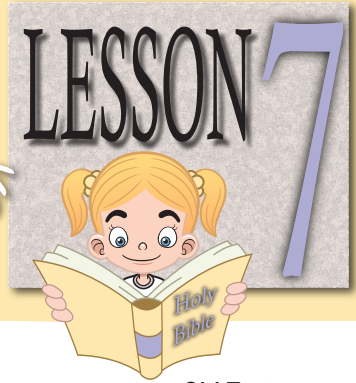


Moses Strikes the Rock at Meribah; The Bronze Serpent

Numbers 20; 21:4-9; 27:14



Old Testament 4
Part 1: God's People in the Desert

SUNDAY MORNING

Old Testament 4 [Class Attendance Sheet](#) provided in activity sheets (NOTE: The document is interactive, allowing the teacher to type in the Class, Teacher, and the children's names.)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Numbers 20; 21:4-9; 27:14; Psalm 106:32-33; 78:5-20

MEMORY WORK:

YOUNGER CHILDREN: "Give me understanding, and I will keep Your law..." (Psalm 119:34a).

OLDER CHILDREN: "Give me understanding, and I will keep Your law; indeed, I will observe it with my whole heart" (Psalm 119:34).

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF LESSON FOR WORDS):

A [song book](#) and [audio recordings](#) of many of the curriculum songs are available on the curriculum Web site.

- ["Trust and Obey"](#)
- ["Fiery Serpents in the Wilderness"](#)

LESSON VISUALS AND TEACHING AIDS (NOTE ANY DISCLAIMERS):

- See [AP's Pinterest page](#) for ideas on bulletin boards, visuals, crafts, etc. [DISCLAIMER: Pins may sometimes need to be adjusted to be scriptural.]
- [God's People and Joshua Bible fact cards](#) (provided under "O.T. 4 Bible Facts" on curriculum Web site)
- Apologetics Press' [Bible Timeline](#)
- "Summary of the Bible" from "[Kids Prep](#)" CD by Jeff Miller
- Life of Moses, Journey through the Wilderness A Beka Flash-A-Card Series (DISCLAIMERS: use the cards, *not the lesson book*; Note on cards 6.3 and 6.5 that angels are not said to have wings in Scripture)
- Betty Lukens' felt pieces

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

I am responsible for every choice I make, whether good or bad. I must accept the consequences of bad choices.



LESSON STARTS HERE

INTRODUCTION: (YOUNGER CHILDREN)

Do you know what it means to complain or gripe? Do you complain or whine when things don't go your way? God's people, the Israelites, complained a lot to Moses and about Moses. Today we're going to talk about one of those times, and what Moses did about it.

INTRODUCTION: (OLDER CHILDREN)

What does it mean to complain? Do you complain (whine or gripe) when things don't go your way? Sometimes when we complain, we lose our tempers and say things that later we wish we hadn't said. Have you ever gotten so mad that you said or did something that you wouldn't have said or done otherwise? That happened to Moses. God's people complained to Moses a lot, and he disobeyed God because he was so angry and frustrated with the people. Let's see what happened.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. As the Israelites moved from one place to another in the wilderness, it was sometimes very hard to find enough water for so many people. [Remember that there were probably **two to three million** Israelites traveling together.] Whenever things didn't go just right, the Israelites grumbled and complained, and told Moses they wanted to go back to Egypt. At a place in the wilderness called Meribah, they grumbled because they didn't have enough water. They had complained about no water at a different place named Meribah before (Exodus 17; see also Deuteronomy 32:51 and Numbers 27:14).
2. Every time the people complained, Moses and Aaron (the High Priest) went to the Tabernacle and prayed, asking God to help them handle the problem. God always told them what they should do. This time, He told Moses to hold his staff over a certain rock and speak to the rock. He promised that water would again come from the rock.
3. The first time that God had brought water from a rock, He told Moses to hit the rock, but not this time.
4. So Moses and Aaron gathered all the people together around the rock and told them that God would provide water for them, even though they complained all the time and were so ungrateful. But when Moses lifted the staff over the rock, he was so angry with the people that he hit the rock instead of speaking to it. Seemingly in his anger, Moses does not direct the people's attention to the power of God, but instead says, "Must **we** bring water for you out of this rock?" as though the power was theirs rather than God's.
5. God caused water to come from the rock, just as He said He would—more than enough water for all the people and their animals. But God was not happy with Moses because Moses struck the rock instead of speaking to it. Moses disobeyed God in what may seem like a small way, but he was showing disrespect to God in front of all the Israelites. Moses did not have the right to disobey God's instruction, no matter what the people did or how mad he was at the time.
6. God said that Moses would have to pay the consequences for his bad choice. As punishment, Moses would not be allowed to go into Canaan, the Promised Land, after all the years he had worked with the troublesome people of Israel. God said that Aaron would not be allowed to go into Canaan either because he also had showed a lack of faith.

7. God told Moses to take Aaron and his son Eleazar to the top of Mount Hor, along the border of the land of Edom. The three men went to the top of the mountain; Moses took Aaron's high priest clothes from him and gave them to Eleazar. This showed all the Israelites that Eleazar was now their High Priest in Aaron's place. Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain, but Aaron died there.
8. The Israelites were at Mount Hor for over a month and then started moving northward. But the Israelites complained again, saying they were tired of the food God provided every day, and tired of not having enough water. To punish them for complaining, God sent poisonous, venomous snakes all through the camp. Many people died from snakebites.
9. The people were terrified and asked Moses to talk to God for them, to beg Him to take away the snakes. God told Moses to make a snake out of bronze and put it on a pole; if the people looked at the snake on the pole, they would live, even after they had been bitten. There was nothing magical about this **bronze** snake; the people lived if they believed God's words and obeyed Him.



NOTE: Some translations mistakenly translate the word “bronze” as “brass,” but brass was not known at that time in history. A better rendering would be “bronze” or perhaps, “copper.”



HISTORICAL NOTE: In later years, the Israelites worshipped the metal snake on the pole as an idol, and King Hezekiah had it broken in pieces (2 Kings 18:4).

10. Moses may not have intended to lose his temper or disobey God at the rock, but he did. He had to bear the consequences of his actions and accept the punishment. The Israelites made a bad choice by complaining continually, and they also had to accept the consequences of their actions and words when the snakes came into the camp and bit them. Whether I make wrong choices on purpose or not, I will also have to take full responsibility for what I choose to do, and bear the consequences for my bad choices.

YOUNGER CHILDREN: You may want to save the portion of the lesson about the bronze snake until Wednesday night.

OLDER CHILDREN: You may want to discuss the parallels between the snake on the pole being set up in the camp to provide physical salvation to the Israelites, and Jesus who was “lifted up” to draw all men to eternal salvation (John 3:14-16).

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—BEFORE CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

- Click here for complete [Activity Book](#) and [Answer Key](#).

Ages 2-5:

- “[Moses Strikes the Rock Coloring Sheet](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- Help children make small Play-doh snakes and wrap them around circular craft sticks.
- Hide die-cut or small plastic snakes around the classroom. Let the children go on a “snake hunt.” You might want to ask them review questions about this and/or previous lessons before allowing them to look for a snake.

1st-2nd Graders:

- “Responsibility” review game: Divide the class into two teams. Ask review questions over this lesson and previous lessons (see [O.T. 4 Review Questions](#) for example questions; use questions that are age-appropriate for your class.). As the teams answer questions correctly, they are given a letter from the word “responsibility.” The team to receive all the letters to spell the word first wins.
- [“Moses Strikes the Rock Word Search”](#) (provided in activity sheet)
- [“Moses Strikes the Rock Crossword Puzzle”](#) (provided in activity sheets)
- Memory Verse review: Write each memory verse from this unit on index cards, one or two words per card. Turn the cards for one verse upside down, and mix them up. Ask the children (individually or in teams) to put the cards (the words of the verse) in the correct order.

3rd-4th Graders:

- “Responsibility” review game: Divide the class into two teams. Ask review questions over this lesson and previous lessons (see [O.T. 4 Review Questions](#) for example questions; use questions that are age-appropriate for your class.). As the teams answer questions correctly, they are given a letter from the word “responsibility.” The team to receive all the letters to spell the word first wins.
- [“Moses Strikes the Rock Word Search”](#) (provided in activity sheet)
- [“Moses Strikes the Rock Crossword Puzzle”](#) (provided in activity sheets)
- Memory Verse review: Write each memory verse from this unit on index cards, one word per card. Turn the cards for one verse upside down, and mix them up. Ask the children (individually or in teams) to put the cards (the words of the verse) in the correct order.
- Have the children read Numbers 20-21 and Psalm 78.

SONGS:

“TRUST AND OBEY” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: John Sammis

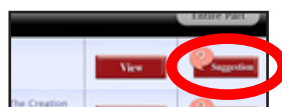
(Tune: See church songbook)

“FIERY SERPENTS IN THE WILDERNESS”

Author: Jewel Kendrick

(Words: See *Sing a Story: Volume I*, by Jewel Kendrick)

*** IF YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS PERTAINING TO THIS LESSON, PLEASE CLICK THE “SUGGESTION” BUTTON BESIDE THE BUTTON FOR THIS LESSON ON THE CURRICULUM WEB SITE.



Moses Strikes the Rock at Meribah; The Bronze Serpent

Numbers 20; 21:4-9; 27:14



Old Testament 4
Part 1: God's People in the Desert

WEDNESDAY EVENING

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- Betty Lukens' felt pieces



PERSONAL APPLICATION:

I am responsible for every choice I make, whether good or bad. I must accept the consequences of bad choices.

INTRODUCTION:

Review [O.T. 4 Bible Facts Flashcards](#) (provided under “O.T. 4 Bible Facts” on curriculum Web site)

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Review Sunday’s lesson (see [O.T. 4 Review Questions](#) for example questions)
2. Review the other lessons in the unit, stressing the importance of obeying God and the consequences for disobeying.

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—**BEFORE** CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

See Sunday morning’s lesson

YOUNGER CHILDREN: Use laminated die-cut shapes of relevant objects, such as a grape cluster, stone tablets, a snake, a rock, etc. Put the shapes in a basket or bag; let kids draw out one shape and tell the significance of that object to our Bible stories.

OLDER CHILDREN: Write key words from lessons in this unit on blank index cards. Use words such as twelve, rock, Canaan, spies, tabernacle, Korah, Dathan, rebel, Joshua, Caleb, Mt. Horeb, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, Mt. Sinai, etc. Let students take turns drawing a card and telling the importance of the word.

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