

# The Bible Story In A Year

## Week 9

Although God tried to fulfill His promises to the Israelites and bring them into the Canaan land, the people refused to enter because of their lack of faith and fear of the people in the land. Consequently, all the people who were 20 years old and above were going to die in the wilderness (except for Joshua and Caleb) during a span of 40 years. Now, we will watch as this happens and the younger generation is prepared to enter the land.

**1) Israel complains.** There have already been many times the unfaithful generation of Israelites have complained during their time in the wilderness after leaving Egypt. But, this continued even more. As the Biblical record advances in time to the 40<sup>th</sup> year after the Israelites left Egypt, they traveled to the Wilderness of Zin (Kadesh, Numbers 20:1; 33:36-38). Here, the Israelites assembled against Moses and Aaron, complaining about the land and the lack of water (20:2-5). In response, God told Moses and Aaron to assemble the community and speak to the rock while the people watch and water would be provided (20:8). Yet, Moses and Aaron did not honor God and were disobedient by striking the rock (20:9-11). Consequently, God told them they would not lead the people into the land (20:12-13). Aaron later died on Mount Hor and his son, Eleazar, became the high priest in his place (20:22-29). After leaving Mount Hor, the people again became impatient and complained against God and Moses concerning their conditions in the wilderness (21:4-5). Therefore, God sent burning (fiery, poisonous) snakes among them and many of the people died (21:6). When they confessed their sin and Moses interceded for them, Moses was to make a bronze snake image mounted on a pole so anyone who was bitten could look at it and recover (21:7-9).

**2) Israel defeats Amorite kings.** As Israel continued traveling, King Sihon of the Amorites refused to allow Israel to travel through their land and even gathered his army to confront and fight against

them (Numbers 21:21-23). However, Israel defeated them and took possession of their land (21:24-26, 31-32). After this, they also went to Bashan and King Og came against them to fight Israel with his army (21:33). However, Israel also defeated them by the Lord's power and took possession of their land (21:34-35). Notice that while the people had previously been afraid of entering the land to fight against the people because of their well-fortified cities, strong armies, giants, etc. (13:28, 32-33), God had now delivered these into their hands (even King Og, who was a giant, Deuteronomy 3:11)!

**3) Israel's encounters with the Moabites.** After defeating these Amorite kings, Israel traveled and camped on the plains of Moab near the Jordan River (across from Jericho, Numbers 22:1). King Balak of Moab (with some Midianites) had been informed of all that Israel had done and was terrified (22:2-4). Consequently, he sent messengers to Balaam so he would put a curse on the Israelites (22:5-6; called a diviner in Joshua 13:22). God revealed to Balaam that he was not to go to Balak or put a curse on the people (22:12-13). Balak, however, was insistent and promised Balaam a great reward for cursing Israel (22:15-17). Although Balaam would only do what God said (22:18-19), he did not accept God's original answer. This time, God allowed him to go, but was angry with him (22:20, 22). If not for his donkey saving him from an angel in the path, God would have destroyed Balaam (22:22-35). When Balaam arrived, God used him to bless Israel rather than curse them (on four occasions).

After this, the text records that Israel began prostituting themselves with the women of Moab and involving themselves in the sacrifices for their gods, aligning themselves with Baal of Peor and angering God (Numbers 25:1-3). God commanded Moses to execute the leaders of the people and to kill each of the men who were guilty (25:4-5). The total of those killed in the plague was 24,000 (25:6-13). Later, we

discover that Balaam was behind this incident, presumably to provoke God to curse the people of Israel so he could receive honor from Balak (31:16). After dealing with Israel's unfaithfulness, God then led the rest of the Israelites in victory over Moab and Midian (25:16-18; 31:1-2, 7-11).

**4) Preparations and Transjordan settlements.** After the plague on Israel due to this incident, Moses and Eleazar were instructed to take another census of Israelite men who could serve in the army (those 20 years old and above, Numbers 26:1-2). None were left of those who rebelled since the last census (26:63-65). The total number was now 601,730. Levites were counted separately. Larger tribes would receive a larger land allotment than smaller ones. Later, Joshua is also identified as the one who would lead Israel after Moses's death (27:18-23). Additional instructions were also given concerning offerings and vows. And, the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh received permission to take their land allotment on the east of the Jordan River in the land that had been conquered (32:1-5, 33), provided the men would still go fight with the rest of the Israelites to help them take the promised land (32:20-27).

The generation of Israelites that had been above 20 years old when they left Egypt had now died during the 40 years that had passed. Now, the younger generation had grown and taken some land as an inheritance. Moses, however, will not lead them across the Jordan into the land God had promised. Yet, we will watch as he works to prepare them for this time.

## Discipleship Questions

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

**Teaching:** What did you learn from this lesson?

**Rebuking:** What are some ways this lesson challenges you to live differently?

**Correcting:** How does this lesson help you make positive changes for Christ?

**Training & Equipping:** How can you apply this lesson to be trained and equipped in God's service?