

A Cloud Leads the Way

Exodus 13:21, 22; 14:19, 20; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 282-290



John enjoyed summer camp. He was learning many new crafts. He especially liked leather craft. He followed his counselor's directions very carefully as he worked on a new wallet.

Our Bible story tells about a large group of people who also followed directions. They followed directions from God—unusual directions, but very important.

After 400 years of slavery the Israelites were finally on their way to the Promised Land. But which way should they go? All that stretched before them was the hot, dry wilderness.

God did not leave them to wonder. Instead, He led them personally and in a

way especially fitted for the desert. "By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night" (Exodus 13:21). During the day the cloud gave them shade from the sun's heat. At night when the desert became very cold, the pillar of fire provided heat as well as light. The cloud led the Israelites into the desert and on to the Red Sea. There it stopped.

Soon the Egyptians realized that when the Israelites left, their supply of slaves were gone. In a short time Pharaoh's army raced across the desert. They wanted to get the Israelites back. The Israelites saw a great cloud of dust coming their way. From their camp at the edge of the sea, they could see the chariots racing

toward them. What could they do? A mountain blocked their way on one side. The Red Sea kept them from going ahead. And Pharaoh's army kept coming straight at them. They were trapped, and they were terrified.

"Do not be afraid," said Moses. "Stand firm, and you will see the Lord deliver you today."

The Egyptian army drew closer.



The Message

We worship God
when we obey Him.

Memory Verse

*"I seek you with all
my heart; do not let
me stray from your
commands"*

(Psalm 119:10).

But God's cloud of protection did something awesome. It moved up and over the Israelites. Then it came to rest between them and the Egyptian army. On one side it became a cloud that brought darkness to the Egyptians. But on the other side it was fire that provided the Israelites with light.

"Tell the Israelites to move forward, into the sea," God said to Moses. Even though there was nothing but deep water in front of them, the Israelites obeyed. They gathered their things and headed for the water.

"Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea," God commanded Moses. Moses obeyed, and a strong wind began to blow a path of dry ground through the sea. All that night the pillar of fire provided light. And the Israelites walked through the Red Sea on dry ground. The wall of water on their right and left stayed in place.

The Egyptians followed the Israelites into the sea. As soon as the last of the Israelites arrived safely on the other side, the Lord spoke to Moses again. "Stretch out your hand over the sea so the waters will flow back together." Again Moses obeyed. And the Egyptian army drowned in the Red Sea as the waters flowed back together.

What a celebration the Israelites had that morning on the far side of the Red Sea. "I will sing to the Lord, for He is highly exalted," they praised. "The Lord is my strength and my song; He has become my salvation." What a worship service that was!

That morning the Israelites worshipped God in a special way. They wanted to thank Him for keeping them safe. But if they had not obeyed, there never would have been a victory

celebration. Imagine what would have happened if they had not followed God's command. Their obedience was an act of worship just as much as the celebration they enjoyed that morning.

Worship is honoring God. We can use our voices and our songs to honor God. And our lives can honor Him too, when we do what He asks.





S A B B A T H

READ If possible, go to a lake or river with your family. Find a quiet place and read your lesson story. Imagine how the Israelites felt when the sea parted and they were able to walk through. Do you think they were sometimes scared? What does God want us to do when we are scared?

DO Read your memory verse to your family.

SING Sing "Trust and Obey" (Sing for Joy, no. 113).

M O N D A Y

THINK For family worship, read Exodus 13:21, 22; 14:19, 20. If possible, go outside and look at some clouds. Imagine following one of them when you go on a trip. Share with your family what you think that would be like. In what ways does God lead you and your family? Are you following Him?

SING Sing "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" (Sing for Joy, no. 119). Tell Jesus that when you pray.

DO In your own words, tell your family what your memory verse means.

W E D N E S D A Y

READ For worship today, read Genesis 6:22 and Genesis 12:1, 4. On the lines below, write the names of the two people who obeyed God.

DO Light a candle. How much light does it give? What would it be like to see a pillar of fire?

S U N D A Y

DO Ask an adult to help you make some cookies. Talk about following the recipe. Read the directions and start mixing things together. If you add extra salt, what difference would it make? If you throw in a handful of sand, will the cookies be good? Why is it important to follow directions? Why is it important to follow God's directions (rules)? Read Proverbs 3:5-8 and Deuteronomy 30:16 together.

DO Teach your memory verse to your family.

T U E S D A Y

DO During family worship, draw a picture of persons you should obey. What does God say about obeying certain people? Read together Ephesians 6:1-3 and Romans 13:1. Discuss: Why should I obey these people? When I obey them, do I worship them?

DO Draw a picture of Jesus and a Bible. Read John 14:15. Write on your picture: "When I obey Jesus, I worship Him." Show it to your family.

The shortest way to Canaan would have taken us into Philistine country and war. So God took us another way.





THURSDAY

DO During family worship, draw a face on each side of a paper plate. On one side, make a smiley face to represent Jesus' happy way. On the other side, make a frowning face to represent Satan's unhappy way. Which kind of face will you choose? Ask your family members to tell about times that are Jesus' way or Satan's way. Show the face on the plate that goes with each.

READ Read John 10:10, last part, together.

DO Say your memory verse together. Ask God to help you always to obey Him.

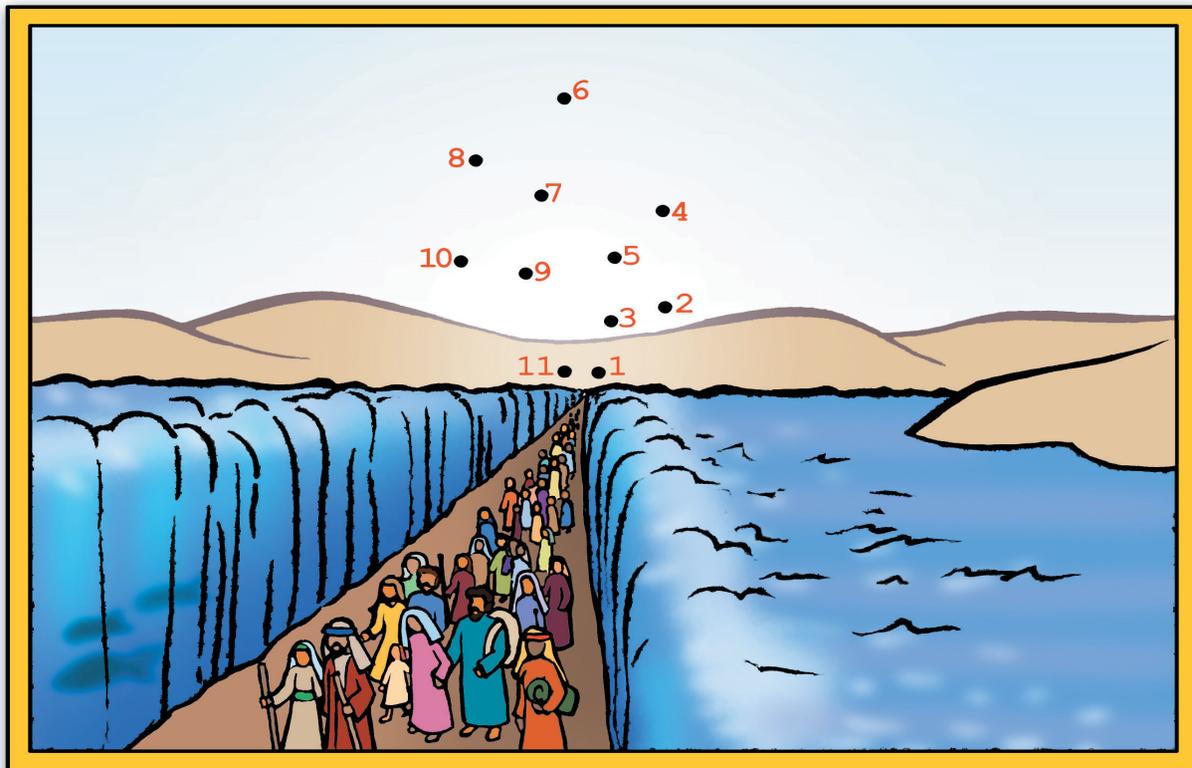
FRIDAY

DO For family worship, act out the lesson story. Then read Exodus 15:1-18 together.

DO Read Psalm 143:10 together. Then pray together as a family. Say your memory verse as part of your prayer.

PUZZLE

Directions: Connect the dots to find out how God led the Israelites through the Red Sea and protected them.



Bitter Waters Made Sweet

Exodus 15:22-27; Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 291-294

The Jones family was on a hike in unknown woods. They walked for a long time. Soon they knew that they were lost. Their water bottles were empty, and they were very hot and thirsty. "Let's stop here," said Mother, "and ask God to help us."

After praying together, they began walking again. Before long they found the right trail. And soon they were back at their campsite.

At their campfire that night they worshipped God with joyful praise. Then Mother told the story about a time when the Israelites had water problems too.

The joyful celebration on the banks of the Red Sea was over. The pillar of cloud began to move again. The Israelites knew it was time to move on. So they followed the cloud into the desert. For three days they traveled without finding water. The water they had brought with them was gone. They had to find more if they were to stay alive.

The cloud led them toward Marah, where they expected to find a spring. Moses had herded sheep in that wilderness for 40 years. He knew the place well. He knew the water at Marah was bitter and not fit to drink. But God had led them to this place.

Just as Moses expected, at the first sight of water the joyful cry went up. "Water! Water!" Men, women, and children rushed to the spring. But as soon as the first of them tasted it, their joy turned to disappointment.

It had been just three days since the Lord had worked the miracle at the Red Sea. Just three days



The Message

We worship God
with joyful praise.

Memory Verse

“I will praise you,
Lord, with all
my heart”

(Psalm 138:1).

since He had destroyed the Egyptian army. It had not been long since they had left Egypt and their lives of slavery. God Himself, in the pillar of cloud, had led them to Marah. But they forgot all that. “What are we going to drink?” they grumbled to Moses.

Moses did what the Israelites did not do. He turned to the Lord for help. The Lord showed Moses a piece of wood and told him to throw it into the water.

Moses did, and the water became sweet. And then, imagine how the people rushed forward to the water. They had gone from joy at finding water to disappointment after tasting it. Now they were back to joy after God worked the miracle. They were no longer in danger of dying of thirst. They had been saved!

And then God gave them a promise through Moses. “Listen carefully to the voice of the Lord and do what is right in His eyes. If you do what He asks you to do, He will keep you from the diseases of the Egyptians.” God would keep them from much of what troubled Egypt. Would they worship God with their lives? Would they honor Him with their obedience? If they did, God would give them happy lives.



God gives you the joy of salvation. Just as the Israelites were saved by the sweet water at Marah, you are saved by the grace of Jesus Christ. That is a reason for joy.

“With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation” (Isaiah 12:3). That promise is as true for us today as it was for the Israelites. Praise God with joyful praise!



S A B B A T H

DO With your family, take a long nature walk. When you stop for rest and water, read the lesson story together. Take a big drink of water and thank God that He provides all your needs. Find and read together Psalm 138:1, which is the memory verse. How many ways can you praise Him?

M O N D A Y

READ For family worship, read Exodus 15:22-27. How many days did the Israelites survive without water? (Exodus 15:22).

DO Look in books or on the Internet (with your parents' permission) for information about deserts. Draw a picture based on what you learn.

DO Sing or say your memory verse.

W E D N E S D A Y

SHARE In worship today, read Exodus 15:24 together.

DO Draw what you think a grumbler looks like. Pray with your family that you will praise God instead of grumbling about life. Should you praise God when bad things happen to you? Talk about it with your family. Then sing a "happy" song together.

DO Find out where your water comes from. Thank God for it.

S U N D A Y

SING During family worship, play "Sing a Scripture." Give each family member a Bible verse to "sing." Each person (or two) makes up their own tune and practices it. Some suggested verses are: Psalm 59:16 or 17; Psalm 66:1, 2; Psalm 66:5; Psalm 67:1; Psalm 121:7, 8; Psalm 138:1 (your memory verse). Use the whole Bible verse, or just part of it and repeat it several times.

READ Read Proverbs 15:13, first part. Practice smiling in front of the mirror. Does it make you happier?

T U E S D A Y

DO With your family, make some popcorn (or enjoy another salty treat). How did it smell? How did it look? How did it taste? Did it make you thirsty? How would you have felt if you had been at Marah when God made the water sweet? Thank God for good water.

READ Read Exodus 15:25 and Isaiah 12:3.

DO Say the memory verse several times, each time a little louder.

T H U R S D A Y

DO During family worship, read Psalm 77:14 together. Think of something amazing that God has done for your family. Then make plans to tell it to someone not in your family. Read Exodus 15:26 together.

DO Sing a song of praise to God for taking such good care of you. (For example, "God Is So Good" [Sing for Joy, no 13].) Then say your memory verse together.



F R I D A Y

DO

Repeat your memory verse while you help your family prepare for Sabbath.

DO

During family worship, tell the Bible lesson story in your own words. Ask your family members to help you act it out.

SING

Praise God with a "singing relay." One person sings the first line of a familiar praise song, then points to somebody else. That person must sing the second line and then point to another singer, and so on.

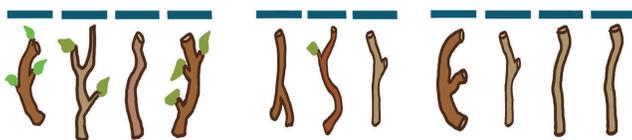
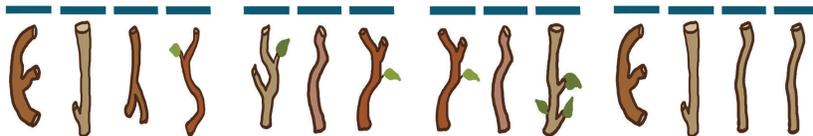
PRAY

Thank God for His loving care this week.

PUZZLE

Directions: Use the code to fill in the blanks.

A D E F H I J L M N O R S T U V W Y



Donkeys can go four days without water, but cattle need it much more often. They were near death when God made the bitter water sweet.

