8

Reminded by a Rock

Key References: Joshua 23; Joshua 24; *Patriarchs and Prophets,* chap. 49, pp. 521-524; *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 3, pp. 102-104; Our Beliefs, nos. 12, 3, 14















power**text**

"It is the Lord your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him" (Deuteronomy 13:4).

power**point**

We respond to God's grace by obeying Him out of love.

Have you ever noticed the faraway look in the eyes of your grandparents when they start telling stories of long ago? This must have been the look that the old man Joshua had on his face as he began reminding the people of God's care through the years he had been alive. He was nearly 110 years old. That's a lot of years to remember God's leading!

Long ago, when Joshua had been a young man, he and his friend Caleb had been two of the 12 spies sent to check out Canaan—the land God had promised to His people.

The people had wanted to know, first of all, if the land was as rich and abundant as they had heard, if it really was "flowing with milk and honey" (Exodus 3:8). And before they started dreaming, they wanted to know if conquering it was really possible.

Of the 12 men sent on the mission, only Caleb and Joshua believed that God would give them all the wonderful things they saw—houses, well-established farms, vineyards, goat herds. It was another 40 years before God was able to give Canaan to the Israelites. This was because so few at that time believed God's promise.

Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 61.

LEARN Begin learning the power text.

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Sunday

READ Read Joshua 23 and this week's story, "Reminded by a Rock."

DRAW Draw a picture of a stone altar that Joshua might have built. In bold letters, write the power text on the altar, using "I" instead of "you."

LEARN Begin to learn the power text.

PRAY Ask God to help you choose Him every day.

Monday

READ Read Joshua 24:1-28.

THINK Think about what employers look for in a good employee. List three principles from this that you think would apply to being a true worshipper of God.

TALK Talk to an adult about choices they've made in their lives. With what one choice are they the most satisfied?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to help you make good choices in being obedient to Him.

Tuesday

READ Read Joshua 24:29-33.

THINK Why do you think that the Israelites obeyed and honored God throughout Joshua's lifetime?

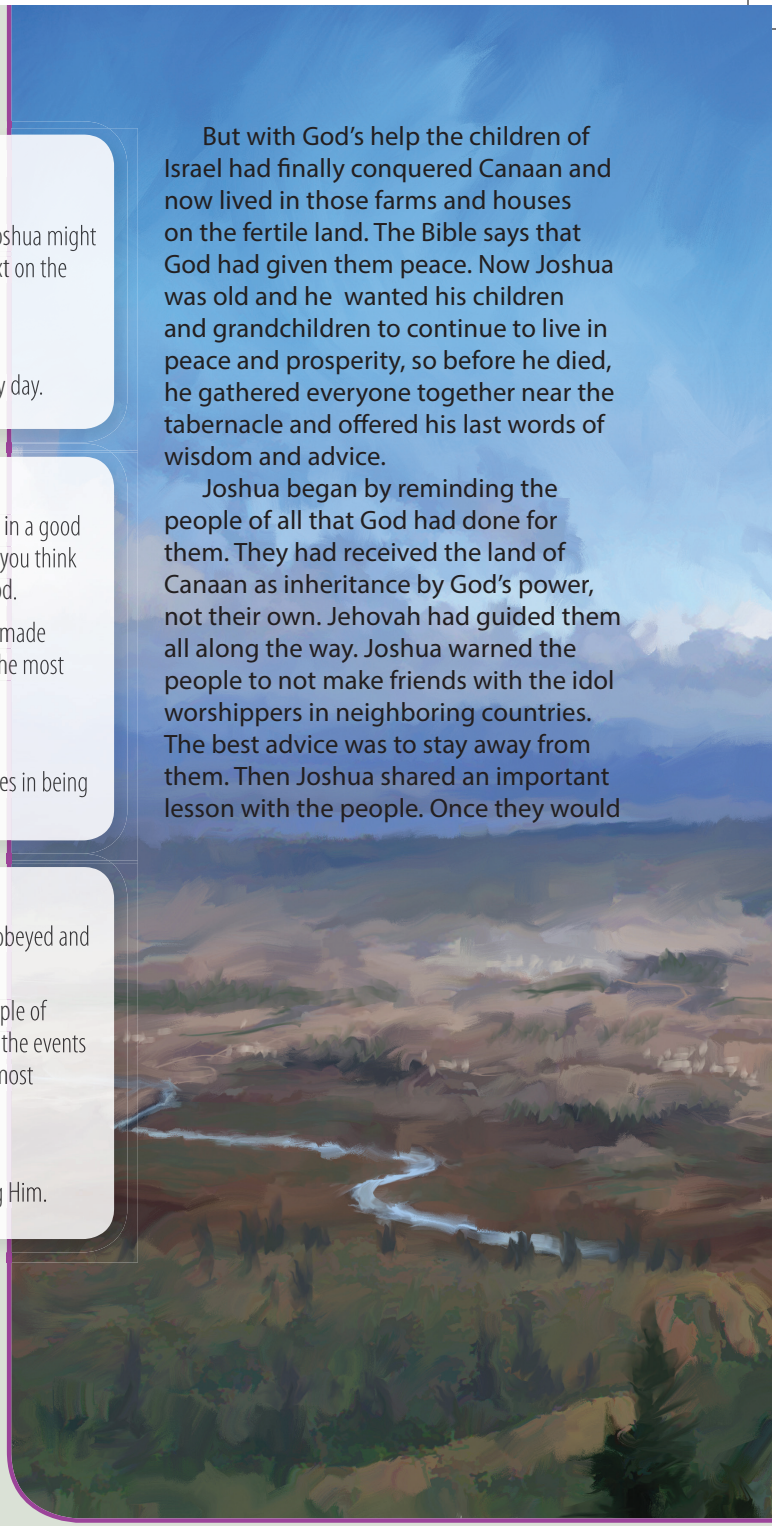
TALK Joshua recounts the history of the people of Israel, going all the way back to Abraham. Of the events described, choose three that you think were most important. Explain why.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God for the privilege of obeying Him.

But with God's help the children of Israel had finally conquered Canaan and now lived in those farms and houses on the fertile land. The Bible says that God had given them peace. Now Joshua was old and he wanted his children and grandchildren to continue to live in peace and prosperity, so before he died, he gathered everyone together near the tabernacle and offered his last words of wisdom and advice.

Joshua began by reminding the people of all that God had done for them. They had received the land of Canaan as inheritance by God's power, not their own. Jehovah had guided them all along the way. Joshua warned the people to not make friends with the idol worshippers in neighboring countries. The best advice was to stay away from them. Then Joshua shared an important lesson with the people. Once they would



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become friends with evil, it would no longer seem so evil. Trying to be friends with both God's followers and Satan's followers is impossible.

Unfortunately, Satan's followers become like a trap. Joshua warned the people that those traps would lure them on for more. The evil practices would become like blinders over their eyes so they wouldn't be able to see what was wrong. Eventually the land of Canaan would return to its original owners if the Israelites forgot God.

Joshua wasn't threatening the people. He was calling their attention to the natural sequence of cause and effect. If an Israelite woman married a Canaanite man who worshipped idols, their oldest son would inherit the property when his parents died.

If that child married another Canaanite, it was not likely that they would honor and worship God. That family would gradually adopt the sinful practices of the idol worshippers. As a result they would lose their identity among God's people, choosing instead to associate with the Canaanites.

But suppose God's followers married only God's followers. Suppose all the Israelites continued to worship God and followed His guidelines for happiness. Then the land would continue to belong to God's people. The Israelites would then continue to enjoy peace, happiness, and freedom.



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Wednesday

READ Read James 1:22-25.

THINK Explain in your own words how a mirror is used in the above verses to explain the difference between obedience and disobedience.

SING Sing "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus."

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to help you remove the "idols" that separate you from wholeheartedly following Him.

Thursday

READ Scripture mentions stones occasionally to symbolize various things. Read the following references and identify what the stone represents in each: Genesis 28:18-22; Revelation 21:19, 20; Isaiah 28:16; Psalm 118:22, 23.

SAY Repeat the power text from memory.

WALK If you want to follow God, go for a walk and find a stone as a reminder of your covenant with Him.

PRAY Thank God for His grace and tell Him that you are willing to follow Him wherever He leads.

Friday

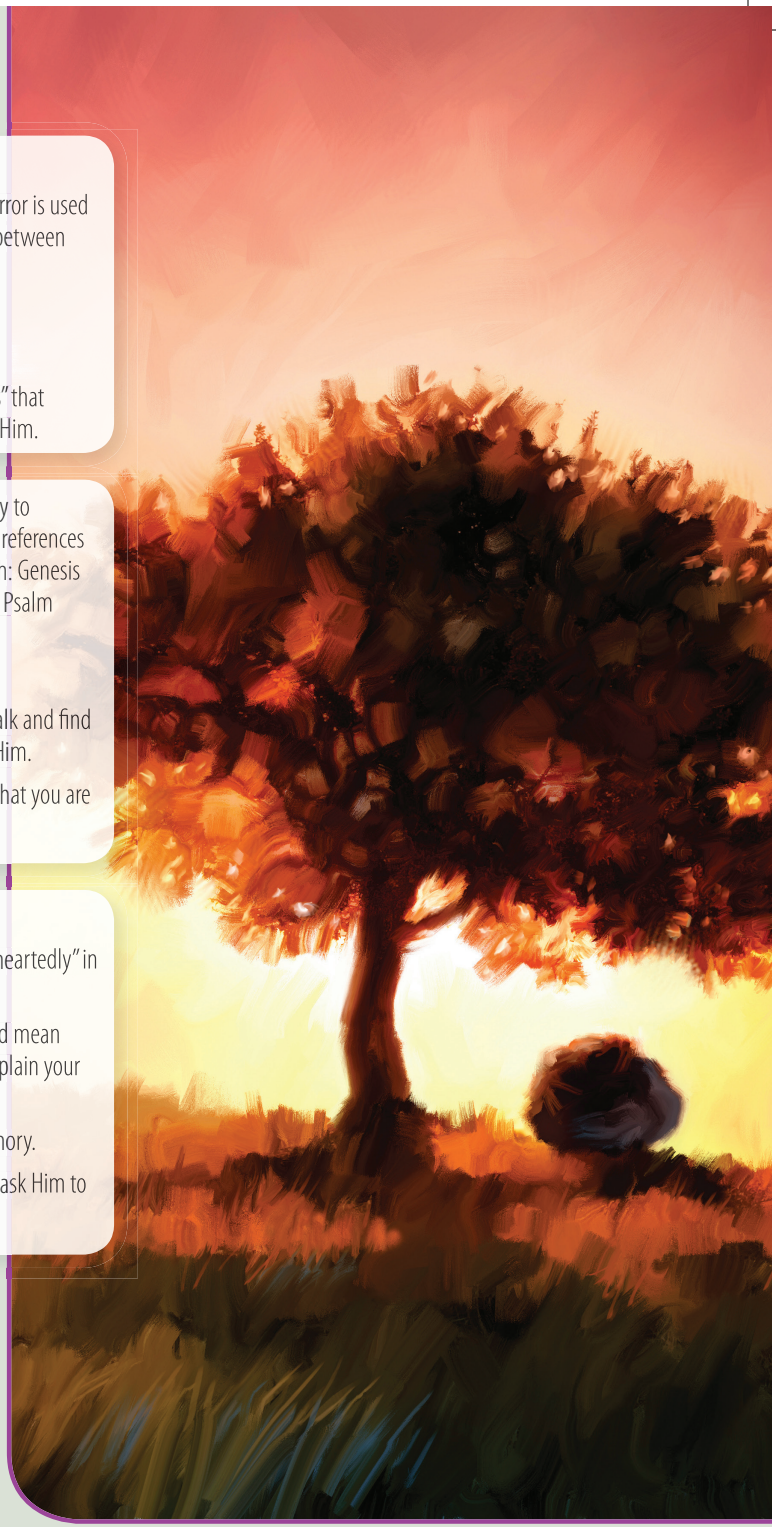
READ Read Romans 6:17.

WRITE Write your own definition of "wholeheartedly" in relation to obedience.

THINK Does wholehearted obedience to God mean that you can never do anything you want? Explain your answer.

REPEAT Say the power text aloud from memory.

PRAY Thank God for His amazing grace and ask Him to give you the desire to follow Him.



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At the end of his speech Joshua told the people they would have to decide. They could keep the land if they chose to follow God's leading and worship only Him. But they had to get rid of the idols. Then, every day, they must decide whom they would worship—the true God, or idols. Such decisions have two parts—facing one way and turning one's back on another way. When people follow God, they turn their backs on Satan. Then Joshua told them what his own choice would be. He and his family had decided to worship God.

The people said they had made the same choice. Then Joshua took a stone and rolled it near the tabernacle. "'See!' he said to all the people. 'This stone will be a witness against us. It has heard all the words the Lord has said to us. It will be a witness against you if you are untrue to your God' "(Joshua 24:27).

Joshua died soon after that, at the age of 110. But if ever people had second thoughts about their decision, all they had to do was to go to the tabernacle and look at the huge stone, a reminder of their decision to worship only the living God and to follow His guidelines for happiness.



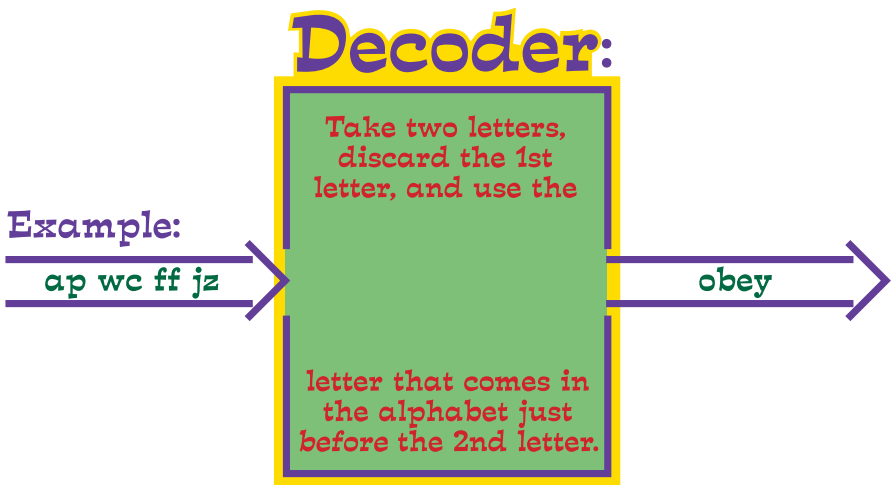
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PUZZLE 8

WORSHIP HIM

Instructions: Decode the letters below to reveal a Bible verse that tells us how to know Jesus.

sX rf ul ko hp lx yu pi jb su ex cf di ab
ow gf qd rp in mf qu fp xl ao ep tx pi bj
tn wj gg nx cf zl uf ff dq ki bj st dd bp
rn sn kb go ve yt.



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