

## Refusing to Rest



### SABBATH—JULY 3

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Numbers 11:1–15; Numbers 12:1–3; Numbers 13:27–33; 1 Corinthians 10:1–11.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “The things that happened to those people are examples. They were written to be warnings for us. We live in the time that all those past histories were pointing to” (1 Corinthians 10:11, ERV).

**DOGS AND OTHER ANIMALS** often behave in strange ways before a big earthquake.

Scientists now know that animals can feel the pressure from an earthquake long before humans do. Maybe that is why animals act confused or afraid just before the ground starts to shake. Elephants can hear sounds from small earthquakes that happen a few days or weeks before a bigger earthquake happens. Humans cannot hear or feel these small earthquakes at all.

On August 23, 2011, a 5.8 earthquake hit the Washington, DC area. A few minutes before the earthquake, some of the animals at the National Zoo started to behave in strange ways. One example was the lemurs. Lemurs are animals that look much the same as monkeys. A lemur has thick fur and a long tail. Lemurs live in trees in Madagascar. The lemurs in the zoo cried loudly for 15 minutes before the ground started to shake.

This week, we look at some examples of strange human behavior. This behavior is not caused by earthquakes or other natural disasters. This behavior is caused by sin. The people in our lesson refused to rest in the forgiveness of Jesus. Jesus offers this forgiveness to everyone who comes to Him in faith.



**A few minutes before the earthquake, some of the animals at the National Zoo started to behave in strange ways.**

**REFUSING TO REST IN THE DESERT (Numbers 11:1–15)**

For sure, Israel must feel unhappy when they leave Sinai. More than a year has passed since they left Egypt (Numbers 1:1). The people want to enter the Promised Land. Sure, they saw all the wonderful miracles God did to show them His favor. But what happens at the first place they come to after they leave Sinai? They start to complain!

**What do the people complain about? Read Numbers 11:1–15 for the answer.**

The mixed group of people with the Israelites start complaining. Soon the Israelites join in. They all want the food they ate in Egypt. “ ‘We wish we had meat to eat. We remember the fish we ate in Egypt. It didn’t cost us anything. We also remember the cucumbers, melons, leeks [a type of onion], onions, and garlic. But now we’ve lost all interest in eating. We never see anything but this manna [bread from heaven]!’ ” (Numbers 11:4–6, NIV). Do you see how the people remember only good things about Egypt? They forget the slavery and remember the food!

God feeds the people manna for more than a year. But the people refuse to be happy with the manna. They want something else. Even Moses gets upset by all the fuss the people make. Moses does not have an easy job, for sure. But Moses knows the One he should turn to: Jesus. Moses asks the Lord, “ ‘Why have you brought me this trouble? I’m your servant. What have I done wrong? Why did you make me responsible for all these people?’ ” (Numbers 11:11, ICB).

**How does God answer the people? Read Numbers 11:16–33 for the answer.**

Of course, God knows our needs. He also knows when we feel unhappy. So, God gives the people birds to eat. But meat is not the thing the people really want. When we are upset, the thing that makes us angry often is not the real cause of our anger. So, we fight because we are upset about a deeper problem. Israel fights against the leadership of God in their lives. We all need to be careful about that. Fighting against God is easier to do than we think.

**Why is it so easy to remember the past as better than it really was?**



**God gives the people birds to eat.**

## WHEN SIN SPREADS THE SAME AS SICKNESS (Numbers 12:1–3)

**What are Miriam and Aaron upset about? Read Numbers 12:1–3 for the answer.**

At first, we may think Miriam and Aaron are unhappy about Zipporah, the wife of Moses. Zipporah is a Cushite from Midian (Exodus 3:1). She was not born an Israelite.

But the Bible shows us Zipporah is not the reason Miriam and Aaron are upset. They complain about the leadership of Israel. In chapter 11, God tells Moses to choose 70 leaders. These men will help Moses lead the people (Numbers 11:16, 17, 24, 25). Aaron and Miriam have served as chief leaders in Israel (Exodus 4:13–15; Micah 6:4). But now they feel their leadership is in danger. Aaron and Miriam say to each other, “‘Moses is not the only one the LORD has used to speak to the people. He has also spoken through [by way of] us!’ The LORD heard this” (Numbers 12:2, ERV).



**The leprosy that falls on Miriam shows that God is not happy with her or Aaron.**

**How does God answer the complaint of Aaron and Miriam? For the answer, read Numbers 12:4–13. Why do you think God answers in this powerful way?**

God answers their complaint right away. God punishes Miriam with leprosy. Leprosy is a skin disease. In Bible times, people with leprosy lived alone so they did not spread the disease to other people. The leprosy shows that Miriam did wrong. Yes, God gave Aaron and Miriam special messages to give to His people. But Aaron and Miriam must remember that these messages are a gift. They must not use this gift as a weapon to get more power over the people. God chose Moses to lead the people because Moses knows he must depend on God for everything.

Aaron does not get leprosy. If God covers Aaron with leprosy, then Aaron cannot enter the holy tent and serve God. But the leprosy that falls on Miriam shows that God is not happy with her and Aaron. Aaron asks Moses for help in getting healing for their sister. When Aaron asks for help, he shows that he is part of the problem that caused his sister to get leprosy (Numbers 12:11). Moses prays for his sister. God wants us to have this same love in our hearts for our brothers and sisters in Jesus.

**Why is it better to pray for our leaders than to complain about them when they make mistakes?**

### FIGHTING AGAINST GOD (Numbers 13:27–33)

The Israelites arrive at the edge of the Promised Land. Moses sends 12 spies into Canaan. Their job is to explore the land and report back to Moses and the people. Their report is exciting and wonderful—at least at first.

**Read the report from the spies in Numbers 13:27–33. What part of the report makes the Israelites lose hope?**

Caleb does his best to stop the people from giving up hope and turning against their leaders. But the doubters win. They cause the people to lose faith. In the end, Israel does not try to win the land that God promises them. The Israelites have hearts that refuse to rest in God. They do not trust Him. The people choose to cry and complain. That is why they do not march forward in faith.

When we do not rest in God, we have a hard time showing faith. Doubt hurts more than just our hearts. Doubt also can cause us to grow fat, start a drug habit, or get more tired and weary. Scientists tell us that when we do not rest enough, we will make bad choices.

**Read Numbers 14:1–10. What happens next?**

Things go from bad to worse. Caleb warns the people, “Don’t turn against the LORD!” (Numbers 14:9, ERV). But the people pay no attention. They decide to kill their leaders with stones. A heart that refuses to rest will turn against God. Where does that feeling lead? To death.

“The ten spies do not trust in God. They talk against Caleb and Joshua. Someone shouts that the people should stone those two loyal men. The crowd goes crazy. They grab rocks to kill Caleb and Joshua. The crowd rushes forward. They yell and lose control of their tempers. All of a sudden, they drop the stones. They grow very quiet and start to shake with fear. God Himself comes to stop their evil plan. The light of the Lord fills the Holy Tent of Worship to show the people that God is there. This light is the same as a fire. The glory from God lights up the whole tent. All the people see this sign from the Lord. God is stronger than they are. Now He shows Himself to the people. No one is brave enough to fight against God. The evil spies hold their breath and creep back to their tents.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 390, adapted.



**“The crowd goes crazy. They grab rocks to kill Caleb and Joshua.”**

## SOMEONE WHO STANDS BETWEEN GOD AND SINNERS (Numbers 14:11, 12)

**What chance does God offer Moses when the Israelites turn against God? Read Numbers 14:11, 12 for the answer.**

God offers to destroy the Israelites and make a whole new people from Moses, who will be the father of them all.

**What does Moses do when the people turn against God and himself? For the answer, read Numbers 14:13–19.**

These verses show us that Moses is a loyal man of God. The answer from Moses shows us the prayer that Jesus will say 1,400 years later for His followers (John 17). What Moses does here for the people is what Jesus does for us now in heaven. Moses does not defend the people to God. He knows they are guilty. But he asks God to forgive them anyway by showing them His love and mercy (Numbers 14:19). The Lord forgives the people because Moses asks Him to forgive. In the same way, God forgives us today because of Jesus. God forgives us because Jesus died on the cross for us and then woke up from the dead.

That is why Moses says, “ ‘Forgive their sin. Forgive them the same way you have been forgiving them since the time they left Egypt until now’ ” (Numbers 14:19, ERV). The mercy of God heals us. The forgiveness of God turns our hearts back to Him and gives us a new start.

Forgiveness costs us something. Mercy and forgiveness are not cheap. Just because God forgives us does not mean we will not suffer because of our mistakes. Our bad choices often cause pain to other people and ourselves. So, this group of Israelites will not enter the Promised Land (Numbers 14:20–23).

Yes, God will take care of the Israelites for another 38 years. God will feed them. He will talk to them from His Holy Tent of Worship. He will be with them in the desert. But then they will die. Then their children will need to trust that God will bring them into the Promised Land.

Does this sound as if God is judging against His people? Really, God is showing them His mercy and forgiveness. How can the Israelites fight and win against the people of Canaan if they do not know how to trust God? How can they be a “light” to the people around them if they themselves are tripping and falling in the dark?



**The Lord forgives the people because Moses asks Him to forgive.**



**REAL FAITH OR FALSE FAITH (1 Corinthians 10:1–11)**

**Compare the time of Israel in the desert to the end times just before the Second Coming. What is the same for the people living in these different times? For the answer, read 1 Corinthians 10:1–11.**

In Bible times, the people of God traveled around in the desert on their way to the Promised Land. Today, the people of God also are on their way to the Promised Land. But the desert they travel across is not a real desert. The desert of today is a word picture that shows how empty our modern lives can be when we do not rest in God.

We are the same as the Israelites. All too often, we refuse to trust in the rest God gives us. We search for peace. But we look for this peace in the wrong places.

**In Numbers 14:39–45, how do the Israelites behave when God judges them?**

Israel says, “ ‘We have sinned. We are sorry that we did not trust the Lord. We will go to the place that the LORD promised’ ” (Numbers 14:40, ERV). Israel turns against God. Then Israel tries to turn back to God without His help. In the last two verses from Numbers 14, we see that Israel refuses to accept the new plan God gives them. What happens next? The story ends for the people of God in death and disappointment. The people are very stubborn. They march to war without the ark, or Holy Box, that has the agreement. They also go to war without Moses to lead them. Their hearts are filled with false faith. False faith is the belief that God will protect us and give us things He has not promised us. This sin is awful.

When we believe God will give us something He has not promised, we are in danger. This sin can cost us our lives because it leads to death. We can die because we are not afraid to act without God or His promises to help us. But we should be afraid. We should always trust in God and wait on Him to lead us. But often, we do not. That is why we make decisions that we will be sorry about later.

**Think about a time you acted on faith. Now think of a time when you did not wait for the Lord to show you His plan. What makes these two experiences different?**



**Israel marches to war without the Holy Box that has the agreement. They also go forward without Moses to lead them.**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** “Faith is not the same as a false belief that God will do something for us that He has not promised to do. We must have real faith. Then we will be protected from this false faith. When we have real faith, we will trust in the promises of God. Real faith will make us obedient to God. People who have false faith say they believe in the promises of God. But these people do what Satan does. Satan uses the promises of God as an excuse to sin. Adam and Eve sin because they do not trust the love of God. Adam and Eve have false faith. This false faith causes them to break the law of God. They believe a lie about His love. Adam and Eve expect God to protect them from the bad things that will happen when they break His law. Only people with false faith expect God to show them favor when they disobey. But if we want God to show us His mercy, we must obey Him. Real faith starts with the promises in the Bible and follows the things the Bible asks us to do.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 126, adapted.



God gives the people a test. He asks them to turn away from the land of their enemies.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

① Talk in class about real Bible faith and false faith. How are the two different? When God asks the Israelites to go fight the Canaanites and win their land, God asks them to act in faith. The people refuse. But later, when the Israelites do attack the Canaanites, the Lord says their actions are a sin. The people have false faith. They do not fight when God tells them to fight. Then when God commands them not to fight, they go ahead and fight anyway. Why does the first example show faith and the second example show false faith? What part do our feelings and the happenings around us have in our decision to show true faith or false faith?

② Think more about the idea that sin leads to suffering. Yes, we can be forgiven. But often we must live with the awful things that happen because of our sins. Some people have a hard time believing that God forgives them for a sin in their past. This is often true when their sin continues to cause problems in their lives now and in the lives of their loved ones. How can you help someone with this problem know that God fully forgives him or her?

## AN ADVENTIST SCHOOL CHANGES LIVES

**H**ow much can one Adventist school change lives? The story about Shima and her family shows us just how much. Shima means “mother” in the Navajo Indian language. Shima heard about Holbrook Seventh-day Adventist Indian School about 40 years ago.

The school is located on the Navajo reservation in the state of Arizona in the United States. Shima sent five of her seven children to Holbrook Indian School. The oldest son of Shima learned how to make things with metal at Holbrook Indian School. The son loved working with metal. So, he became a metalworker.

The second oldest child of Shima was a girl. This daughter decided to go to an Adventist college after finishing Holbrook Indian School. The daughter studied nursing at Pacific Union College in California. Today, she works as a nurse on the Navajo Indian Reservation.

Shima did not send her two youngest children to Holbrook Indian School. Shima decided not to because she became unhappy with the school. One of her daughters, Nabasa, had some hard times at the school. The schoolteachers asked Nabasa to leave. Shima felt hurt that teachers did not allow Nabasa to stay.

Nabasa had a difficult time wherever she went to school. But soon she finished school and went to college. Nabasa became a teacher. She is also a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Nabasa must have forgiven Holbrook Indian School for asking her to leave. Why? Because Nabasa sent all three of her children to the school. Each child got his or her high school diploma from Holbrook Indian School. One of her children is a teacher. Another child is about to become a teacher, too.

What happened to the two youngest children of Shima who never went to an Adventist school? Both became Adventists. One teaches at an Adventist school today.

So, how much can one Adventist school change the lives of a family? Just look at the lives of the children and grandchildren of Shima to see the answer!

Thank you for your 13th Sabbath Offering three years ago for a new gym and health center at Holbrook Indian School. The name of the new health center is New Life Center. Your offerings this quarter will help finish the second part of the center. In the new part of the center, the teachers will offer classes to the community. The teachers will talk about health problems that many Native American children and young people suffer today.

INSIDE  
*Story*  
by DANA FISH



**Shima sent five of her seven children to Holbrook Indian School.**