

=LITTLE-KNOWN BIBLE CHARACTERS=

Lesson 3

Caleb

Objects to have:

Some articles of disguise, such as mustache, hat, coat with a big collar, sunglasses, etc.

A map

A chalkboard and chalk, or poster board and marking pen

A bunch of grapes

Your Bible.

Introducing the lesson:

(While saying the following, pick up, one-by-one, the articles that would help disguise you. Put them on.) I am pretending that I am a spy. I am going to travel to another country just so that I can learn some things about that country and then come back and report to my country what is going on in that other country. I am putting on a disguise. Now, I don't look like myself. I look like somebody else. I'm going to travel to that other country and look around. I'll see how big their army is. I'll learn how many guns and planes they have. I'll learn how big their navy is. I'll see how many ships they have and learn what are on those ships and how fast the ships can travel. I am a spy!

(Take off the disguise.) Our Bible story for today tells about some spies! This story happened many years before our story of last Sunday happened. Last Sunday's Bible story was about Captain Naaman of Syria. Listen to this Bible story.

Telling the story:

Moses was talking. Moses was the man whom God had chosen to be the leader. Moses was the leader of millions of people. These people were called the Israelites. Moses was the leader of the Israelites.

The Israelites had traveled from Egypt where they had been so badly treated! God saw how unhappy the Israelites were in Egypt, and God chose Moses to lead the Israelites out of the country of Egypt. God said, "I promise you that I will give you a new country. You will travel to that new country, and there you will live with Me to take care of you." So, the Israelites were traveling to the Promised Land, the country that God promised to give to them.

One day their journey was just about finished! The Israelites had been led by Moses right up to the edge of the Promised Land; Moses had been led by God. What an exciting day!

Moses was talking. He was saying to the people, "God said that there should be some men who should go into the Promised Land just to look around and then come back to tell us what they saw." There should be twelve of these men to go into the Promised Land. So Moses chose only twelve men out of all the millions of Israelites that there were. What an honor to be chosen to be a spy!

Moses gave the spies some instructions. (Pick up your map.) The spies did not have a good map like this one, that shows roads and all the towns. Moses could tell the spies, however, where the mountains in the Promised Land were, where the rivers were, and where some of the people lived and what the names of some of the groups of people were. God said to Moses, "Tell the spies to be of good courage. Tell the spies not to be afraid, that I will be with them." So Moses told the spies to remember that God would watch over them and that they should be brave and not be afraid. The twelve spies said that they were ready to go.

So the twelve spies left. (Draw on the chalkboard twelve stick figures.) The Israelites waved goodbye to them. The children of these spies and the wives of these spies watched them go. Then they all went back to their tent-houses.

One day passed; two days passed; three days passed; a whole week went by. The spies were not back home. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven more days went by. At the end of this second week, the spies still had not returned from going to spy out the Promised Land that God was giving to the Israelites. Another seven days went by; the spies had been gone twenty-one days. Every day, all day long, Moses, I am sure, was thinking about those twelve good men who had gone to spy out the land of Canaan. Those twelve spies were leaders of the people; they could do the job that God said should be done. Moses was probably thinking, "Where are the men by now? What kind of fruits are they seeing grow in the land? What kind of people are they seeing?" Moses probably prayed every day and many times a day for the twelve spies. He no doubt prayed that they would be safe. The other people were wondering about them, also. Everyone had work to do all day; but while they worked, they wondered. Another seven days went by; the spies had been gone twenty-eight days. Another week went by; the spies had been gone thirty-five days. Surely they would be coming back to the camp of the Israelites soon! They were gone thirty-six, thirty-seven, thirty-eight, thirty-nine, forty days!

Time to start another new day. It was time to fix breakfast, to eat breakfast and to begin the work of the day. What was that? It was the sound of the trumpet! Everybody was being called to a meeting. The people ran out of their tents. They ran to the meeting place near the tabernacle. Moses was there in the meeting place and so were twelve other men. The spies had returned! They had been gone forty days, and now they had come back to the camp of the Israelites.

"Look at what a couple of the spies are carrying," some of the people probably said. "What is it? It looks like a bunch of grapes." (Pick up your grapes.) "It can't be grapes, though; it is much, much too big a bunch to be a bunch of grapes. See, the bunch of grapes is being carried on a big stick that is being carried on the shoulders of two of the spies. We never saw anything like that before. Look, there are other things, too: figs and pomegranates and all kinds of good things to eat. We haven't had such good things to eat for a long, long time." How excited everybody was! They couldn't wait to hear about the wonderful country that God was giving them.

Moses raised his hand. The grown-up people and the children got quiet. The spies started to give their reports of what they had seen in the Promised Land. "It is truly a land that flows with milk and honey. There are beautiful pasture lands for animals so that we would have plenty of milk for our children and for cooking. There are beautiful flowers and clover and trees so that lots and lots of honey is made by the bees, and the honey is good! See these grapes! There are delicious grapes and figs and pomegranates growing everywhere. What a beautiful, wonderful country." The report sounded so good to the Israelites who had waited so anxiously for the spies to come back!

What was it that the spies then were saying? "There are giants in the land. You should see the size of some of those people who live there! They are so tall that next to them we are like grasshoppers. And the cities where they live! The cities where these people live have big, tall walls around them. We don't see how we can take the country. We should have all stayed in Egypt." What a terrible thing for the spies to say! Nothing and nobody could be as strong as God!

Not all the spies were giving that bad report. (Go to the chalkboard and draw a diagonal line through ten of the stick figures.) Ten of the spies were giving that bad report. This spy (point to one of the remaining stick figures) was named Caleb. Caleb said, "Don't listen to that bad report. Don't complain against God; trust Him. The Lord is with us. Don't be afraid of the people in the land of Canaan." Caleb pleaded with the people to listen to him. Another man, Joshua, pleaded with the people, also. Caleb and Joshua stood there and begged the people to listen to them. These two spies called to the people, "Stop your complaining! Listen to us! We can take the land. God is with us."

But the people would not listen! They listened to the bad report, which the Bible calls an evil report, of the ten spies. They refused to trust God! They whined and cried and said, "Let's choose another captain. Moses won't lead us back to Egypt; let's choose a captain who will." The people were so upset with Joshua and Caleb that they began to pick up big stones to throw at Joshua and Caleb.

Just then a special cloud appeared in front of the tabernacle. Whenever that special cloud showed up, that meant that the people should know that God was there. God protected Caleb and Joshua so that the people could not kill them with the stones.

God talked to Moses. God said, "Moses, I am going to kill all these people. They are rebellious and will not do what I want them to do."

Moses said, "Please, dear Lord, don't do that. You have loved them enough to bring them through a lot of things all the way from Egypt to this place."

God said, "All right, Moses, I'll tell you what I will do. I will make the Israelites wander around for years and years and years. While they are wandering, all the adults will die. The children who are here now will be able to go into the Promised Land, and Joshua and Caleb will be allowed to go in, too." Then God made the ten spies who would not trust God to get sick and die right away.

How sad it was for all those adults! Caleb and Joshua felt bad for the people, too, but they were happy that someday they would get to go into the Promised Land. For forty years, a year for every day that the spies were in the land spying it out, all the Israelites had to wander around and around until all the adults died. All the children then were adults, and they got to go into the land that God had promised them.

Let's remember the man named Caleb; he believed God! Remember Joshua, too. God said about Caleb, "He hath followed me fully." I hope that God can say that about us all of the time. Everybody ought to trust Jesus, and to trust Him all the time!

LEARN OUR BIBLE VERSE: Numbers 14:24, "But my servant Caleb...hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land...."