



LEVEL 4  
4·6  
LESSON 6

# *Imperial Academy Bible Lessons*



**The Ten Commandments**

# The Ten Commandments

**T**he Israelites had crossed the Red Sea. They saw God miraculously defeat Pharaoh's army, and they sang jubilant songs of praise to Him. Then what happened?

God led the enormous group of people deeper into the wilderness.

A day passed, and they found no water to drink. Then another day passed; then another. The amount of water they were carrying dipped perilously low. The elderly began to grow weak. Many had headaches. The cries of babies grew worse. The group began to slow.

Finally, the tribes at the front saw green trees. That meant water! Word spread back through the crowds, followed by rippling sighs of relief. The first Israelites reached the trees and the pond beneath them and dipped some water for the elderly and the children.

But the children spit it out. "The water is bad!" one said. This particular pond was mixed with a bitter substance. Word again passed back through the thousands: "The water is undrinkable!"

The Israelites probably did not realize it, but God was testing them. He had

just saved them from death by *parting the Red Sea*, but now He led them into a hardship. Would they keep their fears in perspective? Would they apply what they learned in Egypt and at the Red Sea? Would they still thank and praise God? Would they trust Him?

Another wave passed through the Israelites: a wave of frustration and anger. "No water for three days, now four days!" "Even when we find water, we can't drink!" "We and our cattle could all die out here!" "Where is Moses leading us?" "We have to drink! What are we supposed to drink?"

This grumbling against Moses revealed that once the people began to suffer, they easily forgot God's miracles.

However, God was patient with the Israelites, and so was Moses. Moses prayed to God for help. God showed him a certain tree and told him to fell it and put it into the water. Moses did so, the water became sweet, and the people rushed to drink.

Moses realized that this incident was about much more than just water. He told the Israelites, "If you listen to the voice of God, and do what is right in His sight, and obey His commandments, you

will not be cursed with the diseases that God brought upon the Egyptians: for God is the Lord who heals you.” Moses was teaching the Israelites, and all who would read his words in the future, that God will miraculously protect the health of those who trust and obey Him.

After drinking, filling their water containers and resting, the Israelites continued to walk deeper into the wilderness.

The wilderness desert was a hard place. There were few plants or animals here that the Israelites could eat. The people had water, but now they experienced a lack of food for themselves and their animals. Some felt weary—and angry. They still lacked faith in God. One Israelite told another, “I wish we had died in the land of Egypt, where there was plenty to eat. Moses is leading us out to die of hunger in a wasteland!”

God was disappointed to see the Israelites’ faithless reactions, but His love and patience continued.

“I will make bread rain from the sky to feed the people,” God told Moses. Once again, the people would have to rely on God’s miracles to survive, and once again, God would test their character. “The people shall go out and gather up this bread to eat, and I will test whether they will obey my law.”

God gave Moses instructions for how the Israelites should gather the bread: They must gather bread each day of the week. On the sixth day, they must gather

twice as much, and on the seventh day, the Sabbath, they must rest and not gather any. If they saved extra bread, it would spoil and breed worms, except for on the sixth day. On that day, they could save bread to eat on the Sabbath.

He shared with them God’s instructions about gathering the miraculous bread that came down from the sky. Moses warned the Israelites that when they were complaining against the instructions he gave them, they were actually complaining against God.

When the people woke up in the morning, something like dew was covering the ground. But when they looked closer, they saw that it was a substance like bread. It tasted like crackers made with honey. They named this bread “manna,” which means “what is it?”

This was another incredible miracle from God! But some of the people disobeyed His instructions and went out to gather manna on the Sabbath. They found none, and had to go hungry until the next day. Others disobeyed by gathering extra bread on days other than the sixth day of the week. But as God told them, it spoiled and bred worms.

These people learned the hard way that they had to keep God’s law if they wanted God to bless them!

## **THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**

The Israelites continued to follow the cloud that God was using to protect them from the sun and to lead them through the wilderness. They began to draw closer

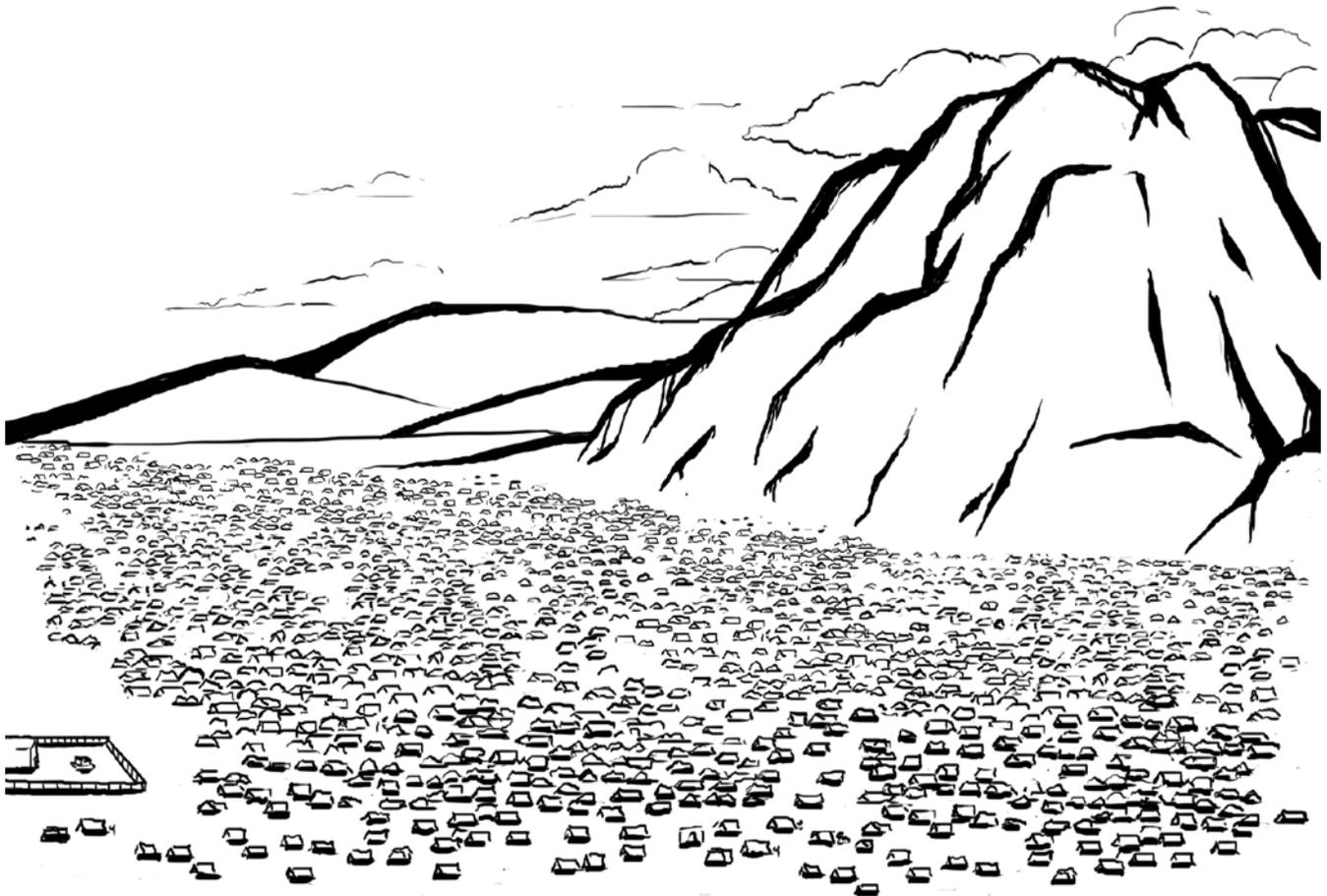
and closer to an area that was familiar to Moses: It was the land near Mount Sinai, where God had appeared to him in a burning bush.

The cloud stopped over Mount Sinai, and the Israelites made their camp. Moses ascended the mountain, and there God spoke to him.

“Say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I carried

you on eagles’ wings and brought you unto myself,” He said. “Now, if you obey my voice, and keep my covenant, you shall be a special treasure to me above all people. You shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.”

Moses walked down from the mountain and told the elders of the people what God had said. The miracle-working God of their ancestors wanted to use them in His master plan as a special nation!



The Israelites encamp at Mount Sinai.

“All that the Eternal has spoken we will do,” answered the leaders of the tribes.

Three days later, a dark cloud filled with thunder and lightning appeared on Mount Sinai. Out from the cloud thundered a voice. The earth shook and the people trembled as they heard the voice of God.

This dramatic time is when God spoke the Ten Commandments. Read about it in Exodus 20, and list the commandments below.

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2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

These Ten Commandments are eternal laws that have existed since the beginning of history. God taught them to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph many years later. But they had become largely lost to the Israelites when they were in slavery in Egypt. So God reminded the Israelites about His law in a dramatic display of power!

### **THE GOLDEN CALF**

After God gave His Ten Commandments to the Israelites, He told Moses to climb up Mount Sinai. He would give him two tablets of stone with these Ten

Commandments on them, written by God’s own finger.

Moses obeyed and began ascending the mountain, along with Aaron and 70 other Israelite leaders. When they came back down, Moses told Aaron and the elders to stay behind and wait for him. Moses put Aaron in charge and then started climbing back up the mountain. He took his assistant Joshua with him partway up the mountain.

After seven days of climbing, God spoke to Moses. He gave him instructions on how to build a tent called a tabernacle, where the Israelites could worship God. God also gave Moses instructions on how to build a chest called an ark that would be placed inside this tabernacle. God also gave Moses two stone tablets, inscribed with the Ten Commandments.

God gave Moses many other instructions about His law, and Moses listened for many days. He was away from the rest of the Israelites for 40 days and 40 nights. Joshua faithfully waited for Moses.

After many days of Moses being gone, the Israelites in the camp became worried. They wanted a god they could see and touch, so they told Aaron to make them a statue of a god like the ones they worshiped in Egypt. The people knew this was disobeying the God who had just given them His Ten Commandments. The Second Commandment is “You shall not make for yourself a carved image.” But the people demanded that Aaron make them an idol, and Aaron gave in, even

though he too knew it was wrong.

“Break off your golden earrings,” he said, “and bring them to me.”

Aaron melted the gold and made out of it a statue of a calf, like the ones the Egyptians worshiped. Then the people yelled,

“These be your gods, O Israel, which brought you out of Egypt.”

The people got up early the next morning to worship the golden calf. They ate, drank and danced wildly. But God saw and heard what they were doing.



The Israelites wildly worship the golden calf.

“Get down from this mountain,” God told Moses, “for your people have sinned and turned away from what I commanded them and have made a golden calf to worship. They are a rebellious people. Leave me alone, that I may destroy them

and raise up a new nation from you and your children that will obey me.”

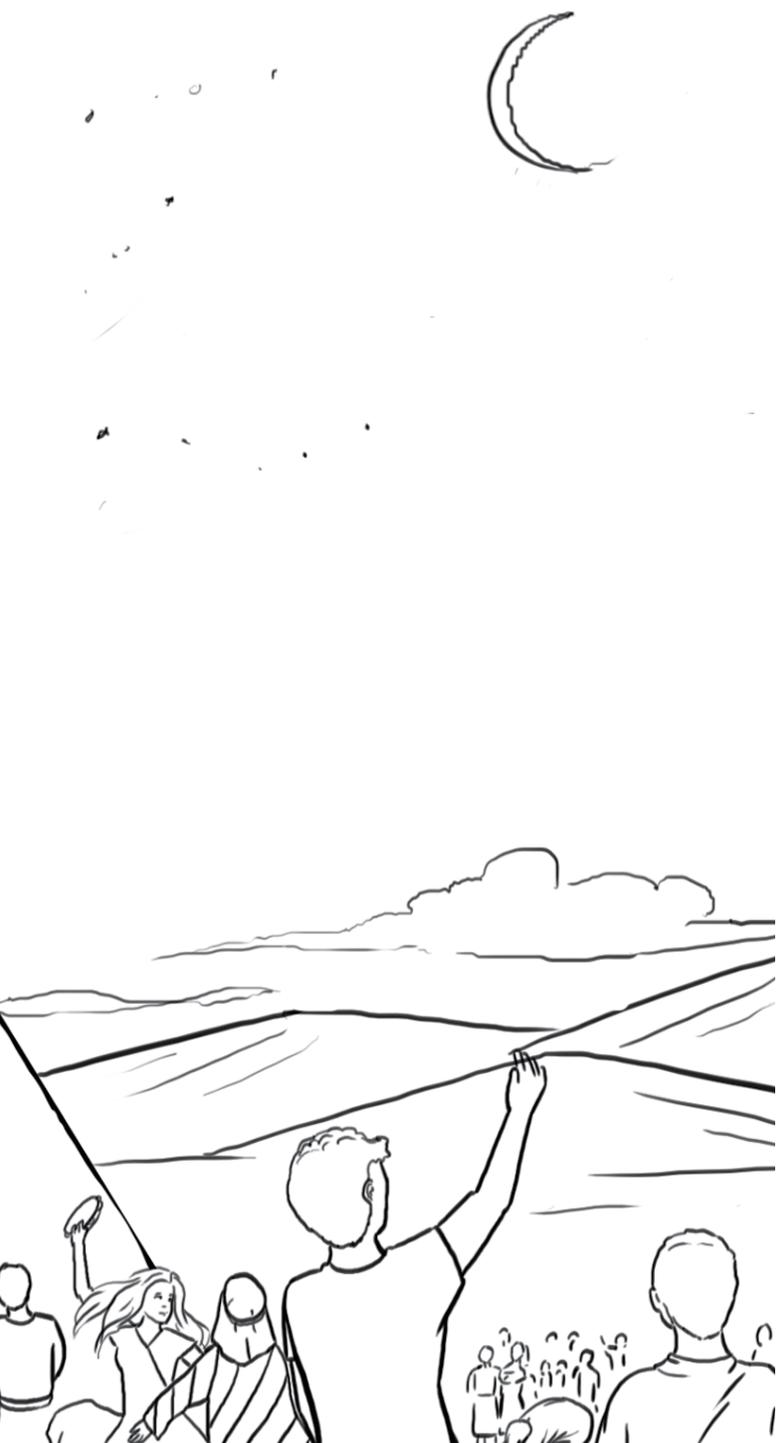
God was ready to kill the disobedient Israelites just as He had killed the disobedient people who lived before the Flood. He would use others to accomplish His plan, and thousands of years later, He would resurrect these people under His Kingdom and teach them to repent. Yet Moses pleaded with God, asking Him to give the Israelites another chance.

God agreed, and Moses went down to where Joshua was. Joshua had heard the noise and was worried the Israelites were being attacked. Moses told him it was not an attack but people worshipping an idol.

When Moses and Joshua approached the camp, they saw the people dancing wildly in rebellion against God. Furious, Moses threw down the stone tablets he was carrying, breaking them. He stopped the people, took the golden calf, burned it, and ground it into powder, mixed it with water and told the people to drink it, showing that it was not at all something to be worshiped.

Since Aaron had been left in charge, Moses went to him and asked why he had let the people sin like this. “Do not be angry at me,” Aaron said. “You know how rebellious the people are. They told me to make them a god, so I cast their gold into the fire and out came this calf.” Aaron should have taken responsibility for his weak leadership, but God forgave him.

Moses executed the 3,000 Israelites who led this rebellion against God. Then



he again climbed up Mount Sinai with two new stone tables so God could write His Ten Commandments on them with His own finger.

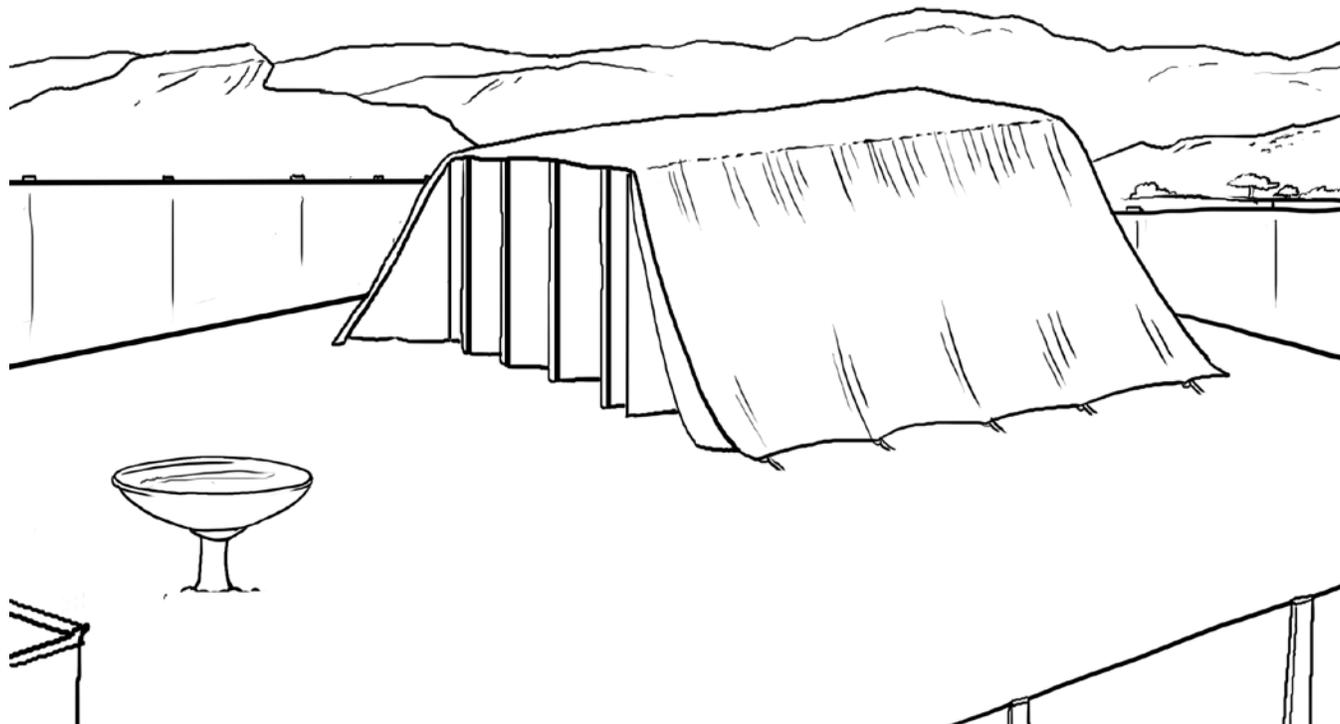
### **THE TABERNACLE**

Now Moses began carrying out the instructions God had given him describing the construction of the tabernacle. God chose a man named Bezaleel to oversee the construction under Moses.

The tabernacle was erected inside a

fenced area with one entrance. The court inside contained an altar for priests to offer sacrifices to God, as well as a bowl called a laver for washing their hands and feet, and finally the tabernacle itself. The tabernacle was a large tent having two rooms. The tabernacle had one entrance, which led to the first room, called the holy place. In this room was a golden lamp, a golden table and a small golden altar.

Behind a large curtain was the second room, the holy of holies. This sacred area



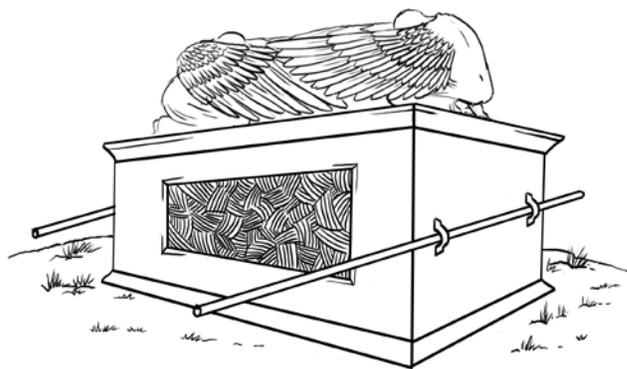
The tabernacle in the wilderness

contained the ark of the covenant. The ark was a golden chest that contained the tablets of the Ten Commandments, as well as a golden container of manna. The lid of the ark had two golden statues of angels, with their wings stretched toward each other. Below their wings was the mercy seat. This was a likeness of the very throne of God in heaven! Inside the holy of holies, God dwelled in spirit. This room was so special and sacred that no one could enter it and live except for the high priest, and he only once a year on the Day of Atonement.

Once the tabernacle was complete, there was a house for God in Israel.

Moses anointed Aaron as high priest, and he anointed his sons as priests as well. When this was done, the cloud hovering over Mount Sinai began moving toward the tabernacle. From then on, the cloud hovered over the tabernacle in the day, and became a pillar of fire at night.

Moses instructed the priests about how God wanted them to perform many kinds of offerings: burnt offerings, peace offerings, food offerings, sin offerings and other offerings. God designed these offerings to teach the Israelites to obey Him and to remind them they needed a Savior to pay the death penalty for their sins. God commanded that the animals to be killed for the offerings in the tabernacle must be healthy and unblemished. They symbolized the Word, who later became a human being, Jesus Christ, and died for the sins of all mankind.



The ark of the covenant

### **TWO PRIESTS REBEL**

Moses and Aaron told the priests exactly how to carry out their duties. One of these duties was to keep a fire burning on the altar in the tabernacle court. The high priest used coals from this fire to burn incense in the holy place. But one morning, Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu let the fire on the altar burn down very low. When they realized it, they fetched some coals from a campfire, even though they knew this was against God's command. They returned to the court before Aaron, and decided that due to the circumstances, they needed to go inside the holy place and burn incense themselves, even though they knew God commanded that only the high priest do this. As the men sprinkled incense on the coals, suddenly bolts of fire shot from the holy of holies, killing them.

God wanted all the other Israelites and those who would read about these events to understand that He took these priests lives as a penalty for disobedience.

There are serious penalties when we disobey God. After the death of Nadab and

Abihu, Aaron's other two sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, performed their priestly duties in the tabernacle.

### **CLEAN AND UNCLEAN MEATS**

Some of the other laws God gave the Israelites instructed them to only eat certain meats. When He had created land animals, birds and fish, God created two types: clean and unclean. He designed clean animals to be eaten

by people. When Noah had built the ark, God specifically told him to take seven pairs of each type of clean animal on the ark, and only one pair of each type of unclean animal.

God's laws about clean and unclean animals are listed in Leviticus 11. He told the Israelites they could eat land animals that had divided hooves and also chewed their cud, which means that after they swallow their food, they later cough it up



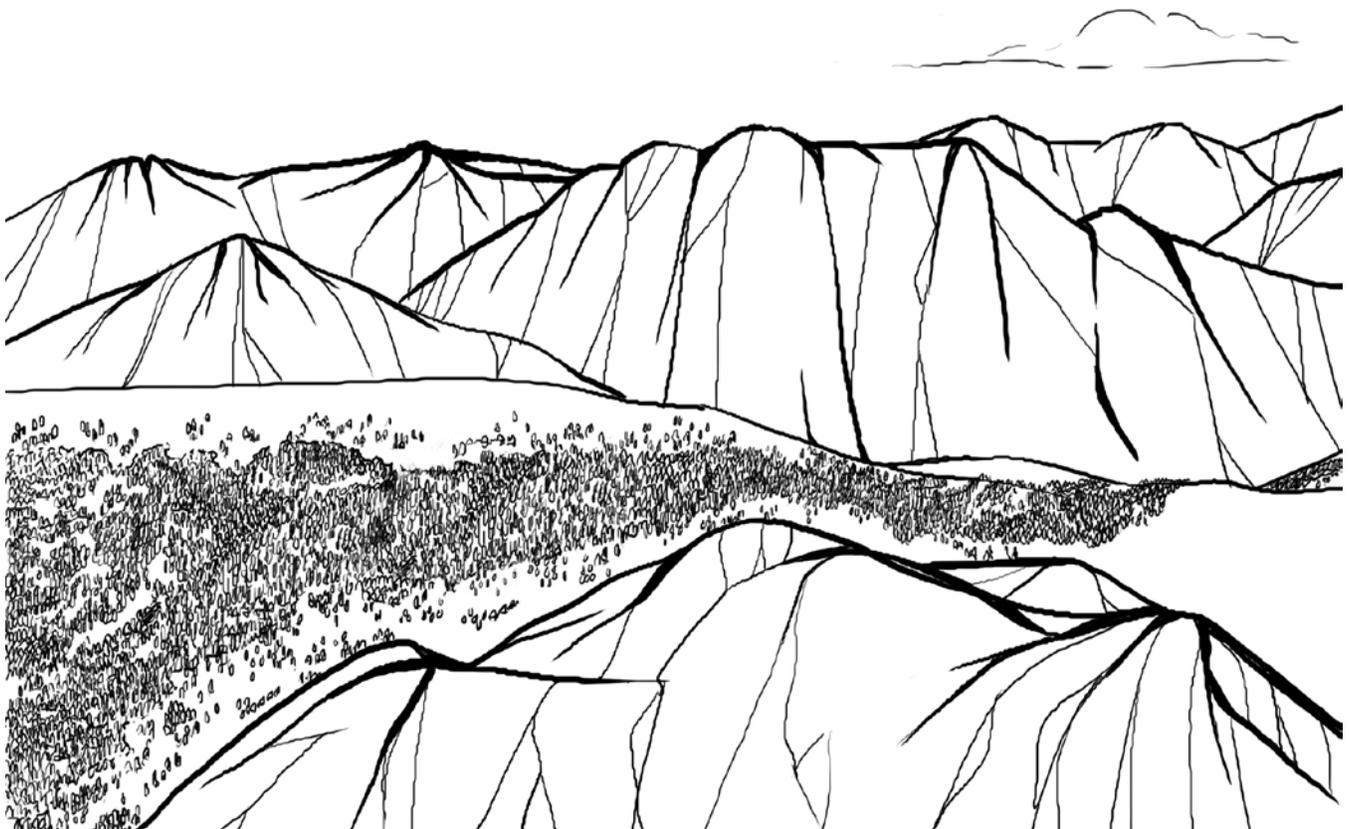
Certain animals are good for food; others are not.

to chew it again more thoroughly. They could eat water creatures that had fins and scales. Regarding birds, the Bible does not give similar rules, but lists quails, doves and pigeons as clean to eat. Similar birds, like chickens and turkeys are also good to eat, but predatory birds like hawks and owls are not.

Obeying God's laws of clean and unclean meats helps us have good health and understand how important it is to God

to separate the clean from the unclean. It also shows Him that we submit to Him regarding a very important and ongoing part of our lives.

As the Israelites continued to wander in the wilderness, God gave them many more opportunities to obey His law. Sometimes they did obey God, but often they did not. Sadly, some people have to learn the hard way, that obedience to God brings blessings and disobedience brings curses.



The Israelites wander in the wilderness.

## Circle the Clean Animals

