

Adult Bible Teacher

For Teachers of Adults Ages 18 and Up

In the beginning **GOD**
created the **heaven** and the **earth**.

Genesis 1:1

Summer Quarter

June | July | August

2026

Large-Print Edition

Adult Bible Teacher

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SUMMER QUARTER

June, July, August 2026

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Daily Bible Readings for Home Study and Worship

(Readings are for the week previous to the lesson topics.)

1. June 7. Moses Prays for Mercy

M — Moses Appeals to God's Promise. Ex. 32:7-14.
T — God's Glory in His Deliverance. Isa. 63:7-14.
W — God Vindicates His Name. Ezek. 36:16-23.
T — A Call to Repentance. Joel 2:12-17.
F — Hard Hearts. Ps. 95:6-11.
S — Unbelief—the Source of Hard Hearts. Heb. 3:7-19.
S — Mercy and Judgment. Num. 14:11-24.

2. June 14. God Renews His Covenant

M — God's Covenant with Israel. Deut. 5:1-10.
T — Why God Chose Israel. Deut. 7:1-11.
W — Israel's Failure to Take the Promised Land.
Judg. 1:27—2:5.
T — God's Goodness to an Unfaithful People. Neh. 9:1-25.
F — God's Slow but Overpowering Anger. Nah. 1:2-8.
S — How God Responds to Repentance.
Jonah 3:6—4:2.
S — God Reveals His Character to Moses. Ex. 34:1-14.

3. June 21. God's Mercy in History

M — God Calls Abraham. Gen. 11:27—12:9.
T — God's Power over Pharaoh. Ex. 7:1-13.
W — Israel's Victory over the Amorites. Num. 21:21-35.
T — The Lord Reverses Balaam's Curse.
Num. 22:36—23:12.
F — Why God Gave Israel Victory. Deut. 9:1-5.
S — A Warning to the Next Generation. Josh. 23:1-16.
S — Undeserved Deliverance and Gifts. Josh. 24:2-13.

4. June 28. God Grants Israel a King

M — Expectations for Israelite Kings. Deut. 17:14-20.
T — King Solomon Acquires Much Wealth.
1 Kgs. 4:20-28.
W — King Solomon Takes Many Wives.
1 Kgs. 10:26—11:8.
T — King Ahab Takes a Vineyard. 1 Kgs. 21:1-16.
F — The Result of Not Heeding Wisdom. Prov. 1:20-33.
S — Hated as Jesus Was Hated. John 15:18-25.
S — A King Like the Nations' Kings. 1 Sam. 8:1-18.

5. July 5. God Gathers All Nations

M — The Regathering of Israel Foretold. Deut. 30:1-10.
T — A New Heart Promised. Ezek. 36:22-38.
W — The Spirit Given to All Who Repent. Acts 2:36-41.
T — The Gentiles Receive the Holy Spirit. Acts 11:1-18.
F — Judah and Israel Will Be Reunited. Ezek. 37:15-28.
S — Israel and Gentiles Together in Heaven. Rev. 7:4-12.
S — A Call to Return to the Lord. Jer. 3:11-20.

6. July 12. God Sends a Righteous Branch

M — God's Guiding Presence at the Exodus. Ex. 13:17-22.
T — The Lord's Branch Brings His Presence. Isa. 4:2-6.
W — The Lord's Branch Removes Sin. Zech. 3:1-10.
T — The Branch in the Line of David. Jer. 33:10-18.
F — A New Exodus Led by the Branch. Isa. 11:1-16.
S — The Branch Is Christ. Rom. 15:8-13.
S — Wicked Shepherds and a Good King. Jer. 23:1-8.

7. July 19. God's Faithful Justice

M — The Persecution of God's Prophets. Jer. 7:21-28.
T — Jesus Cleanses the Temple. Mark 11:15-19.

W — Jesus Prophecies against the Temple.
Matt. 23:37—24:2.

T — Jewish Leaders Seek Jesus' Death. Matt. 26:57-68.
F — Blessing for the Persecuted. Matt. 5:2-12.
S — Hope for Persecutors. 2 Tim. 2:22-26.
S — The Jews Seek Jeremiah's Death. Jer. 26:1-13.

8. July 26. God's Hope for Exiles

M — Confession of Israel's Sin. Neh. 9:26-38.
T — The Exile Intensifies. 2 Kgs. 24:8-20.
W — A False Prophecy of Peace. Jer. 28:1-17.
T — Daniel Obeys Jeremiah's Call to Repent. Dan. 9:1-19.
F — How to Live as Christian Exiles. 1 Pet. 2:11-17.
S — Pray for Secular Leaders. 1 Tim. 2:1-4.
S — Seek the City's Welfare. Jer. 29:1-14.

9. August 2. God's Promised Land

M — The Promised Land of Canaan. Ex. 6:2-8.
T — The Horrors of the Exile. 2 Kgs. 25:1-21.
W — Returning from Exile. Ezra 1:1-8.
T — Rebuilding Jerusalem. Neh. 2:9-20; 6:15-16.
F — Rejoicing in God's Restoration. Ps. 126:1-6.
S — Awaiting the Final Restoration. Acts 1:4-11.
S — Restoring Israel's Fortunes. Jer. 30:1-11, 18-22.

10. August 9. God Reconciles His People

M — God Will Scatter Israel. Lev. 26:27-45.
T — A History of Israel's Idolatry. Ps. 106:24-48.
W — Watchmen Announce the Lord's Coming.
Isa. 62:1-12.
T — Invitation to Gather at God's Feast. Matt. 22:1-10.
F — God Will Dwell with His People. Rev. 21:1-4.
S — The Lord Guides Us like Sheep. Ps. 23:1-6.
S — The Lord's Everlasting Love. Jer. 31:1-14.

11. August 16. The Good Shepherd

M — God's People Slaughtered like Sheep. Ps. 44:4-26.
T — God's Preservation of His Persecuted Sheep.
Rom. 8:35-39.
W — Like Sheep without a Shepherd. Matt. 9:18-38.
T — Jesus' Gentle Compassion. Matt. 12:9-21.
F — Jesus Seeks Out His Lost Sheep. Luke 15:1-32.
S — Jesus Sacrifices for His Sheep. John 10:11-16.
S — God's Vow to Shepherd His People. Ezek. 34:1-16.

12. August 23. God's Love for Israel

M — God's Anger against Israel. Deut. 29:22-29.
T — God's Wrath Is like a Lion's Roar. Amos 3:1-11.
W — Israel's Inability to Return to God. Hos. 5:3-15.
T — God's Wrath Leads to Repentance. Ps. 78:32-38.
F — God Lifts His People's Burden. Isa. 10:20-27.
S — The Easy Burden of Jesus. Matt. 11:28-30.
S — God's Compassion for His Children. Hos. 11:1-11.

13. August 30. God's Faithfulness to Israel

M — God's Promise to Defeat the Serpent. Gen. 3:8-15.
T — God's Promise to Abraham. Gen. 15:1-21.
W — God's Promise to Jacob. Gen. 35:1-15.
T — God's Faithfulness to His Promise. Ex. 3:1-20.
F — God's Faithfulness Despite Sin. Jer. 50:17-20.
S — God's Mercy on Sinners. Ps. 32:1-11.
S — God Tramples Sin Underfoot. Mic. 7:14-20.

SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

NUM. 14:11 And the LORD said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them?

12 I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they.

13 And Moses said unto the LORD, Then the Egyptians shall hear *it*, (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them;)

14 And they will tell *it* to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that thou LORD *art* among this people, that thou LORD art seen face to face, and *that* thy cloud standeth over them, and *that* thou goest before them, by day time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night.

15 Now *if* thou shalt kill *all* this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying,

16 Because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness.

17 And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying,

18 The LORD *is* longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation*.

19 Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.

20 And the LORD said, I have pardoned according to thy word:

21 But *as truly as* I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD.

22 Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice;

23 Surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it:

24 But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.

NOTES

Moses Prays for Mercy

Lesson Text: Numbers 14:11-24

Related Scriptures: Exodus 32:7-14; Joshua 2:8-11;
Ezekiel 36:16-23; Joel 2:12-17; Hebrews 3:7-19

TIME: about 1443 B.C.

PLACE: Kadesh

GOLDEN TEXT—“Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now” (Numbers 14:19).

Preparing to Teach the Lesson

TODAY’S AIM

Facts: to learn about the Israelites’ rebellion, Moses’ intercession, and God’s response.

Principle: to understand that God’s patience and mercy demonstrate the holiness of His character.

Application: to know that God has been patient with us and to repent and proclaim the gospel as a result.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

The Israelites had sent spies out into the land of Canaan to report on its spoil. Instead of feeling secure in the victory God had promised, they rebelled out of fear. Not only did they reject God’s word, but they even wanted to appoint a leader to take them back to Egypt—back to slavery. They were unwilling to face an enemy in battle but were willing to crawl back to their previous oppressors! God could have ended their story there and been perfectly just in His response. Instead, we find something shocking: His patience.

DEVELOPING THE LESSON

1. The Lord judges (Num. 14:11-12). As the whole assembly of

Israel grumbled about their circumstances, the Lord appeared at the tabernacle in His glory. He began with His complaint against His people: they were rebellious and ignored Him despite the signs He had done for them. As a result, He would wipe them out and make of Moses a new nation.

Moses would have become the “new” Abraham, the founder of a great nation. Moses, upon hearing of the coming judgment, called upon the mercy of the Lord—which was exactly what God intended.

2. The Lord listens (Num. 14:13-19). Having pronounced His judgment, the Lord waited for Moses to intercede. He chose Moses and knew that Moses would intercede. The words and stories in the book of Numbers bear witness to the character of God (cf. 1 Cor. 10:6, 11).

Here, we see the witness of the Israelites’ sin as a warning to us, and we also see the mercy of God as a comfort to us. Moses first appealed to the glory of God. Because God had brought His people into the wilderness, if He killed them now, the nations might think it was because God’s power was lacking. The nations knew the Israelites

were different because God's presence visibly went with them; nothing should endanger the glory that came with that. Moses then repeated God's own words back to Him: God is forgiving and slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

3. The Lord relents (Num. 14:20-24).

In His patience, the Lord listened to Moses and relented from His judgment. Even so, He did not clear the guilty—the entire generation of rebellious Israelites would pass away, with the exception of Caleb and Joshua, who were innocent. This is a good reminder for us that the

Lord's mercy is meant to lead us to repentance (Rom. 2:4). That is why the author of Hebrews used the Israelites' wilderness wanderings as a call for the church today. God gives us *today* to repent, but He does not promise any other day. So, let us not delay any longer, but let us enter the rest God has provided for us in His Son (Heb. 3:7—4:1).

ANTICIPATING THE NEXT LESSON

In the next lesson, we will examine God's renewal of His covenant with the Israelites and the proclamation of His Name and glory.

—Katherine Robinson

Studying the Text

GOD'S OFFER—Num. 14:11-12

After miraculously delivering the people from slavery in Egypt through the ten plagues and miraculously providing for them with manna in the wilderness, it should have been obvious that God could miraculously drive out their enemies before them. Sadly, it was not.

{The Lord asked Moses how long the people would despise Him and not believe in Him. While pleas of "how long" were often directed to the Lord by His weary people throughout the Bible (cf. Ps. 13:1; Hab. 1:2), here the Lord strikingly asked that of Moses.}^{Q1} The implication is clear that the Lord had given His people far more than enough evidence to trust Him to deliver them.

{Then the Lord made a very surprising offer. He told Moses that He would destroy the people with a plague and make Moses a nation mightier than them.}^{Q2}

Was God genuinely offering to destroy His people, or was this merely a test of Moses? {We must start by recognizing that God never lies and always keeps His promises (Num. 23:19;

Titus 1:2). The threat would not have broken God's promise to Abraham, for Moses was a descendant of Abraham. If God had destroyed Israel and created a new nation from Moses, Abraham's descendants technically would still have become a mighty nation. And so, God would not have violated His promise to Abraham. Therefore, though some take this offer to Moses as merely a test, it seems reasonable to consider that it may have been a truly genuine offer.}^{Q3}

MOSES' PLEA—Num. 14:13-19

{Moses responded with a twofold appeal to the Lord. First, Moses reasoned that the Lord's name would be dishonored if He struck down His people. Second, Moses appealed to promises that the Lord had made previously and asked Him to spare His people.}^{Q4}

God's Name would be dishonored (Num. 14:13-16). Moses first appealed to God's character and to His glory. He argued that the nations would hear of how the Israelites had died in the wilderness and question God's ability to bring His people into the land. If the

Lord slew His people after repeatedly commanding Pharaoh to let His people go, what would the Egyptians think? What would the nations of the Promised Land think?

{It was a common belief in the ancient Near East that when one nation defeated another, their gods (or God) displayed mastery over the other nations' gods. During the exodus, the Lord Himself said that He was judging the gods of Egypt (Ex. 12:12). His ability to deliver His people out of Egypt and His systematic demonstration of power via the ten plagues demonstrated that He was more powerful than the Egyptian gods.} ^{Q5} Historically, in fact, scholars have thought that each of the ten plagues demonstrated power over the Egyptian deities.

Moses speculated that the nations would assume the Lord was not strong enough to lead His people into the Promised Land and, therefore, gave up on them and killed them in the wilderness. Moses therefore first presented an argument against killing the people of Israel, saying that the Lord would be disrespected.

God promised to go with them (Num. 14:17-19). Next, Moses referred to what God had told him previously on the mountaintop after the golden calf incident (Ex. 33). {This was not the first time Moses appealed to God on behalf of Israel. In both Exodus 32:9-10 and 33:3, the Lord made declarations against Israel, but after Moses pleaded with the Lord, He relented both times.} ^{Q6}

{Though Moses' appeal to God's promise to bring them into the land was implicit, his appeal to God's promise regarding His character was not. He appealed to the Lord to be who He had revealed Himself to be. How could the Lord strike down all His people and start over after He had declared Himself to be slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and forgiving? Moses

was not impertinent in the way that he questioned the Lord. He did not question God's character. Rather, he humbly asked God to keep His promises and be who He said He was.} ^{Q7} We too can pray boldly without praying in a disrespectful way.

THE LORD'S RESPONSE— Num. 14:20-24

{As Moses requested, the Lord pardoned the people and did not destroy them with a plague. But there was a substantial catch. None of the people who had seen the glory of the Lord and all the powerful plagues poured out on Egypt and yet repeatedly rebelled would see the Promised Land. They would not die of a plague, but they would not experience the full blessing that awaited God's people. Those twenty years old and older would die in the wilderness (vs. 29).} ^{Q8}

The people had seen God's power displayed but remained obstinate in unbelief. They had said it would have been better to die in Egypt or in the wilderness, and so die in the wilderness they would (vss. 2, 28-30). The ten spies who gave an unfavorable report of the land did die of the plague seemingly quickly (vss. 36-38).

{God's pardon does not always mean freedom from consequences. As Christians, we are forgiven of our sins, and we are free from God's final judgment. Sometimes when we sin, however, there are natural consequences. We may experience damaged relationships if we lie or gossip. Our bodies may suffer if we indulge in gluttony, abuse alcohol, or sexual sins. We may lose our jobs or be arrested if we break the law. God may forgive our sins without delivering us from the consequences of our actions.

The case of the Israelites seems a bit more complicated, for the Israelites dying in the wilderness may not seem to be a natural consequence. Couldn't the Lord have led them into the Prom-

ised Land? Why confine them to die in the wilderness? We feel tension between the declaration of pardon and the punishment here.

If we look at the preceding verses, we may find some explanation. In verse 2, the people said it would have been better to die in Egypt or in the wilderness, and the Lord obliged them. They did not enter because of their unbelief (Heb. 3:19).⁹⁹

For some people, this story raises a theological question: does God change His mind? The Bible insists that the Lord does not change (Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8). Yet here, He seemed to be influenced by Moses' prayer. How are we to understand this? First Samuel 15 says both that the Lord has regret and that He is not like a man, inferring that He actually does not have regrets (vss. 11, 29). When a single chapter says things that initially appear to be contradictions, it often conveys something nuanced.

The Lord never changes His mind due to new information or a change in His character. In 1 Samuel 8, the Lord foretold the fact that Saul would be a bad king, which must inform our understanding of His regret in chapter 15. He did not have regret because He made a mistake or due to new information. Rather, God is grieved when we act wickedly (Gen. 6:5-6).

A crucial passage for correctly understanding how God relents is Jeremiah 18:5-11. God promised that if at any time He declares a coming judgment and a nation repents, He will relent. Likewise, if a nation turns away from Him to evil, He will no longer bless that nation. If we abandon Him and turn to evil, or if we repent and turn to Him, His actions toward us will change. But that is not because *His* character has changed.

{Numbers 14:21 contains a comment that could be easily skipped over. The Lord affirmed that these things

would take place as surely as He lives and as surely as all the earth will be filled with His glory. Given that this statement is being used to affirm the certainty of something else, it is apparent that the Lord considers this an absolute certainty. The whole earth will be filled with His glory!}¹⁰⁰

Because he had an attitude of obedience to God, Caleb would be allowed to enter the land. Joshua, the other spy who agreed with Caleb, would also be allowed to enter the land, as the Lord promised a few verses later (Num. 14:30). We should follow the Lord, no matter the consequences. It is better to stand against an entire nation than to stand against the Lord.

—Tom Greene

QUESTIONS

1. What did the Lord ask Moses, and how was this unusual?
2. What did the Lord offer Moses?
3. If God fulfilled His offer to Moses, would He have broken His promise to Abraham?
4. What two arguments did Moses make to the Lord?
5. What did many ancient Near East people think happened when one nation defeated another?
6. When had Moses previously interceded for Israel?
7. How did Moses appeal to God's previous revelation?
8. How did the Lord respond to Moses' request?
9. How could the Lord both pardon *and* punish His people?
10. What certain thing did the Lord use to affirm that what He said would come true?

—Tom Greene

PRACTICAL POINTS

1. Many people who do not believe have more than enough information needed to believe (Num. 14:11; cf. Rom. 1:18-19).
2. We should not give up on prayer when things seem hopeless (Num. 14:12; cf. Luke 18:1-8).
3. We can appeal to God's glory as we pray (Num. 14:13-16).
4. We should appeal to the promises of God as we pray (vss. 17-20).
5. The whole earth will be filled with the Lord's glory (vs. 21)!
6. There are often consequences for unbelief and disobedience (vss. 22-23).
7. The Lord rewards obedience (Num. 14:24; cf. Heb. 11:6).

—Tom Greene

RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

1. Can you think of a time in your life when it was hard to trust the Lord?
2. What should we do when God's Word is clear, but it is hard to trust Him?
3. Did Moses convince God to change His mind in this lesson's passage? Why does that matter?
4. If the Lord pardoned the people of Israel, why did He still say they would die in the wilderness?
5. Have you ever seen God answer seemingly hopeless prayers?
6. Are there any situations or people you have given up on praying for because it seemed hopeless?
7. What current obstacles in your life make it hard to trust God? What can you do to strengthen your faith in these areas and follow Him?
8. How can we stir one another up to follow the Lord?

—Tom Greene

ILLUSTRATED HIGH POINTS

How long will it be ere they believe me (Num. 14:11)

I asked my friend, "So you believe Jesus was a historical person?" "Yes." "And you believe He died on the cross?" "Yes." "And you think the tomb was empty afterward?" "Yes." "And you admit the disciples were willing to die rather than renounce their faith in the resurrection?" "Yes." "But you don't think Jesus rose from the dead?" "No."

In that moment, I understood that some people have enough information but do not believe because they do not want to.

Pardon, I beseech thee, . . . as thou hast forgiven this people (vs. 19)

When we think that we have sinned so badly that God could never forgive us, remember how Israel sinned so badly and still was forgiven. King Manasseh did tremendous evil, even sacrificing some of his own children. Yet when he repented, God forgave him (2 Chr. 33:1-20)! If you think God is not gracious, take time to remember His works!

But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit (vs. 24)

God gives His people not a spirit of fear but of power, love, and self-control (2 Tim. 1:7). Paul displayed this confidence when he declared the gospel while under arrest (cf. Acts 26:28-29). Peter and John also preached in a way that made people know that they had been with Jesus (4:13).

As believers, we should stand out, regardless of the consequences or discomfort that may bring. Whether we are speaking out against shady practices at work or lovingly correcting a Christian friend's crude humor, we are to be lights in the world (Matt. 5:14-16).

—Tom Greene