



# CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

JULY 04 2015

**Scripture Story:** Deuteronomy 2; 3:1-11.

**Commentary:** *Patriarchs and Prophets, (or Beginning of the End)*, chapter 39.

## the trust test



Photo by Jennifer and Company

### flashlight

"Everyone who seeks to follow the path of duty will at times be assailed by doubt and unbelief. The way will sometimes be so barred by obstacles, apparently insurmountable, as to dishearten those who will yield to discouragement; but God is saying to such, Go forward. Do your duty at any cost. The difficulties that seem so formidable, that fill your soul with dread, will vanish as you move forward in the path of obedience, humbly trusting in God" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 437).

### keytext

"The Lord your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He has watched over your journey through this vast wilderness. These forty years the Lord your God has been with you, and you have not lacked anything."

**(Deuteronomy 2:7, NIV)**

# what do you think?

**Voting:** Indicate whether you agree (A) or disagree (B) with the following statements and be ready to explain why.

- God expects us to be 100 percent certain before we step out and choose to obey Him.
- God expects us to follow Him with blind faith in His leading.
- God expects us to use reason and facts to make our decisions about His will.

## Either/Or

Which do you think is a more effective way to learn: learning from others' mistakes or from their good example? Choose one and explain your reasons. Think of an example.

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## did you know?

**S**everal groups of big people are referred to in the Bible:

**Nephilim**—existed very early in human history;

**Rephaim**—occupied the land prior to the Canaanites;

**Anakim**—lived in the south, near Hebron and were defeated by the Israelites under Joshua;

**Emim**—a warrior tribe of giants that were defeated by Chedorlaomer and his allies around the time of Abraham (see Numbers 13:33; Deuteronomy 2:10, 11; 3:11).

How big were the giants the Israelites faced? Moses says, "We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim).

We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them" (Numbers 13:33, NIV). Why might Moses have exaggerated? In any case, the enemy was unmistakably large, making the miracle of God's victory equally large.

## INTO THE STORY

"Then we turned back and set out toward the wilderness along the route to the Red Sea, as the Lord had directed me. For a long time we made our way around the hill country of Seir. Then the Lord said to me, 'You have made your way around this hill country long enough; now turn north.

"Give the people these orders: 'You are about to pass through the territory of your relatives the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir. They will be afraid of you, but be very careful. Do not provoke them to war, for I will not give you any of their land, not even enough to put your foot on. I have given Esau the hill country of Seir as his own. You are to pay them in silver for the food you eat and the water you drink.'"

"The Lord your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands.

He has watched over your journey through this vast wilderness. These forty years the Lord your God has been with you, and you have not lacked anything. So we went on past our relatives the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir. We turned from the Arabah road, which comes up from Elath and Ezion Geber, and traveled along the desert road of Moab.

"Then the Lord said to me, 'Do not harass the Moabites or provoke them to war, for I will not give you any part of their land. I have given Ar to the descendants of Lot as a possession.' (The Emmites used to live there—a people strong and numerous, and as tall as the Anakites. Like the Anakites, they too were considered Rephaites, but the Moabites called them Emmites. Horites used to live in Seir, but the descendants of Esau drove them out. They destroyed the Horites from before them and settled in their place, just as Israel did in the land the Lord gave them as their possession.)

"And the Lord said, 'Now get up and cross the Zered Valley.' So we crossed the valley. Thirty-eight years passed from the time we left Kadesh Barnea until we crossed the Zered Valley. By then, that entire generation of fighting men had perished from the camp, as the Lord had sworn to them."

(Deuteronomy 2:1-14, NIV)



# OUT OF THE STORY

What specific commands does God give the children of Israel in the story? *Underline* them.

What promises does God make to the children in this story?

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What words or phrases in this story are key?

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*Circle* the different people or people groups in this story.

Before entering the Promised Land, why do you think God made the Israelites wander and wait 38 years before coming back to this pivotal point?

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What do you think is the central lesson taught in this story?

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*Underline* what you think is the most important phrase or verse in this story.

How do you think the Israelites felt when faced with the challenge that their forefathers had failed 40 years before?

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## punch lines

**“Therefore, since the promise** of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. . . . But the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed” (**Hebrews 4:1, 2, NIV**).

**“Some trust in chariots** and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God” (**Psalms 20:7, NIV**).

**“I can do all this** through him who gives me strength” (**Philippians 4:13, NIV**).

**“Though you have not** seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls” (**1 Peter 1:8, 9, NIV**).

**“And those who know** your name put their trust in you, for you, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you” (**Psalms 9:10, NRSV**).

**“In you our ancestors** put their trust; they trusted and you delivered them” (**Psalms 22:4, NIV**).

## other eyes

**“Faith is like muscle which grows stronger and stronger with use, rather than rubber, which weakens when it is stretched.”**—J. O. Fraser, 20th-century

Scottish missionary in China.

**“Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.”**—Corrie Ten Boom, a

20th-century Dutch Christian who was imprisoned for helping Jews escape the Nazi Holocaust.

# making it real

## Sabbath

In the *What Do You Think?* section you were challenged to choose the better way to learn. It could be said that both the mistakes others make and their success stories serve us well as examples when making decisions. Hebrews 4:11 urges believers to enter salvation's rest using the example of disobedience as an action to avoid. Titus encourages believers to "set them an example by doing what is good" (Titus 2:7, NIV). What is one of the most powerful lessons you have learned in your spiritual journey?

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## Sunday

Read the story of how Israel was led back through the land of the giants. Pay special attention to Deuteronomy 2:7. With what spirit do you think Israel was to journey through the lands of their enemies? As you read this entire section in Deuteronomy 2 and 3, what theme do you pick up as Israel was challenged again to face such a seemingly impossible task?

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What are some challenges you face today that you sense God is asking you to trust Him with?

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## Monday

The *Key Text* this week is Deuteronomy 2:7, which conveys a beautiful reminder of God's enduring care for Israel during a season when they were to learn what it means to lean fully on God's guidance. Paraphrase this passage in your own words, not using any of the major terms or phrases that the Bible uses. Try to capture the essence of this verse as if the

message were given to you personally.

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## Tuesday

The *Flashlight* passage from *Patriarchs and Prophets* contains a reality check, an assurance, and a command that will test your ability to trust God completely with your life. Identify the reality check, the assurance, and the command and reflect on the parts that speak to you personally.

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Reflect on the heroes of faith in your life. Perhaps they are church members, or historical or biblical characters that have been an inspiration to you. Which faith hero can you hear passionately proclaiming the words of the *Flashlight* quote with conviction and experience?

## Wednesday

Read the *Punch Lines* for this week and identify one or two verses that speak to you today. Perhaps there is someone you know who faces a challenge that seems impossible. Or, maybe you have a friend that struggles with faith and turns to their own wisdom when they should trust and obey God, no matter what might happen. Consider praying for that person and possibly encouraging them with one of the *Punch Lines* passages. It may be that your encouragement this week is just what they need to reach out to God and lean fully on His promises.

## Thursday

It is sometimes said, "The devil is in the details," but so is God. On a piece of paper or in a journal, make a list of the many events in your life when you trusted God and He was faithful. List the big things as well as the small things, or the details. As you consider how God has led you in the past, what new challenges do you want to trust Him with in the future? Imagine that each challenge is like knocking on the door of the giants.

List at the top of a piece of paper the upcoming opportunities you will have to lean fully on God. Beneath, write out a prayer thankfully mentioning a few of the pivotal moments of faith you have already experienced and commit your future to God, no matter where He might lead you. Think of at least three areas of your life in which you want to follow God explicitly and include them in your prayer.

## Friday

Take some time and think about some of the more challenging leaps of faith that you remember people taking in Scripture. It may be that some, like the children of Israel, can better liken their journey to a roller-coaster ride going up and down with success and failure. To what would you liken your journey or your relationship with God? If you could change anything about your relationship with God, what would it be?

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## this week's reading\*

*Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 39.

\**Beginning of the End* is a special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at [www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rB09s](http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rB09s). By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.