

The Lord had brought the nation of Israel to the threshold of the Promised Land of Canaan. Moses had selected twelve men to spy out the land and return with a report. The men returned with a glowing report of how rich the land was, providing them with ample food and space. However, they also reported how strong the people and well-fortified the cities of Canaan were. Instead of trusting the Lord's promise and power, they doubted God's plan and decided to return to Egypt. Two of the spies, named Joshua and Caleb, couldn't believe what they were hearing! They tried to remind God's people of what their God had done, but God's people refused to listen. God then announced that the current generation of Israelites would not enter the Promised Land. The Israelites would be forced to wander, living a nomadic lifestyle for the next 40 years. Everyone 20 years or older would die during that time and never see the Promised Land. Thus the 40 years of wandering began. You might think, or at least hope, that God's people had learned to trust the Lord, but not so quickly. Let's read of some accounts that might hit a little too close to home and a picture of what the Savior would one day do for his people.

Read & Review

Read Numbers 20:1-13

1. Who was the first of Moses' family to die?
2. Why did the people complain against Moses this time?
3. What did God tell Moses to do that would solve their lack of water?
4. Compare what Moses was supposed to do with what Moses did. What was the consequence?

Read Numbers 20:22-29

5. Who was the next of Moses' family to die and where?

6. How did the Israelites react to Aaron's death and why might it seem strange?

Read Numbers 21:4-9

7. Why did the people complain against Moses this time?

8. How did the Lord discipline his people for their complaints?

9. What was God's solution to those bitten by the snakes?

10. In a late-night discussion with a Jewish religious leader named Nicodemus, Jesus used this account to describe what he would do. Jesus said, "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him" (John 3:14,15). What parallels are there between the bronze snake and Jesus?

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