

Israel's collapse in the wilderness.



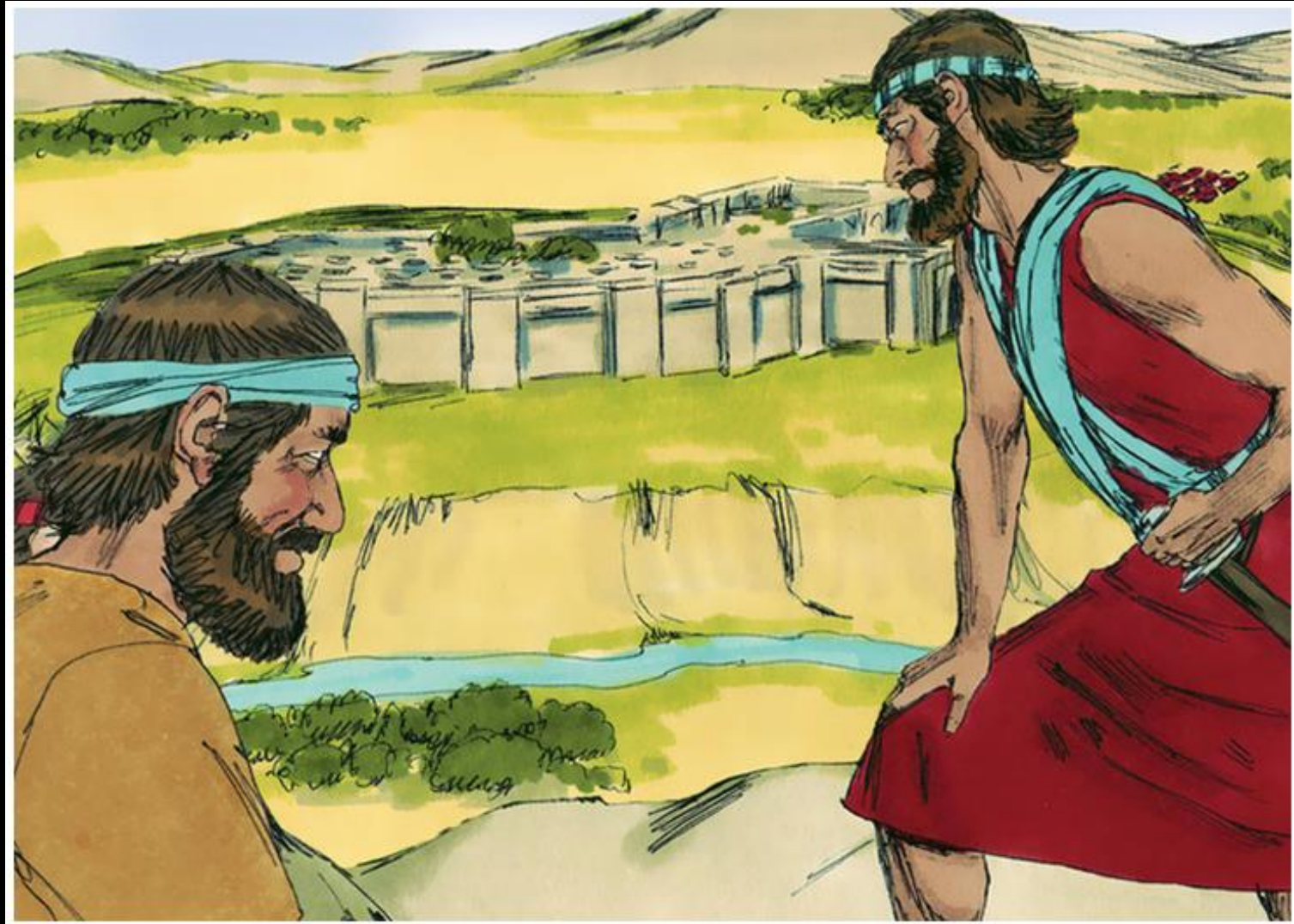
The Setting: God is graciously dwelling with the Israelites in the Tabernacle, showing them mercy when they offered him sacrifices for their sin.



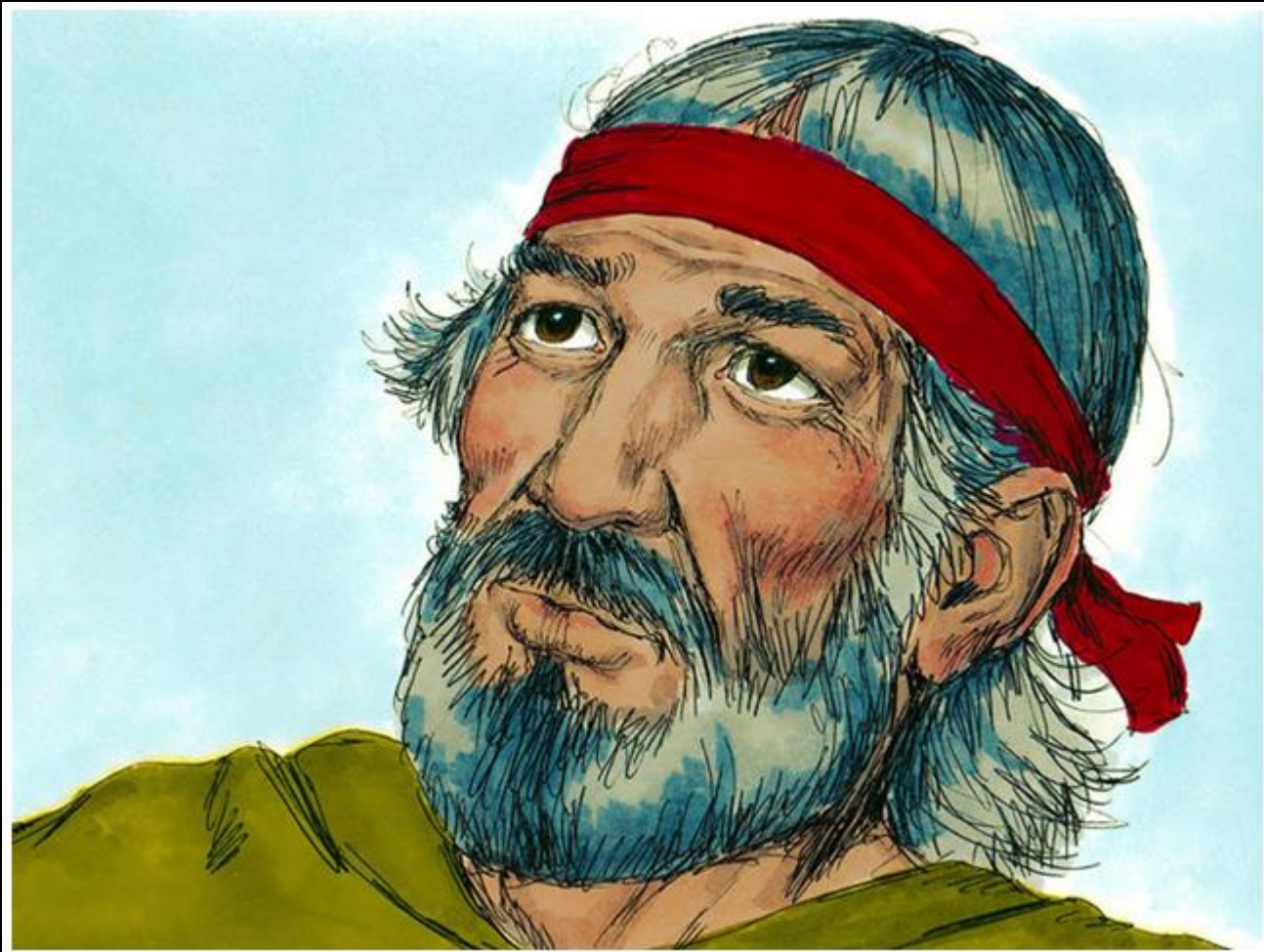
The Setting: God is continuing to lead the Israelites through the wilderness by a cloud. The Lord led them right to the edge of the land which he had promised to give them and Abraham. This land is called **Canaan**.



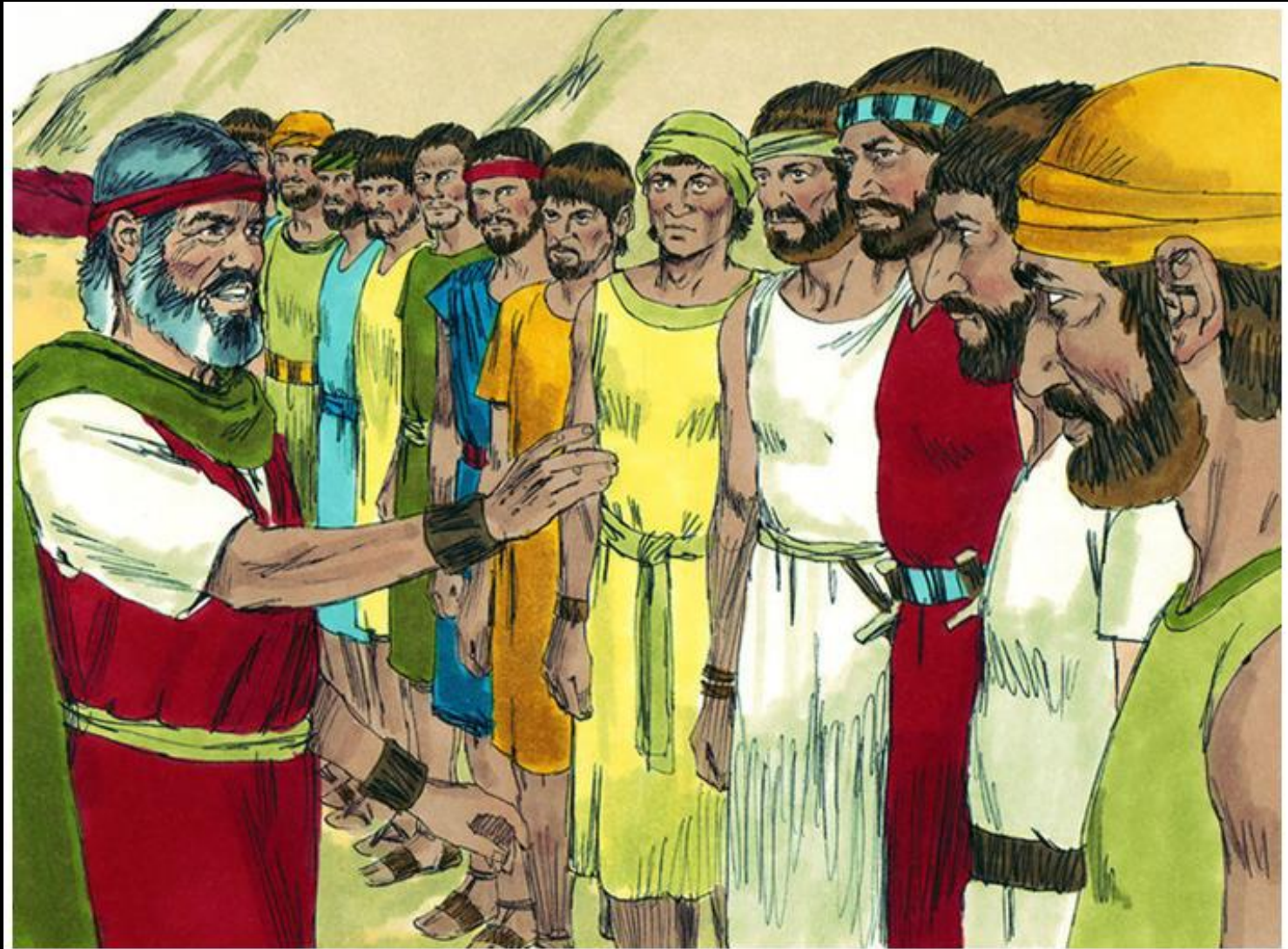
The people who lived in Canaan were very wicked and worshiped idols. The Lord planned to have them destroyed and to give their land to the Israelites.



“The LORD now said to Moses, “Send out men to explore the land of Canaan, the land I am giving to the Israelites. Send one leader from each of the twelve tribes.” **Numbers 13:1-2**



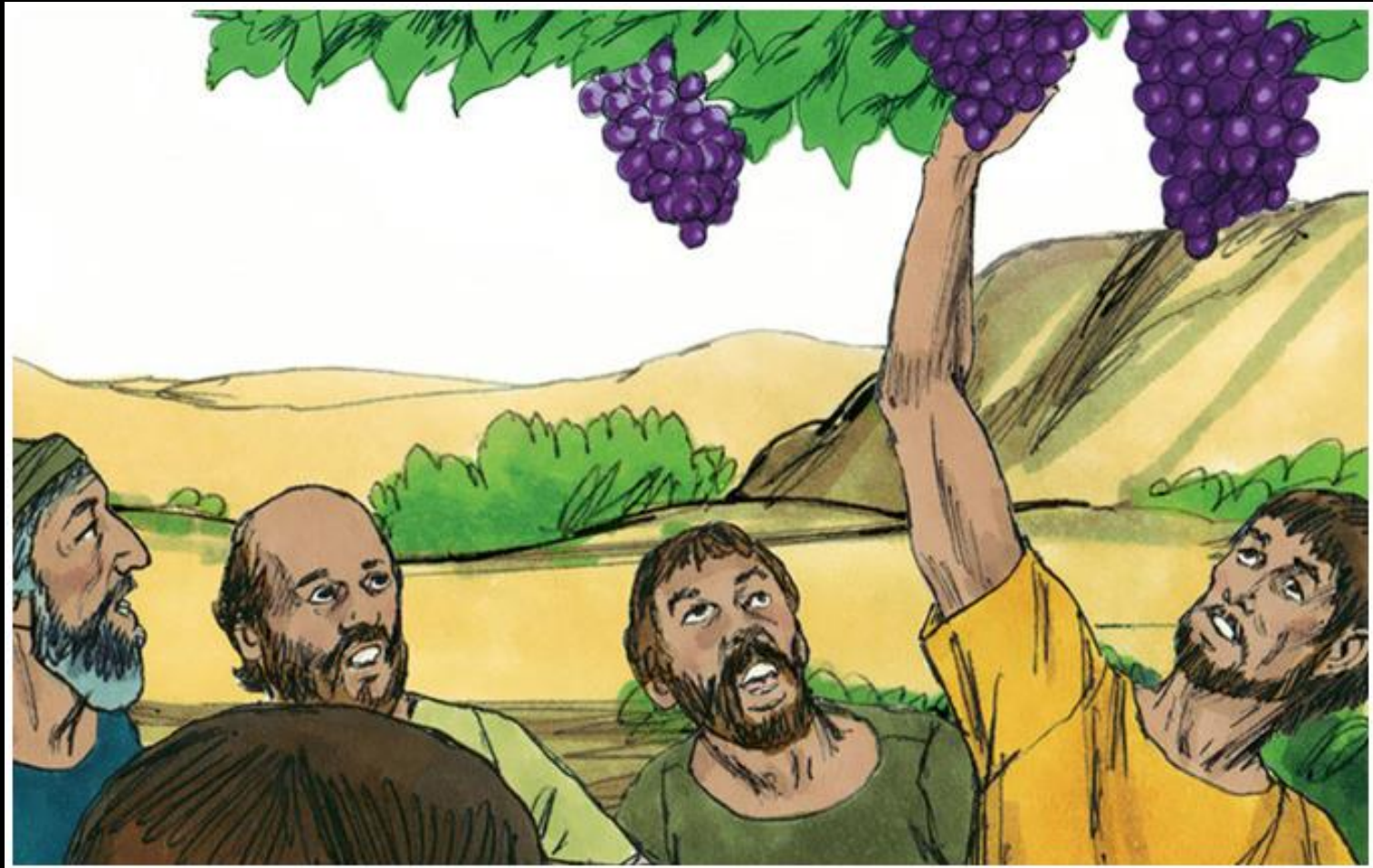
So Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He sent out twelve men, all tribal leaders of Israel, from their camp.” **Numbers 13:3**



Moses gave the men these instructions as he sent them out to explore the land:

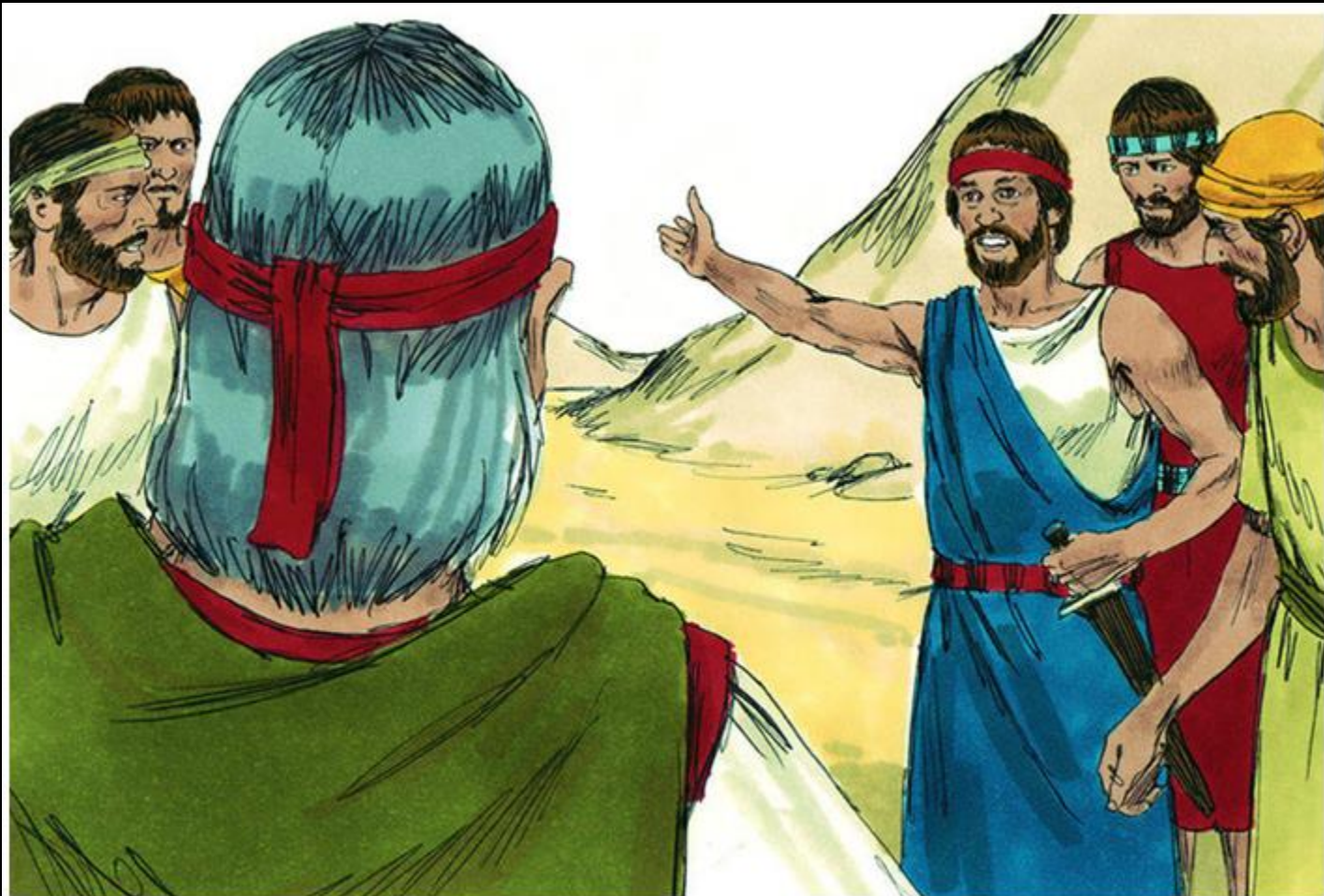
“Go north into the hill country. See what the land is like, and find out whether the people living there are strong or weak, few or many. See what kind of land they live in. Is it good or bad? Do their towns have walls, or are they unprotected like open camps? Is the soil fertile or poor? Are there many trees? Do your best to bring back samples of the crops you see.” **Numbers 13:7-20**

“So they went up and explored the land...When they came to the valley of Eshcol, they cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes so large that it took two of them to carry it on a pole between them! They also brought back samples of the pomegranates and figs.” **Numbers 13:21-23**



“After exploring the land for forty days, the men returned to Moses, Aaron, and the whole community of Israel. They reported to the whole community what they had seen and showed them the fruit they had taken from the land.”

Numbers 13:25-26

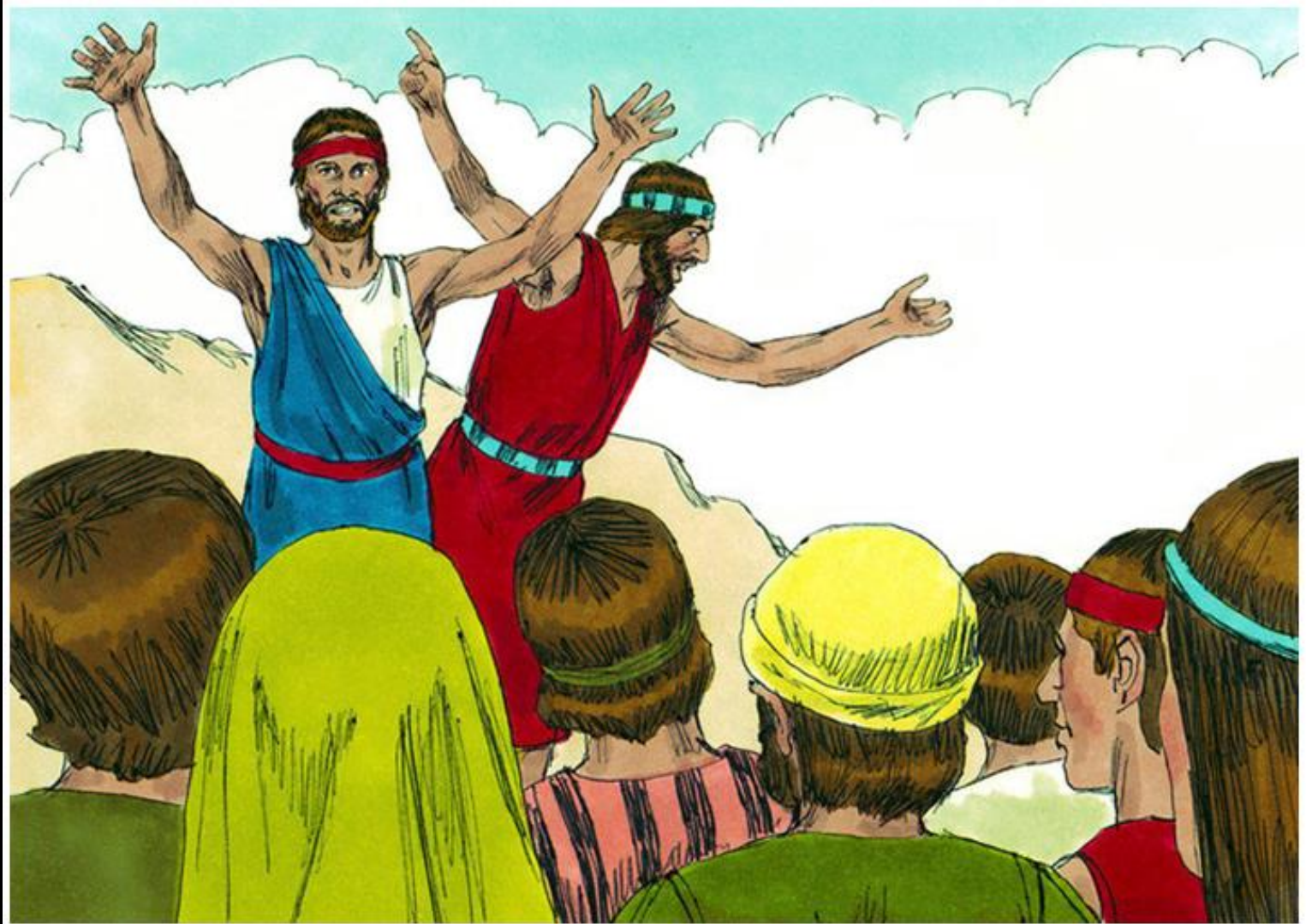


“This was their report to Moses: ‘We entered the land you sent us to explore, and it is indeed a bountiful country—a land flowing with milk and honey. Here is the kind of fruit it produces. But the people living there are powerful, and their towns are large and fortified.

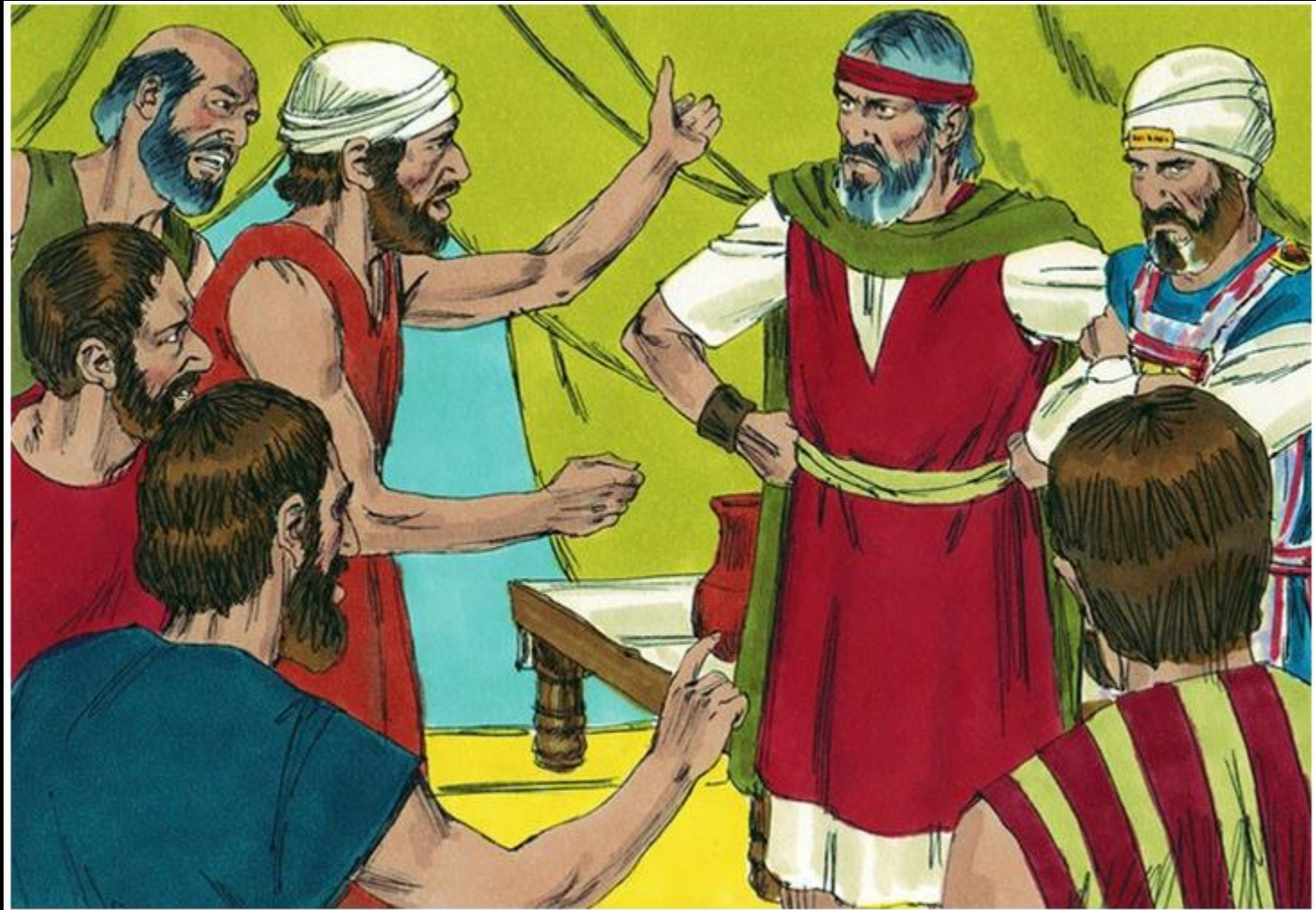
We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak! The Amalekites live in the valley, and the Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites live in the hill country. The Canaanites live along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea and along the Jordan Valley.”

Numbers 13:27-29

“But Caleb tried to quiet the people as they stood before Moses. “Let’s go at once to take the land,” he said. “We can certainly conquer it!” **Numbers 13:30**

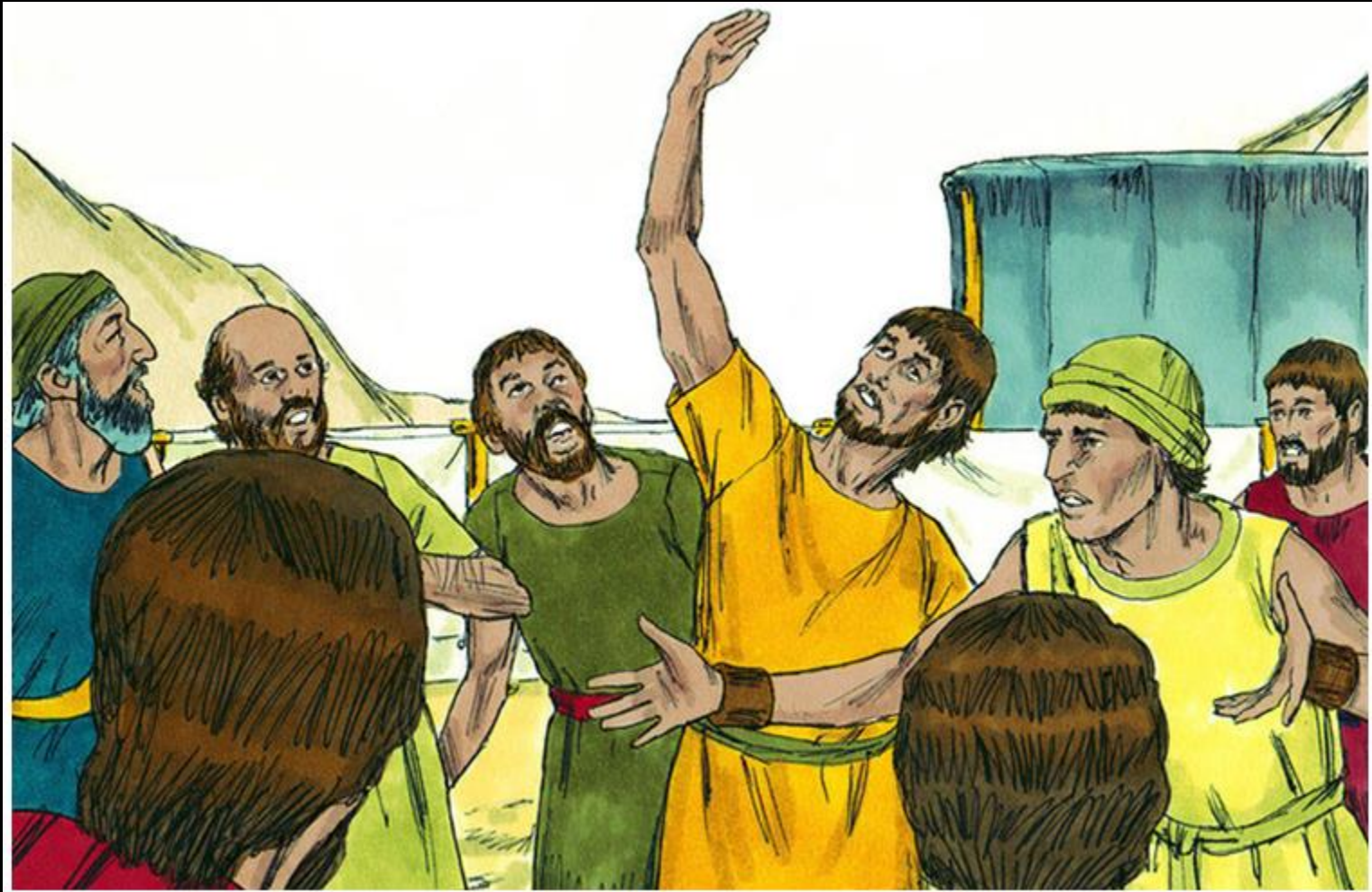


But the other men who had explored the land with him disagreed. “We can’t go up against them! They are stronger than we are!” So they spread this bad report about the land among the Israelites...” **Numbers 13:31-32**



“The land we traveled through will devour anyone who goes to live there. All the people we saw were huge. We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak. Next to them we felt like grasshoppers, and that’s what they thought, too!”

Numbers 13:32-33



“Two of the men who had explored the land, Joshua and Caleb, tore their clothing. They said to all the people of Israel, “The land we traveled through and explored is a wonderful land! And if the LORD is pleased with us, **he will bring us safely into that land and give it to us.** Do not rebel against the LORD, and don’t be afraid of the people of the land. They are only helpless prey to us! They have no protection, but **the LORD is with us! Don’t be afraid of them!**”

Numbers 14:6-9

Israel is at a cross road. They have to decide whether they will believe what God says or what these men say.



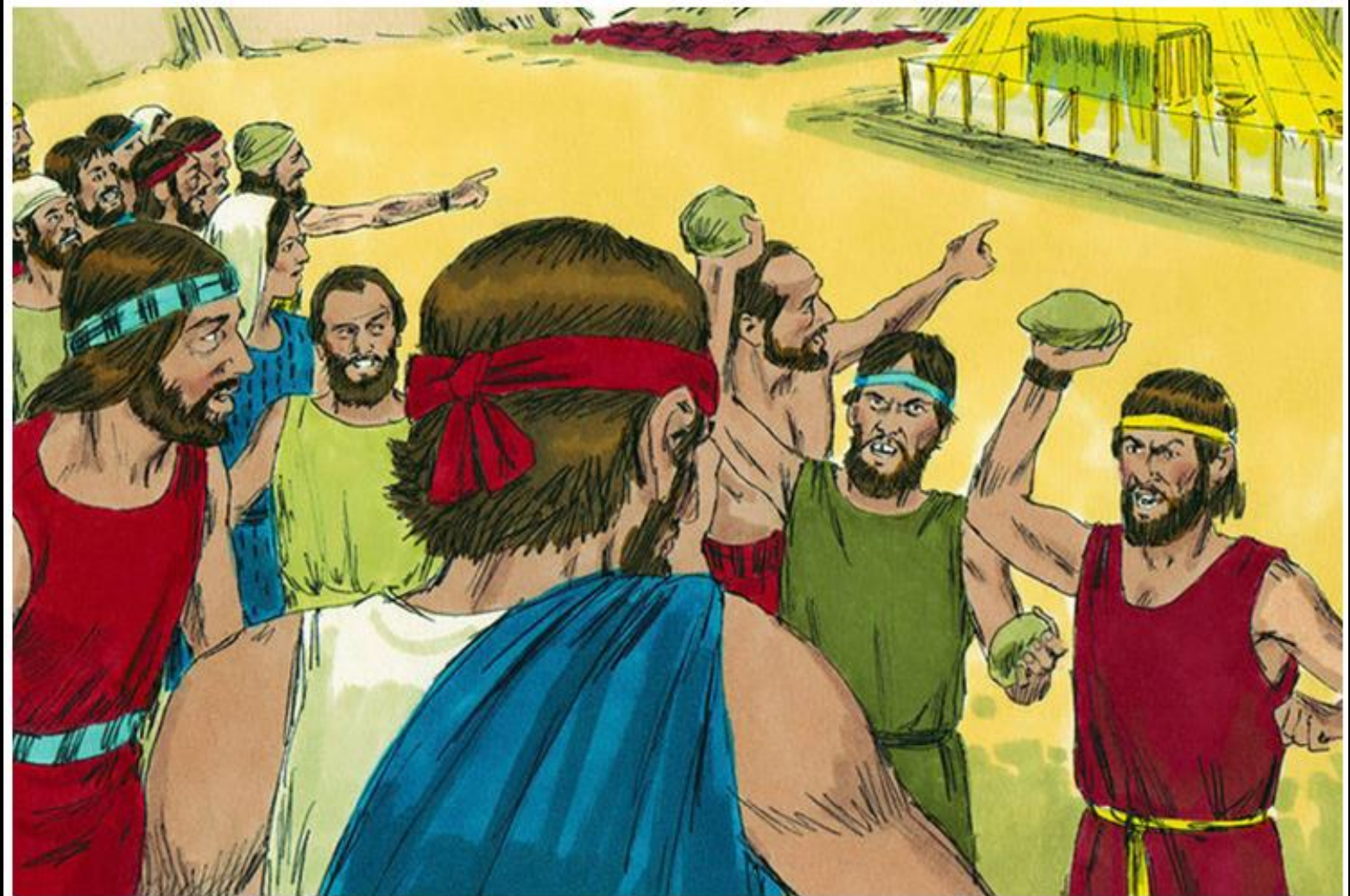
Then the whole community began weeping aloud, and they cried all night. Their voices rose in a great chorus of protest against Moses and Aaron. “If only we had died in Egypt, or even here in the wilderness!” they complained.

“Why is the LORD taking us to this country only to have us die in battle? Our wives and our little ones will be carried off as plunder! Wouldn't it be better for us to return to Egypt?”

Numbers 14:1-4

Then they plotted among themselves, “Let’s choose a new leader and go back to Egypt!”

Numbers 14:1-4



The people made their choice. They decided not to believe what God said about their future.

(See Exodus 3:17)

Had they **forgotten** all the miracles that he had done in Egypt and how he had delivered them?

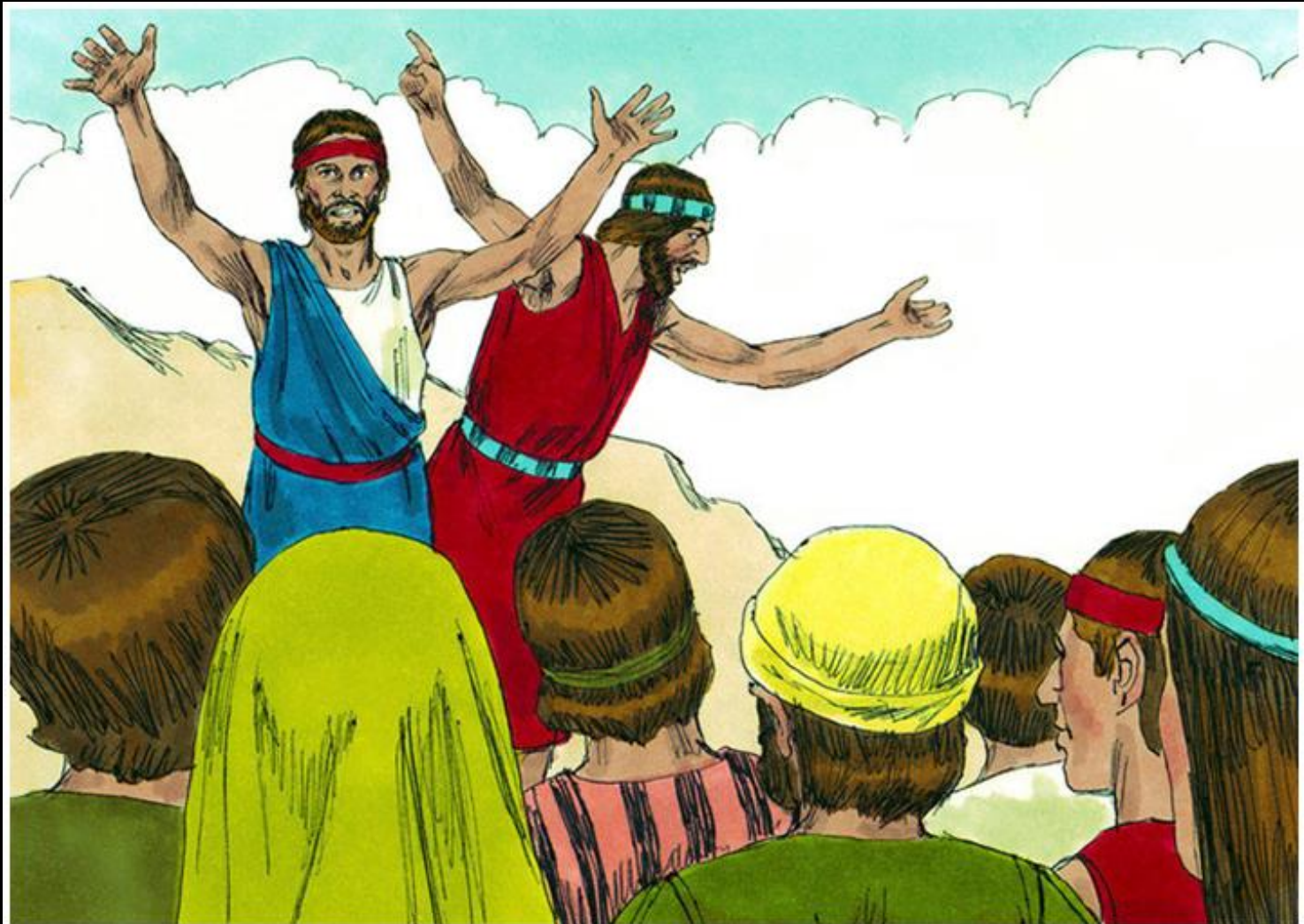


They didn't believe that
God was willing or able
to overcome the people
of Canaan and
give them the land!

“The LORD said to Moses, “How long will these people treat me with contempt? **Will they never believe me, even after all the miraculous signs I have done** among them?”

Numbers 14:11

Joshua and Caleb had also seen the same things...the strong walls surrounding the cities, they had seen the strong people and large people.



However, they had not forgotten what God had done and they **believed** that God would drive the people of Canaan out and give the land to Israel, just as he had **promised.**

In the end, the Israelites did not believe God. Essentially they were calling God a liar, because he promised to give them the land.

(See Exodus 3:17)

Because of their unbelief, God told them that they would all die in the wilderness.

God promised that everyone over the age of 20, except Joshua and Caleb would **NEVER** enter the promised land.

See Numbers 14:29-35

Israel didn't understand yet...
that everyone who believes
God will live and receive his
promises!

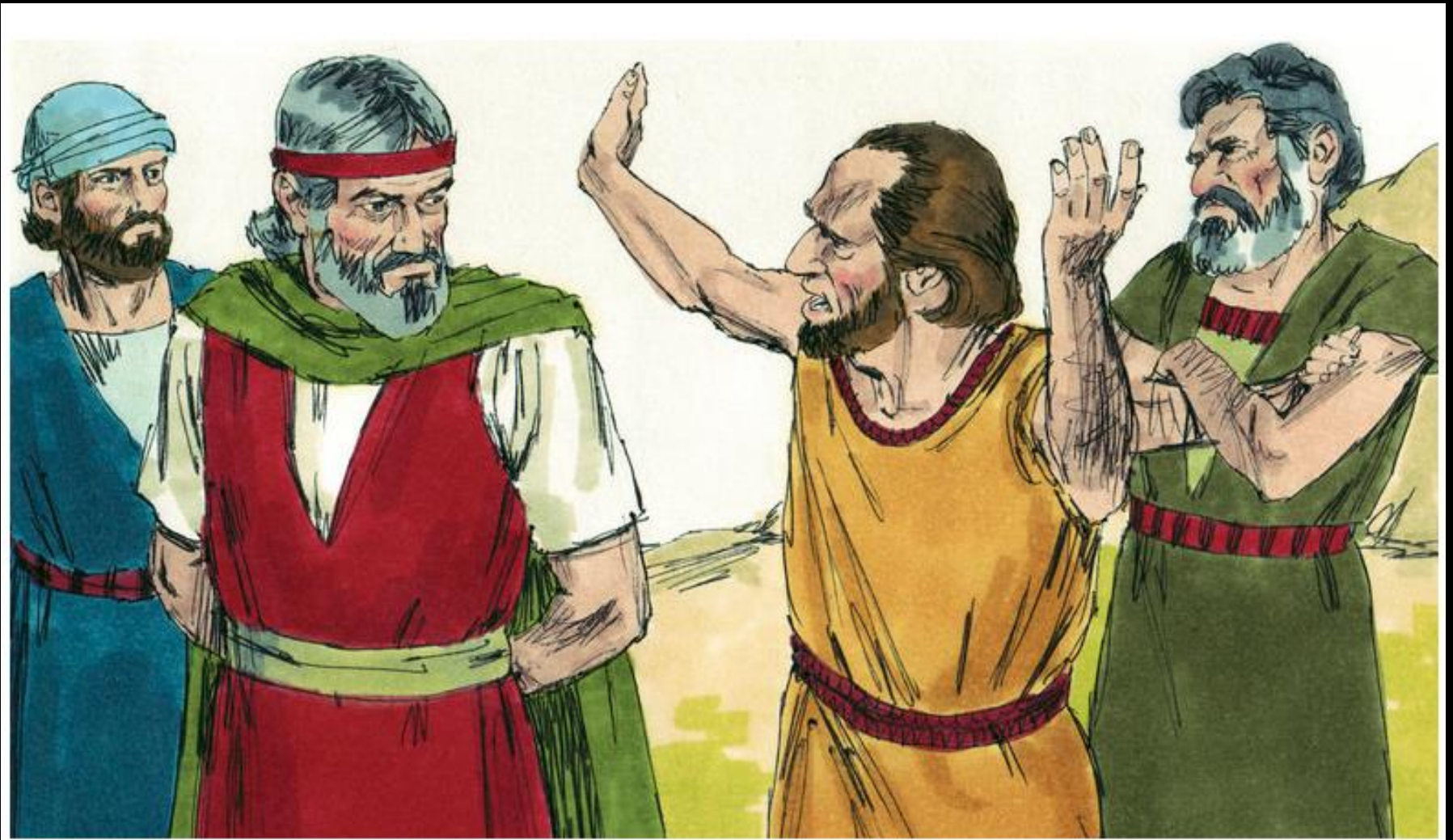
...and

everyone who does not
believe God will die and
never receive his promises!

REPETATIVE TRUTH:

***MAN MUST HAVE FAITH IN
WHAT GOD SAYS IN ORDER
TO BE ACCEPTABLE TO GOD
AND ESCAPE DEATH!***

Israel began complaining again saying they should go back to Egypt, and that God wasn't giving them good enough food. And that they were sick of his provisions.



“...they began to speak against God and Moses. “Why have you brought us out of Egypt to die here in the wilderness?” they complained. “There is nothing to eat here and nothing to drink. And we hate this horrible manna!”

Numbers 21:5

So the LORD sent poisonous snakes
among the people, and many
were bitten and died.

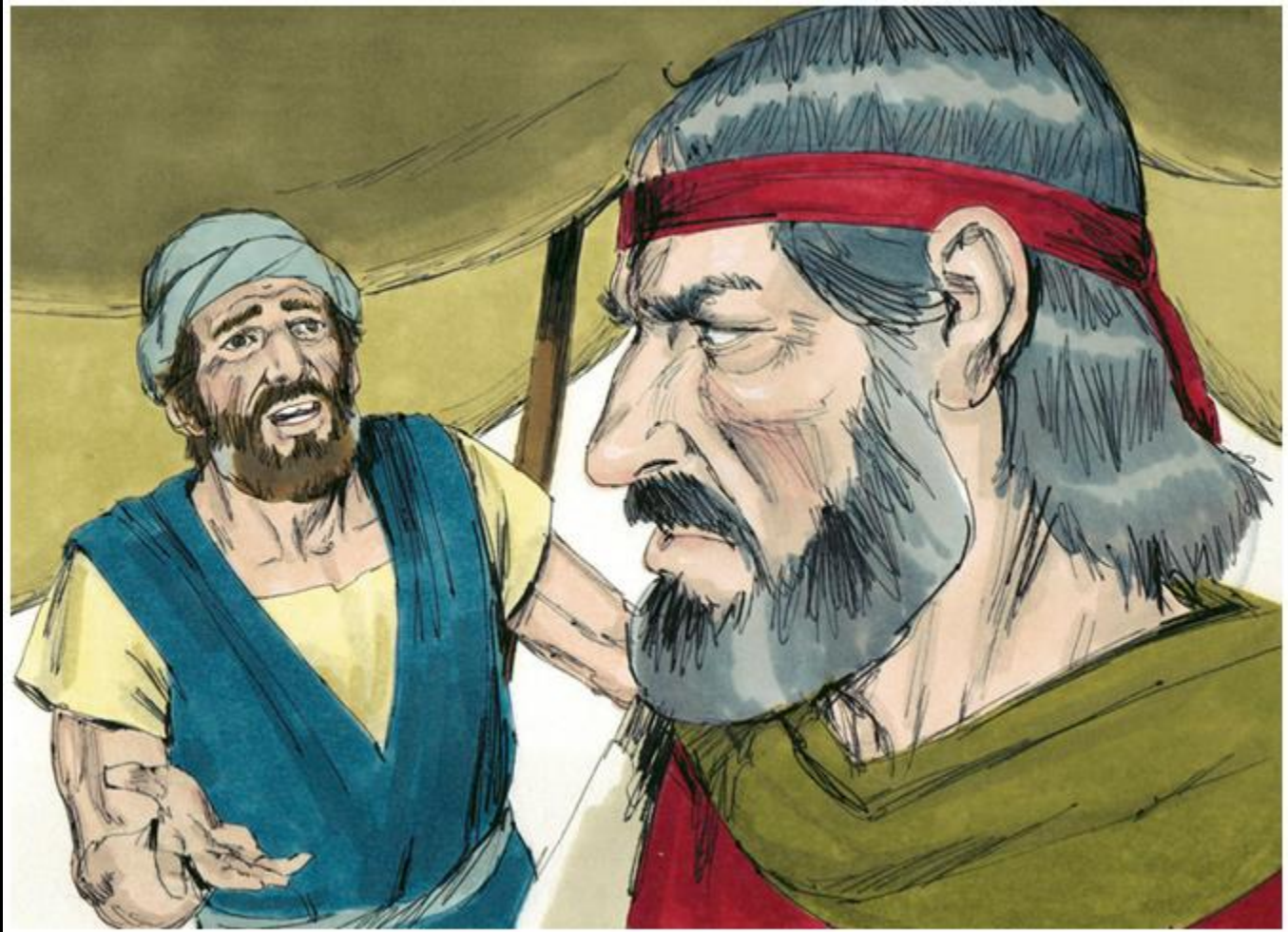
Numbers 21:6



God confirms that the
punishment for sin and
unbelief is death



“Then the people came to Moses and cried out, “We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you. Pray that the LORD will take away the snakes.” So Moses prayed for the people.” **Numbers 21:7**



Then the LORD told him, “Make a replica of a poisonous snake and attach it to a pole.

All who are bitten will live if they simply look at it!” So Moses made a snake out of bronze and attached it to a pole. Then anyone who was bitten by a snake could look at the bronze snake and be healed!

Numbers 21:8-9

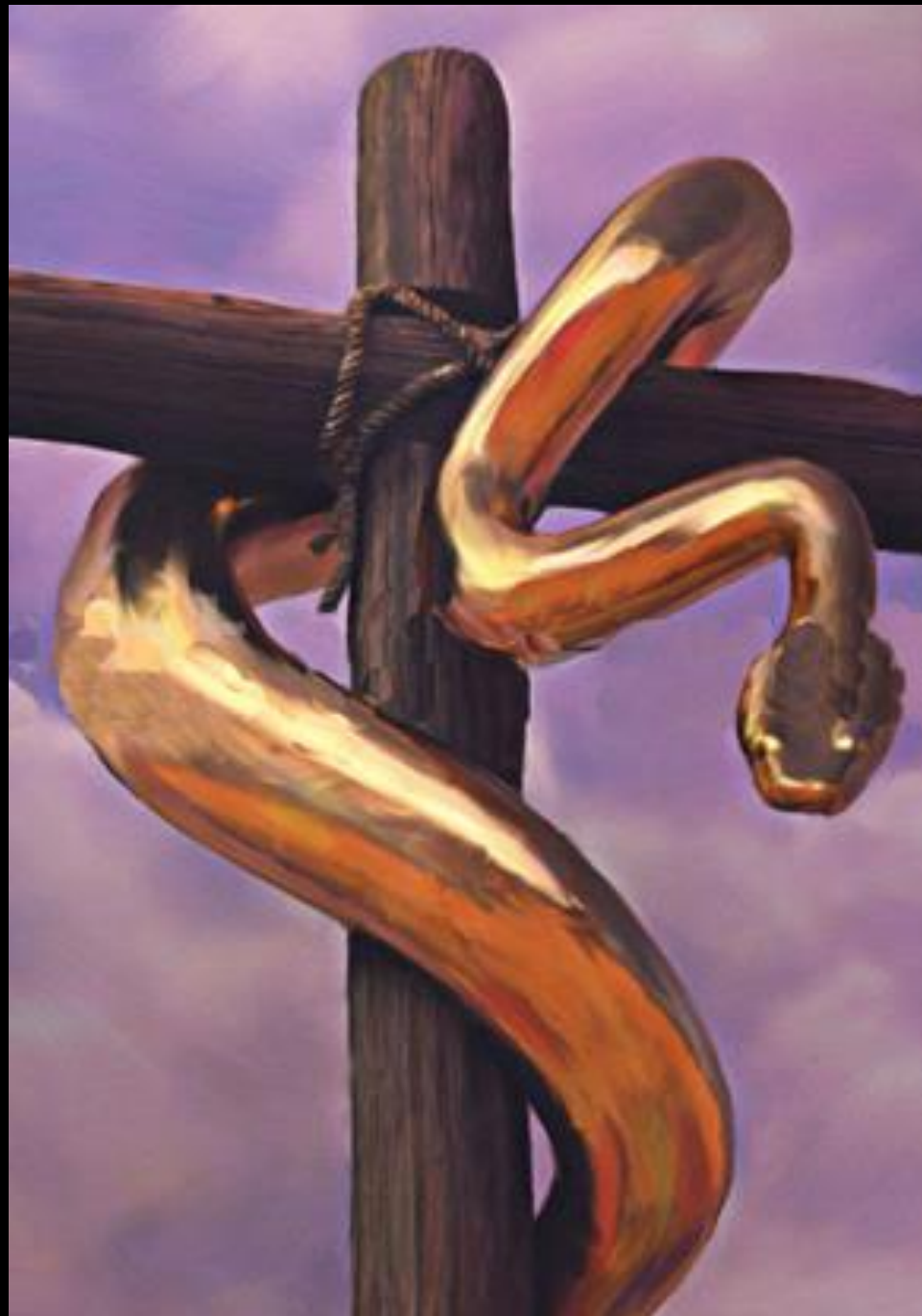
Because the Lord is merciful, he
decided to forgive them and
save them. They **didn't deserve**
his help, but he saves all those
who **trust** in him!

The Lord didn't allow them to find their own way to be heal, there was no way. He told them the only way to be healed, his way.

What the Israelites would need to do, it believe what God said about their situation and the remedy.

Everyone
who
looked was
healed by
God!

(See Num 21:9)



The Israelites believed what God said he would do about those who would look towards the bronze snake and what he said would be true about those who would not look to the bronze snake.

If you **hear** what God
says, **believe** what God
says and **do** what God
says...you will live.

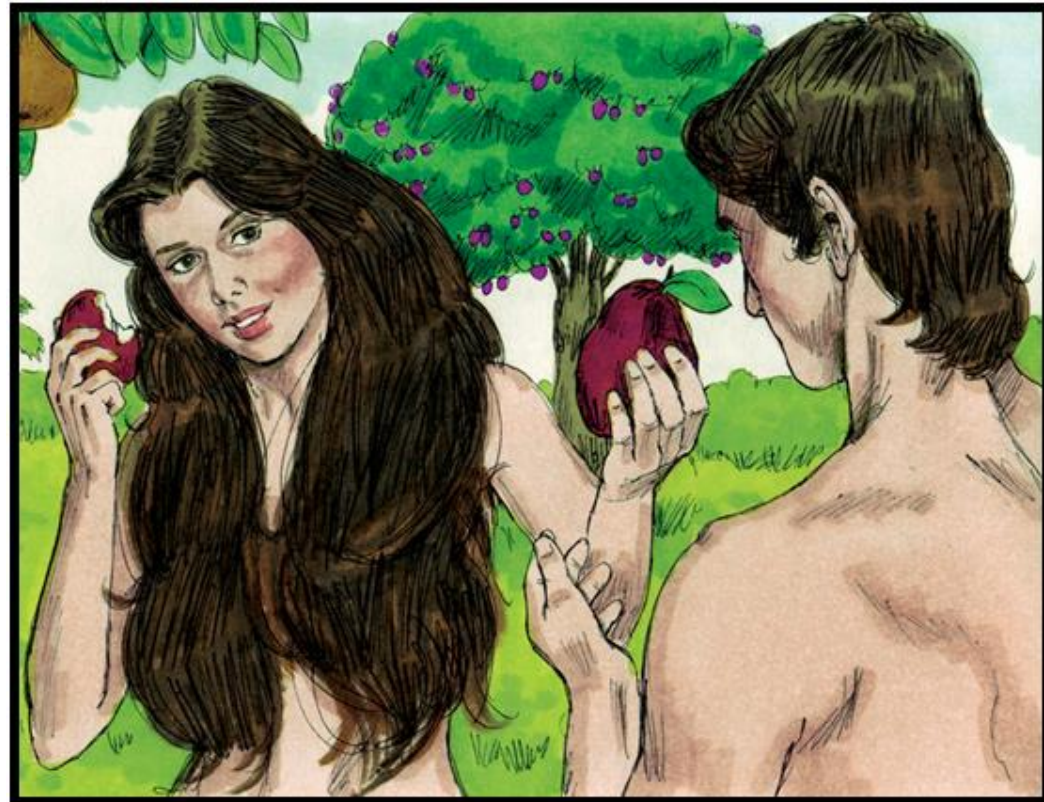
Did the bronze snake have
power to heal them?



NO!

The Lord healed them because they believed him. They believed if they looked to his provision, he would heal them.

Knowing what we know about the beginning...what do you think being 'bitten by poisonous snakes' and then 'dying' because of it represents?



Humanity has been
bitten by the insidious
and evil archenemy of
God; Satan.

We all have failed to
believe God and
disobey, grumble and
complain.

We have been poisoned
with his evil venom and
we are dying in the
wilderness of this earth.

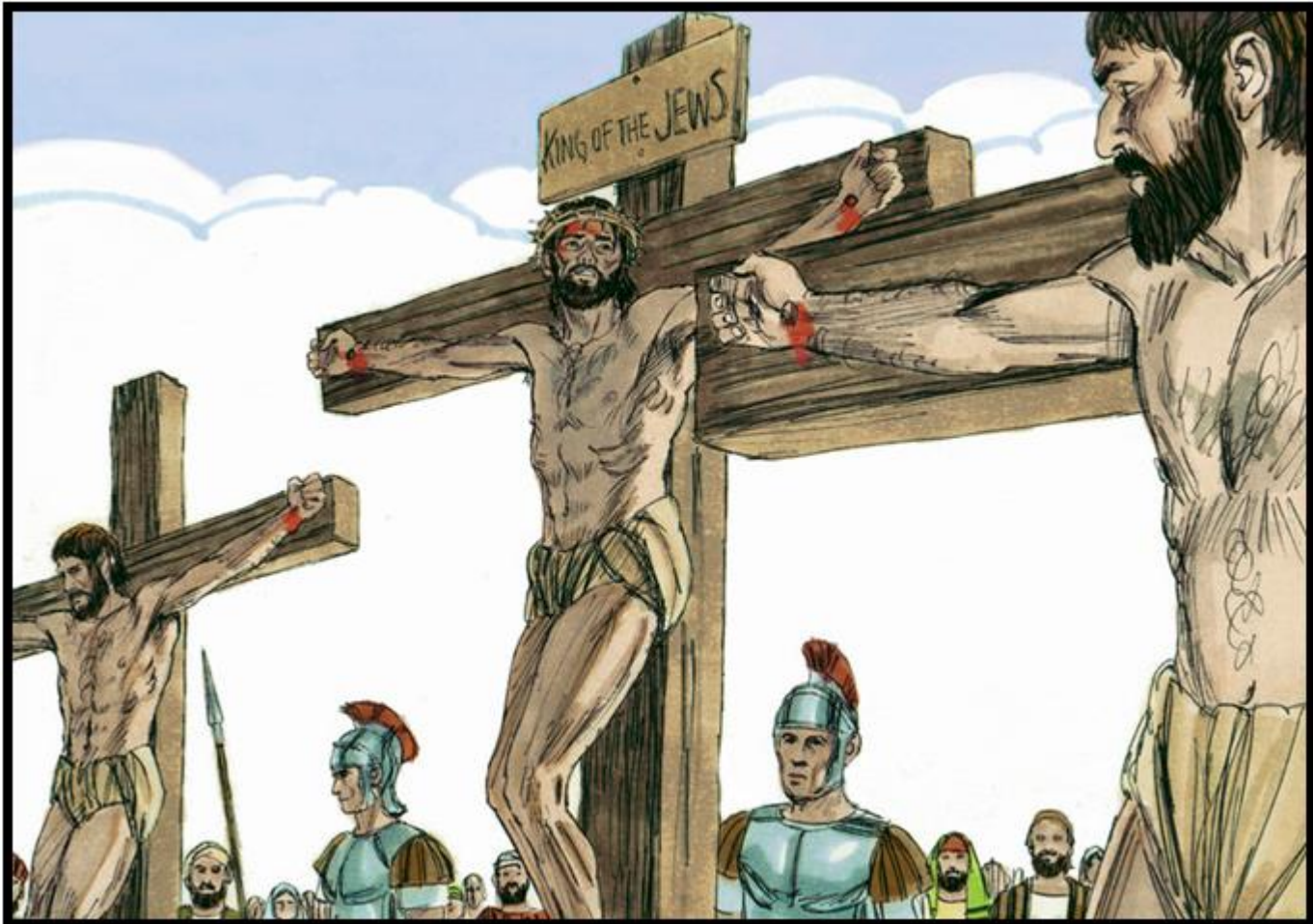
That sin is killing us and
will separate us from
God forever. There is
nothing we can do
about it.

We are helpless to save
ourselves. Nothing than
we can do can heal us.

But in the same way as Moses
lifted up the snake in the desert,
so the Deliverer must also be
lifted up, and everyone who
believes in him, though he dies
physically will have eternal life.

(See John 3:14-15)

The Deliverer will be raised on a post. He will take on the sin that bit us on that cross...And if we look to him and believe that God will heal us and save us...then he will indeed save us.



We need to believe that what God says is true about what he will do with everyone who looks to Christ and what he says he will do with all of those who do not look to Christ.