

## The Story – Chapter 6 – The Wandering

### Introduction

This week we look at parts of two rather difficult books to read – Numbers and Deuteronomy, as we explore the Israelites journey through the desert and Moses farewell discourse. If you don't have *The Story* book, you can read chapters 10-14, 20-21, 25 and 27 in Numbers and chapters 1-2, 4, 6, 8-9, 29-32 and 34 in Deuteronomy.

### Chapter 6 –

God's plan was clear: deliver His people through a series of miracles, defeat their enemies, give them a covenant and set of laws to make them a chosen nation, and provide them a land of promise. Simple, right? God speaks, the people listen. God delivers, the people believe. God provides, the people trust. Well, maybe not so much.

God always held up His end of the bargain: He always provided, always delivered, always kept His promises. It turns out the people were equally consistent: They always forgot, always questioned, always rebelled. Their lack-of-faith list was long. When daily bread fell from heaven, they craved a taste of Egypt. Even Moses' siblings, Miriam and Aaron, grew jealous and undermined their brother's leadership.

When they neared the Promised Land, Moses sent twelve leaders to spy out Canaan. Ten of the twelve said the cities were too strong, the people too big, and God was too small. Only two, Caleb and Joshua, trusted God enough to encourage Israel to go and take what God had given them. But the people complained and failed to believe.

So, Israel spent the next forty years wandering aimlessly in the wilderness. The faithless generation would die out before they set foot on the other side of the land of promise. Only Caleb and Joshua would outlive them all to eventually cross over into their inheritance. (Even Moses ignored God's commands at one point, so he too did not enter the Promised Land.) Before his death, Moses commissioned Joshua as Israel's new leader.

## Discussion Questions

As you read, remember there are discussion questions for each chapter beginning on page 473 of the book and also questions that can be found on *The Story* bookmark (which are also on our website). Also, feel free to consider some of the questions below:

1. The Israelites' journey through the wilderness is one with both great victories and terrible defeat. How do you see God relating to his people when they lose faith in His promises? Is he consistent? How do you relate to God in the midst of great times or great struggles in your own life? How have you seen God respond to you during these times?
2. Moses called the people of Israel to a life of obedience, promising that life and blessing would flow from it. With such a clear blessing extended to us, we still find it difficult to remain obedient. What role, if any, do you think "remembrance" has in remaining faithful?
3. Israel believed the report of the faithless spies out of fear. What do you think was the cause of their consistent lack of faith and trust?
4. God punishes Miriam and Aaron for slandering Moses (p. 74). Have you ever had to deal with lies spoken against you? How did you handle it? How did Moses handle it, and what does God do in response?
5. Despite his years of service, Moses' disobedience kept him from entering the Promised Land. What did Moses do wrong? Do you agree with the punishment? What does this teach you about God's expectations for leadership?
6. What questions came up for you while you were reading this chapter?