and death. The witnesses must be truthful. They must be objective. He called on heaven and earth to see His offer. All of creation witnessed the people's response to Moses.

Moses challenged Israel to choose life. That does not mean just being alive as opposed to being dead. That meant choosing a life that was full, rich, and productive. That is the kind of life God offered Israel. That is His offer to us as well. Years ago there were a pair of Deaf twins. One chose God's way of life. Her life has been full of love and blessings. The other twin ran from God. That twin followed a lifestyle that was opposite from God's will, and she died young. Choosing God is still choosing life. What do you choose?

What choice did Moses offer to Israel? What choice does God offer you today?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Deuteronomy 30:1-10,19-20. Meet with one or two members of your study group to find ways to live what you have learned. You can meet by VP if necessary.

In what ways do you notice God working in your life to bring you closer to Him?

How can you and your group encourage each other to lovingly obey God?

How does your life show that you love God? In what ways do you think God has honored and blessed you and your small group members?



PROMISED

Believers can find hope in God's promises and presence when facing death.

DEUTERONOMY 32:48-52; 34:4-7

Did your parents ever say to you, “If you clean your room you can play”? If you did not complete your job, what happened? You were not allowed to go play. Just as good parents require things from children, God had things He required from Moses. The sin of Moses had consequences.

Moses sinned at Meribah and that sin kept Moses out of Canaan. But that sin did not keep Moses from God. Striking the rock was rebellion. Moses faced punishment, but still, the story of his death is a story of hope. Moses, at his death, saw the promised land and experienced the presence of God. Punishment and grace both happened at the death of Moses.

Death happens to all of us. Death is a result of sin in the world and sins by us. But where is God in death? We learn from Moses that God is present with us at death. Even though we have sinned, the salvation we have in Jesus gives us the promise of God's presence even at death. The death of a believer is a place of hope, promise, and the presence of God.

DEUTERONOMY 32:48-52; 34:4-7

48 The LORD spoke to Moses again that same day and said, **49** “Go up the **Abarim Mountains**, **A** to Mount **Nebo** **B** in the country of Moab, across from Jericho. Look at the land of **Canaan** **C** that I am giving to the Israelites as their own. **50** On that mountain that you climb, you will die and join your ancestors, just as your brother Aaron died on **Mount Hor** **D** and joined his ancestors. **51** You both sinned against me at the waters of **Meribah Kadesh** **E** in the Desert of Zin, and you did not honor me as holy there among the Israelites. **52** So now you will only look at the land from far away. You will not enter the land I am giving the people of Israel.”

4 Then the LORD said to Moses, “This is the land I promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob when I said to them, ‘I will give this land to your descendants.’ I have let you look at it, Moses, but you will not cross over there.”

5 Then Moses, the servant of the LORD, died there in **Moab**, **F** as the LORD had said. **6** He buried Moses in Moab in the valley opposite Beth Peor, but even today no one knows where his grave is. **7** Moses was **one hundred twenty years old** **G** when he died. His eyes were not weak, and he was still strong.

- a. A mountain range that includes Mount Nebo. These mountains are east of the Jordan River in the present country of Jordan.
- b. Mountain about twelve miles east of the Jordan River. It is a large mountain from which a viewer can still see the country of Israel.
- c. Territory between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River, the promised land. It was called Canaan after Noah’s grandson. It is around the area of the Levant today.
- d. A place of unknown location now. The traditional Tomb of Aaron is at Jabel Haroun near Petra in Jordan.
- e. Place where Moses struck a rock to get water for the Israelites. See Numbers 20:11.
- f. The land directly east of the Dead Sea. It is mentioned often in the Bible and in other ancient writings such as the Moabite Stone.
- g. Moses lived about 40 years in Egypt, 40 years in the Sinai Peninsula as a shepherd, and finally 40 years leading the Hebrew people to the promised land.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Discuss as a group why believers can trust God even when we are dying.
2. Where did God tell Moses to go and why was he to go there?
3. Why did God remind Moses of his sin?
4. What was the sin that Moses and Aaron had done at Meribah?
5. What was the reason Moses struck the rock? Was there sin deeper than just hitting a rock?
6. Why is it so hard for people who follow God to always remain faithful to God?
7. Where was Mt. Nebo? What did God allow Moses to do from that mountain?
8. How was God present at the death of Moses? How did God honor Moses even in death?
9. How old was Moses when he died? How was he able to live that long?
10. How did God take care of Moses? What are some of the ways we know God takes care of us?

BIBLE SKILL: *Look up related passages.*

Find these verses that speak about grace. Find the verse, read the verse, and draw a line to the words that are in the verse.

Ephesians 3:7

But we believe that we

Hebrews 4:16

and all need to be made right

Acts 15:11

I mean that you have been

Romans 3:24

By God's special gift

Ephesians 2:8

Let us, then, feel very sure

IN MY CONTEXT

- Death is a reminder that all people are sinners.
- People find God's grace in His presence.
- Believers experience God's mercy even in the time of death.

Discuss with your group how death reminds us that we are all sinners.

How is God present in your life? Why is it right to think about God's presence as an example of God's grace? How can you explain this grace to your friends?

How have you seen God's mercy at the time of a believer's death? At the time of your own death, how do you think God will show His mercy?

MEMORY VERSE

He is like a rock; what he does is perfect, and he is always fair. He is a faithful God who does no wrong, who is right and fair.

– Deuteronomy 32:4

DAY ONE

Read Deuteronomy 32:48-50, finding what God told Moses to do.

God told Moses to climb Mount Nebo to view the promised land. Mount Nebo was a high point in the Abarim mountain range, and from the top of Mount Nebo Moses could look across the river into the promised land. No doubt, Moses could see the Israelites still on the east side of the Jordan River, north of the Dead Sea. He could see all of Canaan, the land of promise. He could see the city of Jericho. The Lord showed Moses all the country He promised to Israel.

God also told Moses he would die on that mountain just as Aaron had died earlier. You can read about Aaron's death on Mount Hor in Numbers 33:38-39. God was gracious to Moses. Moses worked for 40 years following God's directions to lead the Israelites. Finally, the Lord allowed Moses to see the land he had worked so hard to possess.

Most of us do not know when we will die. We may not have time to look back at our lives and see failures and successes. We should be aware every day of how we can make our lives more meaningful than they have been in the past.

Looking back on your life, what are some things you think you would do differently if you had the opportunity to do your life over again? What lessons did you learn from these experiences?

DAY TWO

Read Deuteronomy 32:51-52, seeking to understand why death reminds us of sin.

God reminded Moses of a time in the Desert of Zin at Meribah-kadesh. When the people complained because there was no water Moses asked the Lord what to do. The Lord told Moses to speak to the rock God chose and water would come from the rock. Moses was angry with the people. He did not speak to the rock. He hit the rock two times. Moses did not obey God. You may wonder, "Why was that a sin?" Moses did

not trust the Lord enough to speak to the rock. He did not honor God with obedience. He did not show the holiness of God. Disobeying God is always sin.

At the time of today's passage, Moses knew he was facing death. God reminded Moses about his sin. He looked back and understood how he sinned when he disobeyed God. Sometimes when believers near death they look back and remember their sins. These godly people know they have been forgiven, but they still remember. Death reminds us of our sin. Just thinking of death can do this. Any time God brings our sin into mind is a good time to trust Jesus who forgives our sin.

What should you do if God causes you to remember the sins of your past? How can you trust God to take care of your past sins?

DAY THREE

Read Deuteronomy 34:4, finding how grace is in God's presence.

When God met Moses on Mount Nebo, He said that the land Moses saw would be the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Lord told Moses He promised to give this country to the Israelites. He would give them that land. God allowed Moses to see the promised land. God did not allow Moses to go into the promised land. God was not required to allow Moses to even view the promised land. God allowed Moses to see Canaan as an act of His grace. Grace is a hard word to understand. Most Bible teachers define grace as God giving us something we do not deserve.

Moses was aware he did not deserve to even see the land. God did remind Moses of his failure but God also showed His pleasure with Moses. He showed His grace to him as well. Moses was in God's presence. God spoke to Moses in person. It was in God's presence Moses found His grace. As Christians, we can find God's grace in His presence. We can find peace and pleasure with Him.

How can you explain God's grace to your Deaf friends? How is the presence of God an example of His grace?

DAY FOUR

Read Deuteronomy 34:5-6, thinking about how God will care for you in death.

In many countries in the world there are monuments that honor famous and loved people. There are monuments called “shrines” where people go to honor and sometimes worship the person the shrine represents. They may even pray to that person. It is a sin against God to worship a person. Moses is still a famous and loved person today. Because God buried Moses in an unknown place, people cannot find that place and build a shrine. They cannot worship or honor him more than they worship and honor God. Moses wanted the Israelites to worship God only. He would not want anyone to worship him. God took care of Moses. He buried him in a place no one will ever know.

God took care of Moses in his life and in his death. Believers can be sure God will take care of us if we trust Him (1 Peter 5:7). He takes care of us as we live, and He will take care of us as we die. We can easily remember when God took care of us during hard times. We can trust that when we approach death, God will once again give us all we need to face it.

How has God cared for you during your life? How do you think He will take care of you in your death?

KEY DOCTRINE: *Salvation*

God gives salvation freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Through God’s grace, believers become new people in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit changes the heart of the believer. He lives in the believer. When believers come to the end of their lives they will live with God and be happy forever in God’s presence in heaven.

DAY FIVE

Read Deuteronomy 34:7, discovering where God is when believers die.

Moses was very healthy at the age of 120 years. Moses did not die of natural causes. Natural causes are things like heart failure, cancer, or kidney failure. He died because he finished the work God called him to do. He was the faithful leader God called him to be.

God took care of Moses all through his life. God gave him health and strength. When it was time for Moses to die, God was with him. The Lord did not leave Moses alone as he died. The Lord gave His great mercy to Moses. In the same way, God will not leave believers alone when we die.

A sweet elderly Deaf lady came to the end of her long and faithful life. Her friends and family gathered around her hospital bed. Twice she said, "I see angels." Then she went home to be with Jesus. God gave her great mercy. He let her know He was with her as she died. When death comes for believers God will show His mercy. Remember: "The death of one that belongs to the LORD is precious in His sight" (Psalm 116:15).

**What are your feelings as you think about the end of your own life?
How do you know God will be with you?**

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Deuteronomy 32:48-52; 34:4-7. Meet with one or two members of your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

Why does death remind you of your sin? How can the members of your small group live in a way that will help you prepare for death?

How is God's presence an example of His grace to you? What can your small group do to be God's presence to others this week?

Who do you know who needs reassurance of God's presence in death? How can you help that person?



LEADER HELPS

As the leader of the group, you can build disciples through the group Bible study time, encouraging daily Bible engagement, and by facilitating smaller groups.

Building Disciples through the Group Time

Each week, you will introduce the group to the Bible passage, examine the key message in that passage, and challenge the group to act on that passage. Doing so requires preparation. Here is a way to prepare that gives you adequate time to study the lesson and will make the session fresh in your own life.

Early in the Week (Sunday or Monday)

- Ask God to open your mind and heart to His Word as you study.
- Study the Bible passage.
- Pay careful attention to the In My Context section for that session, looking for ways you need to apply the Bible in your own life.

Through the Week

- Ask God to direct your creation of the group plan.

- Create a group plan, adapting the group plans to fit the needs of your group.
- Complete the Daily Exploration activities in the days leading up to the group time.
- Meet with a group of three to four other teachers to share and pray for each other. Use Connect and Share to start your conversation.
- Create your own using Visual Ideas on pages 141–146.

The Day of the Group Study Time

- Arrive early.
- Pray for the study and the group members.
- Lead the study, adjusting as you go.

After the Group Study Time

- Contact all group members, encouraging them to complete the Daily Exploration section and sharing gathered prayer requests.
- Record insights gained about teaching, group members, and Scripture.
- Do it all again.

Building Disciples by Encouraging Daily Bible Engagement

- Encourage everyone on your ministry list (class roll, membership list, etc.) to engage daily in Bible study. Here are some ways to encourage your group to engage with the Bible daily:
- Ask them. Learn to comfortably ask if group members are studying the Bible. You may want to use a statement such as, “I hope you took a look at the Day Three activity for this week.”
- Tell them. Let them know that you are using the Daily Exploration section as well. Set the standard.
- Show them. Point to the Daily Exploration section at the conclusion of the group study. From time to time, demonstrate how to use the section, guiding them through Day One as a group.

- Invite them. Call on volunteers to share with the group what they are learning and how they use the Daily Exploration section.

Building Disciples through Smaller Groups

At the end of every session, you will find a section entitled Connect and Share. This section is designed for smaller groups of three to four people to meet weekly, holding each other accountable for living a Christ-honoring life.

Create smaller groups:

- Allow group members to form their own initial groups of three by gender (men's smaller groups and women's smaller groups)
- Allow groups to add one person from the names on the ministry list of people who are not present.
- You may want to encourage the groups to form based on neighborhoods or proximity to work.
- Make sure some of the groups have extra space for new group members and guests.
- As the Bible study group grows, you may need to reorganize the smaller groups, but try not to regroup too often so that trust can be built within each smaller group.

Support the smaller groups:

- Provide opportunities for the members of the smaller groups to pray with each other during the group time.
- Make study assignments in the weekly group time based on the smaller groups.
- Pre-enlist a volunteer to share with the larger group how participation in the smaller group is impacting his or her life.
- Periodically organize fellowship events built around the smaller groups. The smaller groups could be the basis for teams during the event.
- Be in a smaller group as well. You may even want to host a smaller group for guests and new group members.



GOD LEADS

Numbers 9:15-23

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for the group to become aware of God leading in their lives.

Enlist a volunteer to study the Introduction to Numbers; Deuteronomy and summarize it for the class.

Enlist three volunteers to each sign one part of the Bible verses for today's session.

FOCUS ATTENTION

Invite the volunteer to share the information from the Introduction to Numbers; Deuteronomy. Explain that the study for the next 13 weeks will focus on the Israelites' journey to the promised land.

SHARE THIS STORY: *One time a teenage girl asked her father for some advice. He shared his wise advice with her and encouraged her to make good choices. She decided to do something the opposite of what he told her to do. The father asked her, "Why did you ask me for advice if you did not want to follow it?"*

ASK: *Have you ever experienced something like this? Has someone ignored your good advice? Have you ignored good advice?*

EXPLAIN: *Today we will see how the Israelites followed when God led them.*

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. God's Presence (Numbers 9:15-16)

CALL ON the first volunteer to sign Numbers 9:15-16.

EXPLAIN: *The Israelites had lived in Egypt over 400 years. When they left, God led them with a cloud during the day and a pillar of fire during the night. In Exodus 40, Moses wrote more details about setting up the Holy Tent or Tabernacle. Moses did everything God commanded him to do in preparing the Tent. The cloud and fire represented God's presence with the people. Exodus 40:38 says, "So all the Israelites could see the cloud while they traveled."*

DISCUSS questions 1-4 from Explore the Text. Remind the group that believers have God's presence all the time. The Holy Spirit lives in us.

2. Learning to Follow (Numbers 9:17-22)

DIRECT the second volunteer to sign Numbers 9:17-22. Encourage the group to count how many times the passage says the Israelites moved or stayed. **EXPLAIN:** *They knew when the cloud moved, it was God's command to move. When the cloud stayed, it was God's command to stay. Note that the Israelites obeyed quickly. Sometimes parents become frustrated with children when the children are slow to obey. Children often become distracted and put off obeying their parents. Many Christians act like children. We are distracted and do not always obey God quickly.* **DISCUSS** experiences the group has with obeying God quickly or becoming distracted.

EMPHASIZE that God clearly led the people. **ASK:** *How can we know what God wants us to do today?*

3. The Principle (Numbers 9:23)

CALL ON the third volunteer to sign Numbers 9:23. This verse summarizes how God led the people and how they responded. **ASK:** *How do you think God feels when His people obey Him?* **REMIND** the group that God gets the glory and honor when His people obey Him. When God's people obey Him, others in the world will see that God is good. They will learn about God's character.

ASK: *How do you feel when you obey God?* **DISCUSS** how obedience helps us to feel closer to God. We feel His presence more when we obey.

IN MY CONTEXT

REVIEW the main points from In My Context in the Personal Study Guide. **DISCUSS** the questions. **ENCOURAGE** the group to do the daily readings this week and meet with someone for Connect and Share.

CLOSE with prayer, asking God to help us follow Him and obey as He leads us.



GOD JUDGES

Numbers 14:5-19

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for the group. Ask God to help them grow in faith and trust in God.

Enlist a volunteer to prepare to sign the story about the spies from Numbers 13:1,26-35. They will sign the story during the session.

Choose some questions from Explore the Text to use for discussion.

FOCUS ATTENTION

SUMMARIZE how in last week's session we saw the Israelites obey God every time He told them to move or stay. But three days after they left Sinai, they began to complain about how hard their lives were. They complained about their food. They wished to be back in Egypt! Even Miriam and Aaron complained. They did not like Moses' wife. These things did not please God. Today we will see another way the people did not please God.

EXPLAIN: *The Israelites were getting close to the promised land. They needed to know how to prepare to take the land. Invite the volunteer to sign the story about the spies and their report.*

ASK: *How do you think the people responded?* **ENCOURAGE** the group to find Numbers 14:1-4 in their Bibles. **DISCUSS** how the people acted after the spies' report.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Challenge Given (Numbers 14:5-9)

SIGN Numbers 14:5-9. **ASK:** *What did Moses and Aaron do when the people complained? What did Joshua and Caleb do?* **EXPLAIN:** *Lying on the ground like Moses and Aaron showed they were humble. Joshua and Caleb showed their grief and sadness.*

DISCUSS how Joshua and Caleb encouraged the people. **ASK:** *What did Joshua and Caleb believe about God?*

DIVIDE the group into smaller groups of three each. **LEAD** the smaller groups to discuss things believers need help with today. **ENCOURAGE** them to list some ways believers can encourage each other in those areas.

2. People are Accountable (Numbers 14:10-12)

SIGN Numbers 14:10-12. **EXPLAIN:** *The people were still angry. They were ready to kill Joshua and Caleb.* **ASK:** *How do we know God was not pleased with the people? What did He want to do?*

LEAD the group to discuss what it means to be accountable. The Israelites apparently did not think they were accountable (or responsible) for their actions. They seemed to think they could complain and rebel without punishment. God made it clear that they were responsible, and He would punish them.

GUIDE the small groups to gather again and discuss how believers can help each other be accountable to each other. One example: If someone wants to memorize verses they could ask another believer to work with them. They could remind each other to keep working on memory verses.

After the groups have a few minutes to discuss, **INVITE** them share their ideas with the larger group.

3. Moses Asks for Grace (Numbers 14:13-19)

SIGN Numbers 14:13-19. **EXPLAIN:** *The people were angry and rebellious. But Moses asked God to forgive them. Moses wanted God to look good to the Egyptians. He wanted others to understand God's great character.* **LEAD** the group in a discussion of God's character based on verses 17-19.

REMIND the group that God is full of grace. Through Jesus, nonbelievers can come to God for forgiveness. When believers sin, they can keep their relationship with God strong through confession. (See 1 John 1:9.)

IN MY CONTEXT

REVIEW the main points from In My Context in the Personal Study Guide. **DISCUSS** the questions. **ENCOURAGE** the group to do the daily readings this week and meet with someone for Connect and Share.

CLOSE with prayer, asking God to help us be accountable to each other and to Him.

GOD REQUIRES

Numbers 20:1-13

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for the group to understand how important it is to obey God in all things.

Enlist a volunteer to summarize the story of Korah from Numbers 16:1-35 for the group session.

Enlist another volunteer to summarize the story of Aaron's staff from Numbers 17:1-12 for the group session.

Be prepared to sign the story from Exodus 17:1-6.

Choose some of the questions from Explore the Text to use for discussion.

FOCUS ATTENTION

EXPLAIN: *The Israelites continued to complain about different things. Imagine how difficult it must have been for Moses and Aaron to lead so many people. They were patient and depended on God. There are two more examples of the people's complaints that happened before the verses for today's session.*

INVITE the two volunteers to sign the stories about Korah's rebellion and Aaron's staff. **ASK:** *How do you think it felt for Moses and Aaron? They were patient with the people's complaints. They had to prove God chose them as leaders. They continued to do what God asked them to do.*

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. The Timing (Numbers 20:1-5)

Now it is many years later. The Israelites are again close to the promised land. **SIGN** Numbers 20:1-5. **NOTE** what happened in the first verse. Moses' and Aaron's sister died. We can imagine they were grieving and sad. But they still must deal with the people. The people even said Moses and Aaron brought them out of Egypt to die!

ASK: Have you ever experienced a time of sadness and grief? How did it feel to go to work or deal with problems during that time? How were you able to be patient with people? **EXPLAIN:** During difficult times it is important for us to depend even more on God for His help and strength.

2. The Directions (Numbers 20:6-8)

SIGN Numbers 20:6-8. **ASK:** How did Moses and Aaron respond to the complaining? They laid down on the ground. What did that mean? What was God's answer?

EXPLAIN: It is important to note that God is always ready to help. **DIRECT THE GROUP** members to find James 1:5-6 in their Bibles. **LEAD** in a discussion of those verses.

3. The Frustration (Numbers 20:9-11)

SIGN Numbers 20:9-11. **ASK:** What did God tell Moses to do? What did Moses actually do?

REMINDE the group that a similar event happened many years before.

SIGN the story from Exodus 17:1-6. **NOTE** how that time Moses did what God told him to do. **ASK:** How does that compare to today's story? Why do you think Moses hit the rock this time?

4. The Consequence (Numbers 20:12-13)

SIGN Numbers 20:12-13. **ASK:** What did Moses and Aaron do wrong? Why did God not let them go into the promised land?

REMINDE the group about the discussion of accountability from last week's session. If we are going through a hard time, we still must obey and honor God with our actions. We do not have an excuse to stop trusting God.

CHOOSE some of the questions from Explore the Text to discuss.

IN MY CONTEXT

REVIEW the main points from In My Context in the Personal Study Guide. **DISCUSS** the questions. **ENCOURAGE** the group to do the daily readings this week and meet with someone for Connect and Share.

CLOSE with prayer, asking God to help us depend on Him and honor Him during difficult times.

GOD SAVES

Matthew 1:18-25; Numbers 21:6-9

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for the group to be bold and share the good news of Jesus with others.

Enlist a volunteer to sign the story of the bronze snake from Numbers 21:4-9. Verses 4-5 help introduce the story.

Practice your testimony to share during the session.

Write the outline on the board.

FOCUS ATTENTION

EXPLAIN: *Many times the Old Testament has prophecies or events that relate to the New Testament. Today we will see a prophecy quoted in the New Testament. We will also see a story in Numbers that will remind us of something that happened in the New Testament.*

First we will take time to focus on the birth of Jesus.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. The Savior (Matthew 1:18-23)

SIGN Matthew 1:18-19. **ASK:** *Why was Joseph thinking of divorcing Mary when they weren't married yet?* **EXPLAIN:** *In Bible times being engaged was a very formal agreement. It was like a legal agreement. If a couple decided to break off the engagement, they must go through a divorce process.*

SIGN Matthew 1:20-23. **DISCUSS** questions 1-3 from Explore the Text. **NOTE** that verse 23 is from Isaiah 7:14. **EXPLAIN:** *Several New Testament writers quoted Old Testament prophets. Jesus often talked about the Old Testament. It helps us understand that God always had a plan to save people from their sin. He prepared the way for a long time. Then He did what He said He would do and sent Jesus.*

2. The Arrival (Matthew 1:24-25)

SIGN Matthew 1:24-25. **DISCUSS** question 4 from Explore the Text. **ASK:** *Why was it important for Matthew to include verse 25? (It was important because people needed to know that Mary was pregnant because of the Holy Spirit. It was a miracle.)*

EXPLAIN: *Joseph had a plan to divorce Mary. But God made it clear to him that he should marry her. Joseph obeyed. This showed his faith in God. Invite members to discuss times they had a plan, but changed their actions to obey God instead.*

3. The Requirement (Numbers 21:6-9)

CALL ON the volunteer to sign the story from Numbers 21:4-9. **NOTE** that again the Israelites complained. When God punished them, they recognized their sin and asked Moses to pray for them.

DISCUSS questions 5-8 from Explore the Text. **INVITE** the group to find John 3:14-16 in their Bibles. **ASK:** *Who was Jesus talking about when He said “Son of Man”? (This is how Jesus often talked about Himself.) What does He mean by “lifted up”? (He would be lifted up on a cross. People must understand that He died on the cross to provide forgiveness for our sin.)*

ENCOURAGE the group to take time to think about their salvation experience. Christmas time can give us opportunities to tell others about how Jesus came to give salvation to all who turn to Him. **SHARE** your testimony with the group as an example. **INVITE** others to share their testimonies with the group. You could also divide into smaller groups of two or three and let them share their testimonies with each other.

IN MY CONTEXT

REVIEW the main points from In My Context in the Personal Study Guide. **DISCUSS** the questions. **ENCOURAGE** the group to do the daily readings this week and meet with someone for Connect and Share.

CLOSE with prayer, asking God to give us opportunities to share His good news with others this week.

GOD CALLS

Numbers 22:22-35

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for the group.

Enlist a volunteer to prepare to sign the story from Numbers 22:22-27 for the group session.

Be prepared to sign the story from 2 Kings 6:15-17 for the group session.

Choose some questions from Explore the Text to use for discussion.

FOCUS ATTENTION

SHARE this background information with the group: *The Israelites moved closer to the promised land. They fought and defeated the Amorites and the army of Bashon. They came close to the country of Moab. Balak, the king of Moab, was afraid of the Israelites. He knew what happened to the Amorites and Bashon. He thought the Israelites would take his land also.*

Balak decided to call on Balaam for help. He believed Balaam could curse the Israelites. Then maybe his armies could defeat the Israelites. Elders from Moab and Midian went to Balaam with money to pay him. God told Balaam not to go with them because God blessed the Israelites. Then Balak sent more elders with more money. God allowed Balaam to go with them, but He warned Balaam to only tell Balak what God told him to say.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Three Strikes (Numbers 22:22-27)

CALL ON the volunteer to sign the story from Numbers 22:22-27.

EXPLAIN: *It may seem strange that God allowed Balaam to go, but He was also angry with him. God knew Balaam's heart and true purpose. Balaam was interested in money. He was not a Hebrew and did not worship God. God had to put boundaries (limits) on Balaam to keep his attention.*

LEAD the group in a discussion about boundaries God puts in our lives to help us follow Him. **ENCOURAGE** the group to share their

experiences with boundaries in their lives. Sometimes believers feel frustrated when we can't do something we plan or want to do. We need to remember God loves us and knows what is best for us.

2. Two Questions (Numbers 22:28-30)

SIGN Numbers 22:28-30. What a funny picture! Imagine a donkey talking. It is interesting that Balaam did not seem surprised that the donkey talked to him. He even answered the donkey! As strange as this is, it teaches us that God can communicate to us in many ways. He can choose any way He wants. **ASK:** *How does God communicate with us today?* (Answers could include: through the Bible, through prayer, through other Christians.)

3. One Message (Numbers 22:31-35)

SIGN Numbers 22:31-35. **ASK:** *Why do you think Balaam did not see the angel before this time?* There is another example of God opening someone's eyes in 2 Kings 6:15-17. **SHARE** the story from these verses.

LEAD the group to read verse 34 again in their Bibles. **ASK:** *What three things did Balaam admit to the angel?* (1. That he sinned, 2. He did not know the angel was trying to stop him, and 3. He was willing to go back.)

EXPLAIN: It seems Balaam finally understood that God's message was very serious. It was important for Balaam to only say God's message and not mix it with any other message. **ASK:** *What can we learn from Balaam's experience? What message do we have to share?* It is important that we share God's truth clearly and correctly.

IN MY CONTEXT

REVIEW the main points from In My Context in the Personal Study Guide. **DISCUSS** the questions. **ENCOURAGE** the group to do the daily readings this week and meet with someone for Connect and Share.

CLOSE with prayer, thanking God for the boundaries He puts in our lives to help us follow Him.

GOD COMMISSIONS

Numbers 27:12-23

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for the group to encourage and mentor future leaders.

Read 1 Timothy 3:1-13, 2 Timothy 2:2,15-16, Titus 1:5-9, and Exodus 18:21. Prepare a list of leader characteristics from these verses to guide discussion during the session.

Enlist three volunteers to each sign one section of Scripture during the session.

Choose some questions from Explore the Text to use for discussion.

FOCUS ATTENTION

BEGIN the session by asking: *If you knew you would die soon, what things would you want to do? Do you have a “bucket list” (a list of things you want to do before you die)? How would you prepare?* **ALLOW** for discussion. **EXPLAIN:** *In today’s session we will see Moses’ main concern as he prepared to die.*

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Facing Death (Numbers 27:12-14)

CALL ON the first volunteer to sign Numbers 27:12-14. **DISCUSS** what happened at the waters in the desert. **ASK:** *How did Moses and Aaron not honor God as holy? (God told him to speak to the rock. Moses hit it twice. This showed they did not trust God.)*

2. Looking to the Future (Numbers 27:15-17)

INVITE the second volunteer to sign Numbers 27:15-17. **ASK:** *What was Moses’ first concern when he knew he would die? Why was it important for the Israelites to have a leader?*

LEAD the group in a discussion about how Moses cared for the Israelites as their leader. **ASK:** *What kinds of things did he do for them?* (Answers could include: He helped them when they had disagreements with each

other; he listened to their problems; he prayed for the people when they disobeyed God; he asked God to forgive the people; he led them in battle; etc.) Now, he wanted to be sure they had a leader when he was gone.

3. God Provides (Numbers 27:18-23)

CALL ON the third volunteer to sign Numbers 27:18-23. **ASK:** *Why do you think God chose Joshua as the new leader?* (He was Moses' assistant for many years, he and Caleb trusted God when the twelve spies went into the promised land, and the people likely trusted him.) **ASK:** *Why did God tell Moses to put his hand on Joshua in front of all the people?* It was important for the people to know Moses approved of Joshua as the new leader. When God told Moses to share his honor with Joshua, that probably meant Joshua would start some of his duties while Moses was still alive. This would help the people begin to accept a new leader.

ASK: *How do we choose church leaders today? What kind of character should leaders have?* **DIVIDE** the group into two smaller groups. **DIRECT** the first group to read 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Exodus 18:21 together. Then they will make a list describing a good leader. The second group will do the same thing reading 2 Timothy 2:2,15-16 and Titus 1:5-9. After the groups have had enough time, **BRING** them back together. **INVITE** a representative from each group to share their group's list with the whole group. **LEAD** in a discussion about how we can encourage and mentor new leaders in the church.

IN MY CONTEXT

REVIEW the main points from In My Context in the Personal Study Guide. **DISCUSS** the questions. **ENCOURAGE** the group to do the daily readings this week and meet with someone for Connect and Share. **CLOSE** with prayer, thanking God for the leaders in your church and ask Him to help you encourage new leaders.



GOD EXPECTS

Numbers 32:20-32

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for the group.

Enlist a volunteer to prepare to summarize the information from the introduction to the session in the Personal Study Guide.

Write the outline on the board.

Choose some questions from Explore the Text to use for discussion.

FOCUS ATTENTION

DIRECT the volunteer to begin the session by sharing the information from the introduction in the Personal Study Guide. **REMIND** the group what happened when the twelve spies gave their report about the promised land. Ten of the spies said it would be too difficult for the Israelites to take the land. The people believed them and did not trust God. The Israelites then wandered for forty years. Now they were close to the promised land again. Moses told the Gadites and Reubenites their actions might cause the Israelites to lose hope again. The Gadites and Reubenites promised they would join the battle with their fellow Israelites. They would stay until the battle was over. Then they would go back across the river to live with their families.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Moses Warns (Numbers 32:20-24)

SIGN Numbers 32:20-24. **ASK:** *What did Moses say would happen if the Gadites and Reubenites did as they promised? (They would be able to go home and have the land east of the Jordan River.) What would happen if they did not do what they promised? (They would be sinning. God would punish them.)*

EXPLAIN: *In some versions of the Bible, verse 23 says, “you may be sure that your sin will find you out.” This means our sins are not secret. God knows all*

things. When we sin, there will be consequences. Moses' warning to the Gadites and Reubenites was strong. He wanted them to understand that making a promise is a serious thing.

ASK: Is it important for believers today to do what we say we will do? Why? (We should want to make God look good to others. One way we can do that is to be people others can trust.)

2. Agreement Made (Numbers 32:25-27)

SIGN Numbers 32:25-27. **ASK:** What kind of attitude did the Gadites and Reubenites show when they answered Moses? (They seemed humble and respected Moses and his authority over them.) What should our attitude be toward our church leaders? How can we show respect to them?

3. Accountability Established (Numbers 32:28-32)

We have discussed the idea of accountability recently. **LEAD** the group in a discussion of what it means to be accountable to others and to God. Then **ENCOURAGE** the group to watch for how the Gadites and Reubenites would be accountable as you sign Numbers 32:28-32. **ASK:** How were the tribes accountable? (Moses told the priest, Joshua, and the leaders of the other tribes about their promise. They knew what to do if the Gadites and Reubenites did not do what they promised.)

Believers make a decision to follow Christ. **ASK:** How can we help each other be accountable for our commitment to Him? **INVITE** the group to find Proverbs 27:17 in their Bibles. **DISCUSS** how we can “improve each other.”

DISCUSS some of the questions from Explore the Text.

IN MY CONTEXT

REVIEW the main points from In My Context in the Personal Study Guide. **DISCUSS** the questions. **ENCOURAGE** the group to do the daily readings this week and meet with someone for Connect and Share. **CLOSE** with prayer, asking God to help us do what we say we will do.

GOD VALUES LIFE

Deuteronomy 5:17; 19:4-13

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for the group. Ask God to help us all have His view of and love for human life.

Enlist a volunteer to study the Introduction to Numbers; Deuteronomy and summarize it for the class.

Look for places in your community that provide services for pregnant women, children, and elderly people. See if there are volunteer opportunities for your group.

Choose some questions from Explore the Text to use for discussion.

FOCUS ATTENTION

EXPLAIN that the next few lessons will come from the Book of Deuteronomy. **INVITE** the volunteer to share the information from the Introduction to Numbers; Deuteronomy.

ENCOURAGE the group to find John 3:16 in their Bibles. **SIGN** the verse together. **EXPLAIN** that we usually interpret “the world” to mean people. **ASK:** *How much does God love people? What does that mean for us? How should we feel about human life?*

EXPLAIN: *Today is Sanctity of Life Sunday. It is a day to remember that God made people in His image (see Genesis 1:27). We must respect human life because we are made in God’s image.* **ASK:** *How is valuing other people a way of showing we value God and His image?*

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. The Command (Deuteronomy 5:17)

CALL FOR a volunteer to sign Deuteronomy 5:17. **LEAD** in a discussion of the word murder. **EXPLAIN** that murder means to plan with a purpose to kill someone. There is no doubt how God feels about murder.

ASK: *What kinds of murder does the world approve today? (Abortion, euthanasia, and doctor-assisted suicide.) Euthanasia means to kill someone who is dying of a sickness or is suffering. Sometimes the person wants to die and asks a doctor to help them by killing them. Abortion is the most common murder that is legal in many countries. **ASK:** Why do you think laws permit these kinds of murder?*

2. Grace (Deuteronomy 19:4-10)

SIGN Deuteronomy 19:4-10. God knows all things. He made a plan for the Israelites for the event of accidental death. He knew if a person accidentally killed someone, the dead person's family might want revenge. They might try to kill that person. **ASK:** *What was God's plan?* (He told Moses to set up cities where people could go to be safe. Cities like this are called cities of safety or cities of refuge.)

NOTICE in verses 8-9 God reminded the people to love Him and obey Him, then their land would continue to grow. As their country became larger, they were to add more cities for safety. **ASK:** *In verse 10, who are the "innocent people" who needed protection?*

God's plan showed His grace. It showed His desire to protect people.

3. Justice (Deuteronomy 19:11-13)

SIGN Deuteronomy 19:11-13. **ASK:** *What was God's plan for a murderer? How was it different from an accidental killing? (The murderer must die. If the murderer went to the city to save his life, the elders in the murderer's city could send for him.)*

EXPLAIN: *In our world today there are laws and courts to take care of murderers. But we, as God's people, can help people who are weak. Some cannot help themselves. **SHARE** the information you found about volunteer opportunities in your community. **DISCUSS** ways to help people respect life as holy.*

IN MY CONTEXT

REVIEW the main points from In My Context in the Personal Study Guide. **DISCUSS** the questions. **ENCOURAGE** the group to do the daily readings this week and meet with someone for Connect and Share. **CLOSE** with prayer, asking God to help us show respect for all people.

HONORING GOD

Deuteronomy 4:1-9

PLAN AHEAD

Pray that the group will grow in their love for the Bible.

Enlist three volunteers to each sign one part of the verses for the session.

Choose some questions from Explore the Text to use for discussion.

FOCUS ATTENTION

INTRODUCE the session with the following example: *Have you ever watched a basketball game or played in a game? Imagine a game with no referee. What could happen in the game? What if there were no rules? What might happen? Would it be fun to be involved in a game like that? Why or why not?*

Some people feel life would be better with no rules. Some believe God is mean and does not want people to have fun. In today's session, we will see that God knows best. He gives laws for our good.

The Israelites were preparing to enter the promised land. Moses called them together to talk with them. He explained some of their history. He reminded them about how God helped them defeat their enemies. Moses also told the people God would not let him enter the promised land. This made it even more important that they listen, learn, and teach the law he prepared to give them.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Listen (Deuteronomy 4:1-5)

INVITE the first volunteer to sign Deuteronomy 4:1-5. **ASK:** *Moses called on the people to pay attention to God's commands. Why was it important for them to listen and obey?*

ASK the group if they remember what happened at Baal Peor. Moses reminded the Israelites of this terrible event as a warning of the consequences of disobedience. When some of the Israelites sinned with the Moabite women, God killed 24,000 of them. Moses wanted

the people to listen and learn. When they obeyed, things would go well for them.

ENCOURAGE the group to think of someone who needs to know about God's Word. Paul encouraged Timothy, "Be careful in your life and in your teaching. If you continue to live and teach rightly, you will save both yourself and those who listen to you" (1 Timothy 4:16). Paul also told him to teach people he could trust, then those people could teach others (2 Timothy 2:2).

2. Honor (Deuteronomy 4:6-8)

INVITE the second volunteer to sign Deuteronomy 4:6-8. **ASK:** *What did Moses say other nations would think about the Israelites if they obeyed the laws? (That they had wisdom and understanding.) What do you think the nations would think about their God?*

LEAD in a discussion of verses 7-8. *How does Moses describe God in comparison to other gods? How does God come near people today? (He sent His own Son to die in our place to make a way to have full fellowship with Him.)*

3. Teach (Deuteronomy 4:9)

CALL FOR the third volunteer to sign Deuteronomy 4:9. **ASK:** *What was Moses' warning to the people? Why was it so important to teach children and grandchildren?*

DIVIDE the group into small groups of two or three. **ENCOURAGE** the groups to do the Bible Skill together. **DIRECT** them to think of ways to teach God's Word at the different times listed. After they have had time for discussion, **ALLOW** the groups to share their ideas with the others.

IN MY CONTEXT

REVIEW the main points from In My Context in the Personal Study Guide. **DISCUSS** the questions. **ENCOURAGE** the group to do the daily readings this week and meet with someone for Connect and Share.

CLOSE with prayer, asking God to help us eagerly obey Him.

LOVING GOD

Deuteronomy 6:1-13

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for the group to grow in their love for God. Pray that our love for Him will show in our lives as obedience.

Choose some questions from Explore the Text to use for discussion.

FOCUS ATTENTION

EXPLAIN: *Last week we read about Moses teaching the law to the Israelites. In today's session, we will see how loving God and obeying Him go together.*

Sometimes we do not like rules people make for us. We may not want to do things other people ask us to do. However, we may feel differently about it if we love the person who asks us to do it. In a similar way, when we truly love God, we will want to obey Him.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. The Promise (Deuteronomy 6:1-3)

SIGN Deuteronomy 6:1-3. **ENCOURAGE** the group to watch for the blessings that would come to the Israelites if they obeyed. (All would go well for them, they would become a great nation, and they would live a long time.)

Some people today become confused about God's promise to the Israelites. Some television preachers teach we can all become rich if we obey God. They teach that poor and sick people are poor and sick because they don't follow God's commands. This is a false teaching. In fact, the New Testament makes it clear we will have problems, and we will suffer (James 1:2-3; John 16:33). We also know God is with us and will help us through it all (James 1:5; Philippians 4:13).

2. Loving Fully (Deuteronomy 6:4-5)

SIGN Deuteronomy 6:4-5. **ASK:** *Why is it important to know that the Lord is the only Lord?* **EXPLAIN:** *The nations around the Israelites believed differently.*

They made up many gods. They believed their gods each controlled different things and had their own interests. Their gods were limited in power. The God of the Israelites was the one true God. Their God was always right and holy. His purposes were just. His plans for them were good. No other nation had a god that was near them in the way God was near to the Israelites.

Next, Moses told the people to love God. **ASK:** *How can we love God with all our heart, soul, and strength?* **INVITE** the group to find Mark 12:28-30 in their Bibles. Jesus affirmed the importance of loving God fully. He also taught that if people loved Him, they would obey Him (John 14:23).

3. Telling about God (Deuteronomy 6:6-9)

ASK: *Have you ever noticed that when you teach something, you are able to remember it better?* Moses told the Israelites to remember the commands and teach them. They were to teach them and talk about them often.

CALL FOR a volunteer to sign Deuteronomy 6:6-9, while the rest of the group watches for ways and times to teach the commands. (These verses are like the verses we read last week in the small groups.)

Some Jews write verses on paper and actually tie them on their heads and arms (Matthew 23:5). They put verses on their doors. Moses probably meant these words as a picture. The Israelites should keep the laws in their minds. A good way to do that was to teach them to others.

4. Being Faithful (Deuteronomy 6:10-13)

SIGN Deuteronomy 6:10-13. **ASK:** *What was Moses' warning? Why did he think the people might forget?* We need to stay faithful to God, trusting and obeying Him in good times and bad.

IN MY CONTEXT

REVIEW the main points from In My Context in the Personal Study Guide. **DISCUSS** the questions. **ENCOURAGE** the group to do the daily readings this week and meet with someone for Connect and Share.

CLOSE with prayer, asking God to help us always love Him.

GOD REVEALS HIMSELF

Deuteronomy 18:15-22

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for the group to be able to recognize God's true messengers.

Enlist three volunteers to each sign one section of the verses for the session.

Choose some questions from Explore the Text to use for discussion.

FOCUS ATTENTION

REMINDE the group about what happened when Moses met with God at Mount Sinai to get the Ten Commandments. The people were far from the mountain top, but they saw lightening and heard thunder. They saw the mountain in smoke. They were so afraid. They told Moses to tell them what God said. They did not want God to speak to them Himself. They were afraid they would die if God spoke to them directly. They trusted Moses to be the mediator between them and God. (See Exodus 20:18-19.)

In today's session we will see how Moses prepared the people for other messengers or mediators. He knew he would not go with them to the promised land. They would need other mediators. The new nation of Israel would need prophets for future generations.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. The Need (Deuteronomy 18:15-17)

EXPLAIN: *The people in the nations around the Israelites did not follow God. They listened to people who did magic or witchcraft. Moses told the Israelites God would not allow them to do this. God would provide what the people needed.*

INVITE the first volunteer to sign Deuteronomy 18:15-17. **ASK:** *What was God's plan?*

2. God Provides (Deuteronomy 18:18-19)

INVITE the second volunteer to sign Deuteronomy 18:18-19. **ASK:** *Who were some of the prophets God sent to the Israelites after Moses? (Answers could include: Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Malachi, etc.) Who was the perfect prophet/mediator?* **DIRECT** the group to find 1 Timothy 2:5 in their Bibles. **DIRECT** a volunteer to sign the verse. **LEAD** in a discussion about how Jesus provides the way to a relationship with our Holy God. (This would be a good time to share the plan of salvation if some in the group are not believers.)

3. The Test (Deuteronomy 18:20-22)

The people needed to know who they could trust as a prophet for God. Moses explained what to do. **CALL FOR** the third volunteer to sign Deuteronomy 18:20-22. **ASK:** *How could the Israelites know if someone was a true prophet? (If what the prophet said would happen didn't happen, they would know to ignore that prophet.) What was the strong warning in verse 20? (The lying prophet should die.)*

In Jeremiah there is a story of a false prophet named Hananiah. God did not send him but the people believed his lies. Jeremiah told Hananiah that he would die because of his false teaching. He died that same year. (See Jeremiah 28.)

ASK: *Are there false prophets today? How do we know they are false? (What they say does not happen. They say things that do not agree with the Bible.)* Also, as believers, we have the Holy Spirit living in us. He works in our spirits to help us recognize truth.

If there is time, **GUIDE** the group to take turns signing the verses in the Bible Skill section about Jesus, our perfect prophet.

IN MY CONTEXT

REVIEW the main points from In My Context in the Personal Study Guide. **DISCUSS** the questions. **ENCOURAGE** the group to do the daily readings this week and meet with someone for Connect and Share.

CLOSE with prayer, thanking God for providing the perfect mediator, Jesus Christ.



CHOSEN

Deuteronomy 30:1-10, 19-20

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for the group to always choose true life.

Find a picture of a smoker's lungs that shows damage from smoking to show during the group session.

Choose some questions from Explore the Text to use for discussion

FOCUS ATTENTION

SHOW the picture of the damaged lungs (or other picture showing damage from smoking). **ALLOW** the group to share about commercials showing health problems from smoking. The goal of the commercials is to encourage people to stop smoking or choose to never smoke. Of course, no one chooses to have lung cancer. But the decisions every day will lead to a better life or a worse life.

In the chapters between last week's session and today's, Moses taught many more laws. He also explained the blessings that would happen if the Israelites obeyed the laws. He listed the curses that would happen if they did not obey. He then offered the Israelites a choice.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. God Restores (Deuteronomy 30:1-5)

SIGN Deuteronomy 30:1-5. **EXPLAIN:** *Moses knew the Israelites would disobey. He was with them for forty years, he knew their ways.* **ASK:** *What did he say would happen to the Israelites? (God would send them away to other nations; they would think and return to the Lord and obey Him; God would bring them back to their land.)* **ASK:** *In verse 2, how does it say the people will obey God? (With their whole being in everything.)*

God knew the people would disobey. He still had a plan to bring them back to Himself. God loves fellowship with His people and wants us to be with Him.

2. Renewed Hearts (Deuteronomy 30:6-10)

SIGN Deuteronomy 30:6-10. **ASK:** *What other blessings would happen to the Israelites when they came back to the Lord?*

NOTICE in verses 1-10 Moses said “with your whole being” three different times. **INVITE** the group to look at verses 2, 6, and 10 to find what three things the Israelites would do with their whole being (obey, love, return).

ASK: *What do you think “with your whole being” means?* God expected the Israelites to be fully committed and fully involved with Him. He expects the same from us today. Loving and obeying God should be who we are every day, not just on Sundays. As our Father, God enjoys when His people love and obey Him.

3. The Right Choice (Deuteronomy 30:19-20)

ENCOURAGE the group to read Deuteronomy 30:11-18 in their Bibles. Then sign Deuteronomy 30:19-20. **ASK:** *How do you think Moses felt as he asked the Israelites to choose? How did he try to convince them to make the right decision?* It seems as if he begged them to do the right thing. He told them it was not a hard thing to do.

If you have parents in your group, ask them to explain how they feel when their children make good choices. Perhaps Moses felt like a father to the Israelites. He led them for a long time and prayed for them. He pleaded with God to forgive them several times. He wanted them to succeed and experience God’s blessings.

IN MY CONTEXT

REVIEW the main points from In My Context in the Personal Study Guide. **DISCUSS** the questions. **ENCOURAGE** the group to do the daily readings this week and meet with someone for Connect and Share.

CLOSE with prayer, asking God to help us experience love for Him with our whole being.



PROMISED

Deuteronomy 32:48-52; 34:4-7

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for the group to understand God's grace and mercy.

Read the memory verse for the session and try signing it with the rhythm of a song. Practice so you can lead the group in signing it.

Choose some questions from Explore the Text to use for discussion.

FOCUS ATTENTION

EXPLAIN: Chapter 32 is mostly a song that Moses shared with the people. Deuteronomy 32:4 is our memory verse this week and is a short part of the song.

GUIDE the group to sign the memory verse with you as a song.

EXPLAIN: The message of that verse is important as it relates to our session today. You may remember that Moses and Aaron sinned against God at the waters of Meribah. God told them they would not enter the promised land because of their sin. That punishment might seem unfair to us. But Moses declared his faith in God by praising Him in song. **ASK:** What does verse 4 say about God? (He is faithful, right, and fair.)

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Knowing Our Sin (Deuteronomy 32:48-52)

EXPLAIN: You may have heard stories of people nearing death. Often they think of things they would do differently. They might say, "If I could live my life again, I would spend more time with my family." Or, "I made many mistakes in my life. I wish I had served God better."

As the time came for Moses to die, God reminded him of something.

SIGN Deuteronomy 32:48-52. **ASK:** What did God remind Moses about? How do believers today know about our sin? (We learn from the Bible. The Holy Spirit shows us our sin.) What should we do when we recognize our sin?

GUIDE the group to find 1 John 1:9 in their Bibles. **LEAD** in a discussion of what confession means.

2. Knowing God's Presence (Deuteronomy 34:4)

When Moses sinned at Meribah, God did not leave him. God still had a close relationship with Moses. God forgave him. But Moses' action did have a consequence. He would not go into the promised land.

SIGN Deuteronomy 34:4. Imagine, at the age of 120 Moses climbed up a mountain high enough to see into the promised land! Was he alone? No. God met him there. **ASK:** *What did God do for Moses?* In being with Moses, God affirmed their relationship and showed His grace to Moses.

ASK: *How do we know God is with believers today? How does He show His love and grace to us?*

3. Finding God's Mercy (Deuteronomy 34:5-7)

LEAD in a discussion of God's mercy. *What does it mean to be merciful?* Some explain it as being kind and forgiving. **DIRECT** the group to watch for ways God showed mercy to Moses as you sign Deuteronomy 34:5-7.

ASK: *In what ways do you notice God's mercy?* (God took care of Moses all his life, he was still healthy at 120 years of age, and God took care of him as he died.)

ASK: *How does God show His mercy to believers today?* Be sure to include God's plan to save us from our sin through Jesus' death. As sinners we earned the punishment of death and separation from God (Roman 3:23; 6:23). But He saved us because of His great mercy (Titus 3:4-5).

IN MY CONTEXT

REVIEW the main points from In My Context in the Personal Study Guide. **DISCUSS** the questions. **ENCOURAGE** the group to do the daily readings this week and meet with someone for Connect and Share.

CLOSE with prayer, asking God to help us be aware that He is with us all the time.

LEADER PACK

»» **PACK ITEM 1**

Map: Kadesh-Barnea to Moab Sessions 1-13

Use the map on page 147 or locate a map in a Bible atlas that shows the possible journey of the Israelites through the wilderness.

»» **PACK ITEM 2**

Outlines of Numbers; Deuteronomy Sessions 1-13

Refer to the outline printed on page 7.

»» **PACK ITEM 3**

Poster: The Bronze Snake Sessions 4,9

Locate an image of bronze snake. Comment: Just as those in Moses' time looked upon the snake image Moses had mounted on a pole and were healed, those who look in faith to Christ who was lifted up on the cross will be healed of their sins. Those who look upon Him and believe in Him will have eternal life (John 3:14).

»» **PACK ITEM 4**

Poster: Arrangement of the Camp Session 1

Create a poster that shows the Lord's prescribed arrangement for Israelites to camp in the wilderness around the tent of meeting (Num. 2:1-34).

»» **PACK ITEM 5**

Poster: Jesus Quotes Deuteronomy Sessions 8,10,11

Use a Bible concordance to create a poster of the references Jesus made in the Gospels to the Book of Deuteronomy.

»» **PACK ITEM 6**

Key Verse: Deuteronomy 6:5 Sessions 4,9-12

Create a poster that lists Deuteronomy 6:5: “Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”

»» PACK ITEM 7

Handout: Numbers; Deuteronomy Time Line Sessions 1,8,9

Locate a study Bible with a time line of the major people and events in Numbers and Deuteronomy (from 1600 BC–1375 BC). Use it as a reference during this study.

»» PACK ITEM 8

Handout: Memory Verse Bookmark Sessions 1-13

Make a list of these suggested memory verses to distribute to your group:

- Numbers 9:23 • Numbers 27:17 • Deuteronomy 6:5
- Numbers 14:18 • Numbers 32:23b • Deuteronomy 18:19
- Numbers 20:12 • Deuteronomy 5:17 • Deuteronomy 30:19
- Matthew 1:21 • Deuteronomy 4:9 • Deuteronomy 32:4
- Numbers 22:38

»» PACK ITEM 9

Handout: Adversaries Along the Journey Sessions 5,6

Use a Bible dictionary to create a handout that defines the adversaries of the Israelites on their journey to the promised land. Include the Amalekites, Amorites, Edomites, Midianites, and Moabites.

»» PACK ITEM 10

Handout: Jesus Quotes Deuteronomy Sessions 8,10

Use a Bible concordance to create a chart that lists the references Jesus made in the Gospels to the Book of Deuteronomy.

»» PACK ITEM 11

Handout: Covenant Pattern Session 7

Use a Bible dictionary or commentary to create a handout that compares

and contrasts the patterns blessings and curses/stipulations in law codes and covenants.

»» PACK ITEM 12

Handout: Mentors in the Bible

Session 6

Use a Bible dictionary or commentary to create a handout that discusses Christian mentoring. Note the relationships between Jethro and Moses; Eli and Samuel; Elijah and Elisha; Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar; Mordecai and Esther; Priscilla, Aquila, and Apollos; and Jesus and His disciples.

»» PACK ITEM 13

Handout: Complaints in the Wilderness

Sessions 2,3,4

Use a Bible dictionary or commentary to create a handout that expounds on the Israelites' complaints in the wilderness.

List these Scriptures as a guide:

- | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| • Exodus 5 | • Exodus 32 | • Numbers 14:1-10 |
| • Exodus 14:11-12 | • Numbers 11:1-34 | • Numbers 14:10-12,22,37 |
| • Exodus 15:22 | • Numbers 12:1-12 | • Numbers 16:1-50 |
| • Exodus 16:1-4 | • Numbers 13:26-33 | • Numbers 20:1-13 |
| • Exodus 17:1-4 | • Numbers 13:30-14:3 | • Numbers 21:4-5 |

»» PACK ITEM 14

Handout: Priests of Israel

Sessions 3,6

Use a Bible dictionary or commentary to create a chart of the names, references, and identifications of the priests of Israel.

Kadesh-Barnea to Moab



"The Journey from Kadesh-Barnea to the Plains of Moab" is adapted from the Holman Bible Atlas (Nashville: Holman Reference, 2014), 72. Used by permission.

Numbers; Deuteronomy

"Are we there yet?" Every parent knows what it is to hear this question coming from the backseat of a car. When children say this, they are voicing something that is true of all of us: We are by nature impatient to get to our destination. This quarter's study of Numbers and Deuteronomy focuses our attention not on the destination but on the journey itself. Each day of the Israelites' long journey to the promised land, God demonstrated His faithfulness by leading them in the form of the pillar of cloud. Each night, He demonstrated His presence by the pillar of fire. Along the way, He taught His people the necessity of attentively following His leadership. The journey, not just the destination, has important things to tell us about God and ourselves.



Let the Word dwell in you.

The Promise of a

18 But with thee
enant; and ^{thou} sh
thou, and thy sons, an
wives with thee.

19 And of every livin
of every *sort* shalt tho
keep *them* alive with
and female.

20 Of fowls after the
ter their kind, of ever
earth after his kind,
come unto thee, to ke

here, and its meaning is
tions include "roof" or "t
then the text probably in
inches over the sides of
dow," then it refers to an
four sides of the boat fr

6:17 Only after He com
did God tell him why it w
a flood—a term used onl
all-destroying flood in No
earth *shall die*. The bibli
in Genesis 6–8 most nat
covered the entire globe.
this (2 Pet. 2:5, 3:6). That
dominant Christian unde
remains so today. Biele
explain the flood's impac
also tackle questions su
quired to flood the entir
preflood geography, so
have needed four times
the flood to cover the b
in this light some defen
gested that pre-flood ge
graphy. Specifically, the
was flatter in the preflo
to flood and that the viol
geographical and geolog
ical approach suggesting
ity is largely the same. I
greater quantity of water
lost by an unknown mec
was greatly diminished af

6:18 The term *covenant*
ment between two partic
tract.

6:19 God's preservation
not support billions of a
male and one female on
preserving