

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?

SHARE 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.

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

PUZZLE

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

