

# YOU ARE THERE

## CALEB EXPLORES CANAAN

### Introduction, through the eyes of someone who was there

You are Caleb, a leader of the tribe of Judah. It's been two years since you left Egypt, and it's time to conquer Canaan. You are chosen, along with a leader from each of the other eleven tribes, to spy throughout Canaan and bring back a report. Moses tells you to collect a few crops and to report on the people [strong or weak? many or few?], land [fat or lean? how many trees?] and cities [like open camps or fortified?] You slip into Canaan and go as far north as Rehob. Forty days later, you return, bringing back a cluster of grapes so big that it takes two of you to carry it, plus pomegranates and figs. You all report that the land is wonderful, but that the people are strong (some are giants) and the cities are fortified. This scares the people, but you and Joshua (Ephraim's spy) are confident that you can conquer the land. Unfortunately, the other spies and the people agree that conquest is impossible. They decide that they'll die if they keep following Moses, and start making plans to return to Egypt ...

Original illustration (also available in full-color card sets)



### Basic verses and other related passages

#### THE BASIC STORY

Numbers 13 – 14 (12 spies explore Canaan and report back)

#### BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE ...

Numbers 26:63-65, Joshua 5:4-6 (All adult men die before Canaan)

Joshua 14, 1 Chronicles 2 (Caleb gets the land around Hebron as his inheritance; some is named "Ephrathah" after his wife. 1400 years later, Jesus is born in Bethlehem (of) Ephrathah.)

### More depth and detail

God agrees with the people — not a single man who fears the Canaanites will enter the land; they'll die first. (The other spies are soon killed in a plague for doubting God's power.) For forty years (a year for each day the spies were gone), the Israelites will wander in the wilderness south of Canaan. Caleb and Joshua will enter Canaan, but all other men who have been counted in the census (those older than twenty, but not the Levites) will die by then; their children will enter, but they won't. It's probably safe to assume that none of the women or Levites who doubted God's power will enter Canaan, either. We do know that Eleazar, the high priest after Aaron, survives and enters Canaan; perhaps other faithful Levites enter as well.

Adding foolishness to faithlessness, the Israelites decide that they can conquer Canaan anyway. They attack the Amalekites and Canaanites and (just as Moses foretells) the Israelites are defeated.

#### WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT CALEB?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

"Summing up" time (if needed)

### DID YOU KNOW? MILK & HONEY

Does that sound sticky?

Figuratively speaking, a land "flowing with milk and honey" is any land with an abundance. In the Bible the terms describe the Promised Land, the land God promises to Abraham and his descendants, the Israelites, now desire — a land where God will take care of His people in all ways, and the people will know peace. God tells Moses that Canaan is that land, and commands him to lead the people to it.

Related facts about Bible life & times

But why milk and honey? "Flowing with honey" suggests that the land is so fertile that flowers and fruit abound everywhere. Therefore bees are able to make massive amounts of honey, so much honey that it flows from the hive like liquid gold. Honey is not only used for food, but also for medicinal purposes. We have no evidence that the ancient Israelites or Canaanites keep bees, so the hives in question are probably wild bee hives, owned by no one and whose honey belongs to whomever finds it.

Milk is from goats and cows. "Flowing with milk" suggests that not only does Canaan have good farming land, but good pasture land, too. The grass is so rich that the animals are fat and productive. Milk is a staple of the Israelite diet, and knowing that the milk would flow freely from their dairy herds should be comforting to the weary Israelites as they wander in the wilderness.

Canaan is a land so extraordinarily fertile that its people lack nothing; God richly provides everything.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

# LESSON 1

- 1 The story of the twelve spies is a clear example of the contrast between faith and doubt. Give another Bible story where someone is able to do something with God's power.

The heart of the lesson:  
What can we learn from Caleb?  
How can we use his experiences to make us better?

List one or two things that *you* can do with God's power (that would be impossible or at least very hard otherwise).

- 2 Even when we know better, we sometimes stubbornly try to do things our own way, without God's help. List a time or two that you (or someone you know) have tried to get something done without God.

God doesn't help with everything that people ask Him for. What types of things does God help with? What would you not expect Him to help with?

Teacher notes with ways to discuss and develop each question are available (at no cost)

- 3 We don't offer burnt offerings or grain offerings to God anymore; we offer ourselves. How can we make atonement to God for our sin?

List ways that we can show our dedication to God (like a grain offering).

- 4 What can you learn from Caleb?

A second "summing up" time

Map with notes on the places in the lesson

## IT'S THE LAW SACRIFICES & OFFERINGS (A)

Moses' Law lists five types of sacrifices and offerings: Burnt, Grain, Peace, Sin and Guilt. We'll cover the first two in this lesson.

**Burnt offerings** (Leviticus 1:3-17, 6:8-13, 7:8) are to regain the favor of God after sin (making atonement), and to show complete dedication and consecration to God. They can consist of unblemished bulls, male sheep or turtledoves or pigeons, depending on what you can afford. The complete animal is offered to God, and the skin (which goes to the priests). Looking forward to the new covenant, we find Christ's example of complete dedication to God (Matthew 26:39-44, Philippians 2:5-11) and our responsibility to do the same (Romans 12:1-2, Hebrews 13:15).

A **Grain offering** (Leviticus 2, 6:14-18, 7:9-10) is made with each burnt offering; it shows tribute and dedication to God. It is composed of unleavened ("uncontaminated") grain (usually flour), mixed with salt (a preservative showing an eternal covenant), oil and frankincense (a sweet perfume when burned). Part is burned with the burnt offering, while the priests eat the rest. Looking forward, we must still dedicate ourselves to Christ eternally, unsoiled by sin, with "sweet offerings."

Sidebar for each lesson, on a related theme

The Israelites are at **Kadesh-Barnea** in the **Wilderness of Paran** when God sends 12 spies into the region of **Canaan**. They explore the **Wilderness of Zin** and the **Negev**, and then go as far north as **Rehob**. They collect grapes and other fruit in the valley of **Eshcol**. After God forbids them going into Canaan, they try anyway and are driven away by the Amalekites and Canaanites at **Hormah**. After the conquest, Caleb claims the land around **Hebron** (including **Bethlehem**) as his inheritance.

