



Lesson 37 – The Twelve Spies

based on Numbers 13 and 14.

The Children of Israel just had an eventful journey from the Base of Sinai to the borders of the Promised Land in Kadesh, in the Wilderness of Paran.

- 1) What did God tell Moses to do?

Numbers 13:2 Send thou men, that they may _____ the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them.

The matter was presented before the Lord by Moses, and permission was granted, with the direction that one of the rulers of each tribe should be selected for this purpose. The men were chosen as had been directed, and Moses bade them go and see the country, what it was, its situation and natural advantages; and the people that dwelt therein, whether they were strong or weak, few or many; also, to observe the nature of the soil and its productiveness and to bring of the fruit of the land.

- 2) What did they bring back as evidence of the goodly land?

Numbers 13:23 And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of _____, and they bare it between _____ upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs.

The people of Israel were cherishing high hopes and were waiting in eager expectancy. The news of the spies' return was carried from tribe to tribe and was hailed with rejoicing. The people rushed out to meet the messengers, who had safely escaped the dangers of their perilous undertaking.

- 3) What was the report given to Moses and the people?

Numbers 13:27 And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with _____ and _____; and this is the fruit of it.

- 4) ...and then?

Numbers 13:28-29 Nevertheless the people be _____ that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of _____ there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan.

But after describing the beauty and fertility of the land, all but two of the spies enlarged upon the difficulties and dangers that lay before the Israelites should they undertake the conquest of Canaan. They enumerated the powerful nations located in various parts of the country and said that the cities were walled and very great, and the people who dwelt therein were strong, and it would be impossible to conquer them. They also stated that they had seen giants, the sons of Anak, there, and it was useless to think of possessing the land.

Their unbelief cast a gloomy shadow over the congregation, and the mighty power of God, so often manifested on behalf of the chosen nation, was forgotten. The people did not wait to reflect; they did not reason that He who had brought them thus far would certainly give them the land; they did not call to mind how wonderfully God had delivered them from their oppressors, cutting a path through the sea and destroying the pursuing hosts of Pharaoh. They left God out of the question and acted as though they must depend solely on the power of arms.

- 5) Who piped in to calm the crowd?

Numbers 13:30 And _____ stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.

Caleb comprehended the situation, and, bold to stand in defense of the word of God, he did all in his power to counteract the evil influence of his unfaithful associates. For an instant the people were stilled to listen to his words of hope and courage respecting the goodly land. He did not contradict what had already been said; the walls were high and the Canaanites strong. But God had promised the land to Israel.



6) Did they listen?

Numbers 13:31 But the men that went up with him said, We be _____ to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.

Numbers 13:33 And there we saw the _____, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

These men, having entered upon a wrong course, stubbornly set themselves against Caleb and Joshua, against Moses, and against God. Every advance step rendered them the more determined. They were resolved to discourage all effort to gain possession of Canaan. They distorted the truth in order to sustain their baleful influence.

7) What lie did they tell the congregation?

Numbers 13:32 And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that _____ up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature.

When men yield their hearts to unbelief they place themselves under the control of Satan, and none can tell to what lengths he will lead them.

8) What followed?

Numbers 14:1-2 And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel _____ against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had _____ in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!

Revolt and open mutiny quickly followed; for Satan had full sway, and the people seemed bereft of reason. They cursed Moses and Aaron, forgetting that God hearkened to their wicked speeches, and that, enshrouded in the cloudy pillar, the Angel of His presence was witnessing their terrible outburst of wrath.

9) ...and then?

Numbers 14:4 And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us _____ into Egypt.

10) What did Moses and Aaron do when they heard all this?

Numbers 14:5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their _____ before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.

11) Who stepped in to try to turn the tide?

Numbers 14:6-7 And _____ the son of Nun, and _____ the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes: And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding _____ land.

Numbers 14:8-9 If the LORD _____ in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only _____ ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not.

The Canaanites had filled up the measure of their iniquity, and the Lord would no longer bear with them. His protection being removed, they would be an easy prey. By the covenant of God, the land was ensured to Israel. But the false report of the unfaithful spies was accepted, and through it the whole congregation was deluded. The traitors had done their work. **If only the two men had brought the evil report, and all the ten had encouraged them to possess the land in the name of the Lord, they would still have taken the advice of the two in preference to the ten, because of their wicked unbelief.**

12) What did the mob decide should be done with Joshua and Caleb?

Numbers 14:10 But all the congregation bade _____ them with stones. And the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel.



The insane mob seized missiles with which to slay those faithful men. They rushed forward with yells of madness, when suddenly the stones dropped from their hands, a hush fell upon them, and they shook with fear. God had interposed to check their murderous design. The glory of His presence, like a flaming light, illuminated the tabernacle. All the people beheld the signal of the Lord. A mightier one than they had revealed Himself, and none dared continue their resistance. The spies who brought the evil report crouched terror-stricken, and with bated breath sought their tents.

- 13) Moses went to the Tabernacle, what did God tell him?

Numbers 14:11-12 And the LORD said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they _____ me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a _____ nation and mightier than they.

- 14) What did Moses plead for the people?

Numbers 14:15-16 Now if thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will _____, saying, Because the LORD was _____ to bring this people into the land which he swore unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness.

Numbers 14:18-19 The LORD is _____, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy _____, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.

The Lord promised to spare Israel from immediate destruction; but because of their unbelief and cowardice He could not manifest His power to subdue their enemies. Therefore, in His mercy He bade them, as the only safe course, to turn back toward the Red Sea.

- 15) What did they ask for when they murmured against God?

Numbers 14:2 And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had _____ in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this _____!

- 16) What did God say?

Numbers 14:28-29 Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the LORD, as ye have _____ in mine ears, so will I _____ to you: Your carcases shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me,

- 17) Who would be allowed to go into the Promised Land?

Numbers 14:30-31 Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save _____ the son of Jephunneh, and _____ the son of Nun. But your _____, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised.

- 18) When?

Numbers 14:34-35 After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each _____ for a _____, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise. I the LORD have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.

When Moses made known to the people the divine decision, their rage was changed to mourning. They knew that their punishment was just. The ten unfaithful spies, divinely smitten by the plague, perished before the eyes of all Israel; and in their fate the people read their own doom.

- 19) What did the congregation decide to do?

Numbers 14:40 And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we be here, and will _____ unto the place which the LORD hath promised: for we have sinned.



Now they seemed sincerely to repent of their sinful conduct; but they sorrowed because of the result of their evil course rather than from a sense of their ingratitude and disobedience. When they found that the Lord did not relent in His decree, their self-will again arose, and they declared that they would not return into the wilderness. In commanding them to retire from the land of their enemies, God tested their apparent submission and proved that it was not real.

20) What warning was given?

Numbers 14:41-42 And Moses said, Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of the LORD? but it shall not _____ Go not up, for the LORD is not among you; that ye be not _____ before your enemies.

The night was spent in lamentation, but with the morning came a hope. They resolved to redeem their cowardice. When God had bidden them go up and take the land, they had refused; and now when He directed them to retreat, they were equally rebellious.

God had made it their privilege and their duty to enter the land at the time of His appointment, but through their willful neglect that permission had been withdrawn. Satan had gained his object in preventing them from entering Canaan; and now he urged them on to do the very thing, in the face of the divine prohibition, which they had refused to do when God required it. Thus, the great deceiver gained the victory by leading them to rebellion the second time.

21) How'd that go for 'em?

Numbers 14:45 Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and _____ them, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah.

Though their hearts were unchanged, the people had been brought to confess the sinfulness and folly of their rebellion at the report of the spies. They now saw the value of the blessing which they had so rashly cast away. They confessed that it was their own unbelief which had shut them out from Canaan. Though their confession did not spring from true repentance, it served to vindicate the justice of God in His dealings with them.

22) What will happen at the end of time?

Jude 14-15 ...Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

The Lord still works in a similar manner to glorify His name by bringing men to acknowledge His justice. When those who profess to love Him complain of His providence, despise His promises, and, yielding to temptation, unite with evil angels to defeat the purposes of God, the Lord often so overrules circumstances as to bring these persons where, though they may have no real repentance, they will be convinced of their sin and will be constrained to acknowledge the wickedness of their course and the justice and goodness of God in His dealings with them.

23) Defeated, what did they do?

Deuteronomy 1:45-46 And ye returned and wept before the LORD; but the LORD would not _____ to your voice, nor give _____ unto you. So ye abode in Kadesh many days, according unto the days that ye abode there.

All the reports the Canaanites had heard concerning the marvelous things that God had wrought for His people, they now regarded as false, and they felt that there was no cause for fear. That first defeat of Israel, by inspiring the Canaanites with courage and resolution, had greatly increased the difficulties of the conquest. Nothing remained for Israel but to fall back from the face of their victorious foes, into the wilderness, knowing that here must be the grave of a whole generation.

Can you see God knows what is best?

Would you like God to fight your battles for you?

When is it time to go when God calls?