



**"When Our Faith Falters"**  
**"A Kadesh-Barnea Experience"**  
Scripture: Numbers 13 and 14

**"Effective Expositions For Life"**

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## Introduction

As I begin to write this new exposition from the Old Testament, the very first thing that comes to my mind is, "Have you ever had a Kadesh-Barnea experience in your Christian life?" Now, some of you might not even know what I am talking about, but if you are familiar with the nation of Israel coming out of Egyptian bondage, surely you have heard of Kadesh-Barnea. I believe every serious student of God's Word should be familiar with this experience in the Wilderness of Paran. The Wilderness of Paran is the place where Israel came to a very important crossroad in their one-year plus journey from Egyptian slavery. For more than one entire year the people had been stationed at the foot of Mt. Sinai, where they were eventually given the Ten Commandments after Moses received them upon the Mount. This first-year plus had been a very difficult year including many traumatic things that happened, such as the people's rebellion under the leadership of Aaron down at the foot of the mountain. Of course, this idolatrous rebellion was the result of their wicked impatience and because of their dissatisfaction with the blessings that God had provided for them during their journey through the Wilderness of Sin after the Exodus from Egypt. These Israelites had not been out of Egypt but a short time until they began to murmur and complain, and believe it or not, they even told Moses that it would have been better for them to have died down in Egyptian bondage.

So, these people rebelled demonstratively nine times before this Kadesh-Barnea experience just because they were miserable, didn't have the right food they wanted to eat, and just couldn't have it their own way. Oh my friends, how quickly do people forget how God brings them salvation and deliverance, and then like spoiled children, they rebel against the God who has saved them and provided them with the necessities of life. Of course, we know that this attitude of rebellion is caused by selfish and ego-centric behavior, and because of a lack of reverence and respect for the God Who has done so much for us as His children. This rebellion started out for the Israelites after just a few days in the wilderness. But, as time moved forward, the people of God became more and more defiant until they were so much in opposition to the God that loved them, that they had nine incidents of outright rebellion because of their wickedness. Of course, it is worthy of note that most of this rebellion took place in the Wilderness of Sin, which so rightly describes the actions of these Israelites all the way to the foot of Mount Sinai.

I am sure that most of us remember the rebellion of the people down at the foot of Mount Sinai under the leadership of Aaron, while Moses was upon the mountain top meeting with the God they were rebelling against. Moses was up there receiving the Ten Commandments for God's people, while the people were down at the foot of the mountain willfully breaking the very first one; **"Thou shalt have no other gods before me!"** And, we need to remember that when Moses came down from the mount with the first tablets of stone, he became extremely angry when he saw the idolatry of the people, and he slammed the stone tablets down on the ground. Yes, Moses sinned tremendously, but so did the people who sought to worship a pagan deity in the form of a big bull, which may have just been a leftover pagan worship from down in Egypt. You see folks, we may get saved and get

delivered from the Egypt of this world, but we probably still have a lot of Egypt in our lives if we are not very careful.

So, the people went through nine incidents of rebellion from the Red Sea to the base of Mount Sinai. But then, God brought them to the Wilderness of Paran, where He told the people that it was time to select one man from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, and send them as spies into the Land of Promise. The time had come for these fickle believers to take a big step of faith and move on into the Promised Land, which had been promised to Israel by God. We do need to remember that God had brought them out of Egypt so that He could take them into the Promise Land of blessing. But yet, their entrance into the land was dependent upon them exercising a tremendous amount of faith and by squelching any fear they might have had because of the uncertainty of what was before them.

And, I would like to remind us that there is a lot of confusion in our modern churches about the Promised Land. Often times in our Christian hymns and songs, we hear the Promised Land as a picture or prototype of our coming heaven. These songs and hymns may be good spiritual songs, but this is poor theology because we know that the Promised Land in Canaan could not possibly represent heaven because the Promised Land in Israel was filled with sinful and wicked men, and in order for the Israel to possess that land, they would need to fight battles and withstand the giants in order to possess the land God had promised. Therefore, there is just no way that the Promised Land could possibly represent heaven. So, you might ask, "If the Promised Land was not a prototype of heaven, what does it symbolize?" Well, the truth is that it represents the victorious Christian life whereby faithful Christians exercise their faith and move out of the wilderness of a defeated Christian life into the victorious life, whereby they rest in and appropriate God's promises. The promise of the Promised Land of spiritual blessings and Christian victory does not come without dedication, a deep expression of one's faith, and a due diligence in claiming what God has promised to every child of God. Thus, we now come to the significance of how we handle Kadesh-Barnea experience in our lives. The question is, "will we focus on the giants like ten of the spies did and come back with a negative report, or will we be like Joshua and Caleb and come back from our Kadesh-Barnea investigation with a positive report and a total confidence that we can defeat whatever giant Satan sends our way as we claim what has been rightfully promised to us?" My desire is to claim whatever God has promised to me, and hopefully, to lead and encourage those family members and friends around me to do the same. I don't want to fall short in any way of obtaining or reaching the potential that God has planned for me, and for all of those he has given me to influence and lead. We must not accept the better instead of pushing on to the best! Therefore, we must not falter at our Kadesh-Barnea experience because of a lack of faith and trust in God.

Now, after having been a pastor for well over half a century, I think that I can make a statement that can readily be proven if I need to. This statement is that I believe that no more than five percent of the people in our churches ever come to live in the perfect will of God. Oh yes, there are multitudes that claim to be saved and in the will of God, but for most of these, they are just working in some lessor role in a local church, and they have never sought to discover seriously the perfect will of

God for their lives, and they never reach the potential that God had planned for their lives while they are here on the earth. In other words, they have stopped far short of their Promised Land of blessing because they have not been willing to exercise a stronger faith to do as Jesus told Peter in Luke 5, when He told him, "to launch out into the deep in order to catch the big fish in the deeper part of the lake."

And, I believe you will agree with me, that we can see what I have just stated in the lack of young people committing their lives to Christ in our churches today. Truthfully, according to what some mission statisticians say, 95% of evangelical churches all across America today have no one on the mission fields from their body of believers. We are just not seeing people seek the perfect will of God for their lives, and we are not seeing people push on forward by faith when they have their Kadesh-Barnea experience in their Christian lives.

Let me now tell you that I am totally convinced that just like God brought Israel to Kadesh-Barnea in the wilderness after just over one year plus staggering around in the dessert and wilderness, he also has at least one major Kadesh-Barnea experience for every born again child of God. For some people, there may be several of these Kadesh-Barnea experiences, but there will probably be one major one as in the case of me and my family. Let me share something about our Kadesh-Barnea experience which changed our lives and ministry for ever.

### **The Frye Kadesh-Barnea Experience Was A Gigantic Move To Florida!**

Now, I don't want to sound boastful in any way, but there was a tremendously difficult encounter for our Frye family when we had our Kadesh-Barnea experience back in 1976. At the time, I was the pastor of a new church which JoAnne and I had planted in the month of February of 1973, after we moved back from Tennessee to our home area here in North Carolina. After going through a very difficult time of suffering in our second church in East Tennessee, we just decided that the best thing for our family was to return to North Carolina, and somewhat, start over by planting the Grace Baptist Church in the Bethlehem Community which is located between Hickory and Taylorsville, N.C. After six months of knocking on doors in our community, on the second Sunday in February, 1973, we conducted our first service in a rental trailer on two acres of property located on the Rink Dam Road out here near Lake Hickory, N.C. On that first Sunday morning we had 27 in Sunday School and 39 for worship. God blessed that morning, and we were off to a wonderful four years of ministry just ahead of us as we founded the Grace Baptist Mission, which later became the Grace Baptist Church.

During the next four years, this little mission church really grew with us reaching a high attendance of 286 in Sunday School, and just over 400 for a special day of worship. We ended up purchasing three more acres of property, and building the first unit building for our church facilities. God really blessed the church, and He really blessed our family as well. Also, during the next few years, we moved out of one nice home into a brand new house with much more room, two fireplaces, an enclosed downstairs garage, and a beautiful outside back deck where we could enjoy sitting and watching the children in our housing project. We were just so

happy, and Grace Baptist Church really took care of us. They even had a complete maintenance program for our vehicles. This means that if something broke, they had it repaired. If a tire went flat, they had it repaired or replaced. So, we were just so happy with all that God was doing through us, and yes, for us as well. We had never been happier in our short eight years of ministry.

Then, one day I was sitting in my study in our new church building working on a correspondence course from Luther Rice Seminary in Jacksonville, Florida, when God just dropped a bomb in my lap, figuratively speaking. While sitting there in my study working on that course, it was like God just spoke to my heart and said, "Stan, you have fooled around with these external courses for several years, it is now time for you to pull up stakes and move to Florida and finish your education because I have greater things in store for you and your family." Well folks, I was scared to death, and after I told my dear wife about what I believed God was telling us to do, we were both scared, somewhat angry, very uncertain, and yes, we even had a strong twinge of resistance to what God wanted.

After several weeks when we decided that this was what God wanted, we shared it with our families, and most of the family members thought we were crazy. We had a great church, a brand new beautiful house, the children were happy, and we had a decent income coming in each week. What else could we possibly want? Well, I couldn't understand it, but I just felt this strong leading away from our home area out into the unknown world where God seemed to be calling us. So, while JoAnne and I were trying to finalize the decision, I decided to make an exploratory trip to Jacksonville and take a month-long mini-semester course for four weeks. When I made this trip and took the course, I came back to North Carolina with an A grade on the course, but with even more fear in my heart about moving than I had before. But, when I got back home, we finally came to the conclusion that it was indeed God's will for us to move to Jacksonville to finish up my Master's Degree, and only God knew what was ahead of us worldwide because of this Kadesh-Barnea experience.

So, right in the midst of the summer, we sold our new house to JoAnne's cousin, and we took the \$7,000 from the sale of our house, and we rented a Ryder Truck and headed down to Jacksonville. JoAnne drove our old 1969 Oldsmobile station wagon while I drove the rental truck. We had CB radios to communicate with as we drove the 450 miles to Jacksonville, but the thing I remember the most about those CB radios was the crying of my wife and kids, and yes, from me as well, as we launched out into the expected Promised Land where God was calling us. We were making a huge step of faith depending entirely upon the Lord.

Well, we made it safely to Jacksonville, and we moved into a rental house that didn't even have heat in one third of the house. But of course, it was not supposed to get cold in Florida, but that winter in January, the temperature dropped to 18 degrees in Florida, and we had two plus inches of snow on all of the toll bridges, which literally shut down the traffic. Yes, we got cold, but we just huddled together in the heated part of the house and stayed as warm as possible. But, I must tell you that while we sat there in that old rental house trying to stay warm, there were some very regretful thoughts we had about leaving that brand new home up in North Carolina where we had two beautiful fireplaces.

I wish I had time to tell you about the next several months in Jacksonville, but you can find some of this story in my autobiography, which I wrote several years ago. The main thing I want to emphasize here is that because God gave us a strong enough faith to move forward at our Kadesh-Barnea experience, an entire different world was opened for us to share the Gospel with literally millions of lost souls. Yes, the decision to move forward from Kadesh-Barnea was a difficult one, but eventually the rewards were far greater than the earlier sacrifices we had to make to move ahead to claim the land of blessing, which God had prepared for us.

Although I won't mention a lot of information about what happened to us during and after our move to Florida in 1976, I will tell you that that move opened up scores of doors for us to minister that probably would never have been opened were it not for us taking this great step of faith when we were brought to our Kadesh-Barnea. Because of this one move, doors opened all over America for me to preach over 1,000 revivals in 33 states, and to start working in prisons which I have been doing for the past 40 plus years. Also, because of this move, the door was opened for us to go to Africa and work there for the last 35 years.

Folks, when God saves us, He does so with a tremendous plan for us. But, He does usually try us and bring us to the point where we have to decide, "do I want God's best and to reach my God-given potential, or do I just want to accept second best rather than push on by faith for the very best!" I promise all of you readers that if you truly get saved, and then, sincerely seek God's perfect will for your life, He will bring you to Kadesh-Barnea, where you have to decide, "do I truly want to reach my God-given potential, or do I want to be a coward and draw back into the wilderness desert of a complaining and murmuring life. Just remember that of the almost two million people that came out of Egyptian bondage, not one of this large original group was permitted to enter into the Promised Land of blessing, except Joshua and Caleb, the two positive spies. A younger generation of people born in the wilderness did in fact enter the Promised Land, but only because they had two spiritually powerful older men who believed God and led the way.

Now, I want us to take a serious look at the story of the Israelites at Kadesh-Barnea, and make sure that we don't miss God's best because our faith has faltered as did the Israelites, which resulted in an entire generation dying in the wilderness.

## **"When Our Faith Falters" The Outline And Commentary Of Numbers 13-14**

### **I. PLEASE NOTICE THE SOVEREIGN COMMAND. vs. Numb. 13:1-2**

#### A. Notice the Source of this command. v. 1a

I think it is very much worth mentioning that God commanded that Moses send the spies into the land of Canaan to see the challenge that was before the Israelites. Please bear in mind that it is believed that these people could have gone directly into the promised land in no more than three weeks to a month, but because their faith faltered, they ended up spending forty years in the wilderness until the saved people from Egyptian bondage all died in the wilderness, except for Joshua and Caleb. And, I do believe it is worthy of noting that even Moses, their deliverer missed going into Canaan because of his anger and defiance when he smote the rock for the second time, instead of speaking to it as God commanded.

The point I really want to emphasize here is that the command for the spies to go into the Promised Land was a direct command from God Almighty! Therefore, we must learn from this bad experience at Kadesh-Barnea that it is never a good thing to rebel against the God of the universe when He commands us to do something.

#### B. Notice the subject of this command. v. 1b

Do you remember what Moses told the Lord when God commanded him to go down into Egypt and tell the Pharaoh to let the people of God go? He told the Lord that why should the Pharaoh believe him, because he was really a nobody. In fact, in verse 3 of Chapter 12, we find that Moses was a very meek man. Notice what this verse actually says, "**Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.**" The subject or person that God used to command that the spies go into the Promised Land was a very meek and humble person. Of course, it is very hard for us to believe this when we consider that this same Moses was the one that got so angry that he killed an Egyptian. In other words, it is obvious that God changed Moses after his horrible murder of another human being, and yet, Moses was a lot like many of us today. My point is that God relishes the thought of taking nobodies and doing great and wonderful things through them. So, Moses was God's chosen vessel, and he was commanded by God to put together the team to go down into the Promised Land from Kadesh-Barnea and check out the land. Truly, there is hope for any of us if God could so dramatically change Moses and make him one of the meekest men on earth.

#### C. Notice the substance of this command. v. 2

So, God commanded Moses to put together this inspection team with one leader from each of the twelve tribes of Israel so that they could spy out the Canaan Land. The make up of this team was extremely important, but after reading the negative results when the team came back, I just have to wonder if there could not have been some more positive people with stronger faith for Moses to choose for this very important project. And, I supposed that having been a pastor of eleven churches during my lifetime, I know the obvious results of asking negative faithless people to serve on committees or teams. You might say that I have been there and done that. And truthfully, I don't want to ever do this again. My question is, "I wonder if Moses had any regrets about the people he chose after ten of the twelve came back and said the Promised Land could not be taken because of the enormous giants in the land. I surely don't know if Moses had any regrets, but I can tell you that I certainly have after making the mistake of choosing some negative people down through the many years of my ministry.

## **II. PLEASE NOTICE THE SAINT'S COMPLIANCE. vs. Numb. 13:3-25**

### **A. It was an orderly compliance. vs. 3-16**

In verse 3, God told Moses to enlist the twelve spies from the leadership of the twelve tribes, he enlisted these men in the Wilderness of Paran, and sent them forward into the Land of Promise in an orderly fashion.

In verses 4-16, we notice the names listed of all of the spies chosen to spy out the land, including Joshua and Caleb. It was as if these men were just so ready to move forward to discover what great blessings were ahead of them for the entire nation of the Israelites; God's chosen people. The amazing thing to me is how they were ready to move out and investigate the Promised Land, and then, how so discouraged and negative they were after their spying for forty days in the land. It is almost like their attitude changed 180 degrees in no time at all. Yet, isn't this the way Satan defeats God's children? He may allow you to see the great possibilities and the fruit in the land, but then, he makes the giants look so much bigger than they really are. Yet, we know that Satan is a defeated foe, and he does know that his time is limited.

### **B. It was an observing compliance. vs. 17-19a**

So, Moses enlisted the twelve spies and got the team in an orderly fashion, and then sent them into the Promised Land to really investigate the geography, the topography, and the people that were dwelling in the land. They were to go down into the valleys, up into the mountains, and they were to see what kind of people were there. You might say that God's army was investigating Satan's soldiers to see just how much combat would be necessary once God's people arrived in the land. However, the sad thing was that in the mind of at least ten of the spies, Satan exaggerated the strength and size of the giants, as he always does. When it comes to fighting by faith in the army of our Lord, the devil always makes the enemy seem



more powerful than he really is. Therefore, we must claim more of God's power to stand up against the wiles of the devil.

#### C. It was an optimistic compliance. vs. 19-25

In the second part of verse 19 all the way through verse 25, we notice that the spies went into the Promised Land with an expectant heart with ever intention of obeying the command of Moses to go where they should go, and for what they should look for and observe. So, it seems that they started in at the southern end of the valley, and they progressed through one area after another until they came to the valley of Eschol, which was probably near Hebron at that time. The word brook in verse 24 actually means valley, wadi, or dry riverbed. At the time the spies arrived, it was definitely in the grape season because of the great clusters of grapes, pomegranates, and figs, which were present in the valley. As a matter of fact, the clusters were so large that it literally took two men to carry one cluster between them on a long stick of wood or vine. They took this huge cluster of grapes back to Moses and the people to provide a witness to what great fruits were ahead of them, if they only would go there courageously and possess the land. Yet, we will see that their fear overpowered their faith, and they recommended to Moses that they should not go.

### III. PLEASE NOTICE THE SCARED CALCULATION. vs. Numb. 13:26-29

#### A. Their fear calculated that the fruit wasn't worth the cost. vs. 26-28a

Well now, the twelve spies returned to Moses and the people in the wilderness of Paran with the huge cluster of grapes, and they told the people that the land flowed with milk and honey, and with wonderful fruit of all kinds. It was obvious to all of the people that the land truly was a wonderful Promised Land just like God had promised them. But yet, as is so often the case in this day and time, the spies began to convince the people of Israel that the cost of going in to try and take the land was too much, and that even with the great and beautiful fruit, it would not be worth the effort. Of course, this is what always happens when men and women begin to compare the great gifts of God with the sacrifice that may have to be made. The enormous cost usually wins over the promising fruit and blessings. Again, let me say that this is why so many people never enter their Promised Land of blessing just because their human rationale takes precedence over the amount of faith that is required to appropriate the complete blessings that God has in store for His children.

Let me give you a Scripture passage that well illustrates why so many people never really enter the Canaan Rest in the believer's life. Please notice the following verse. **"Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it (Hebrews 4:1-2).** The truth that the writer of Hebrews, whom I believe was Paul, is trying to get across to us as believers

is that if we are going to enter the rest of victorious Christian living as born again children of God, then we must exercise faith in the promises of God. And, this faith is not just a theoretical faith where we talk about claiming the promises of God in theory, but, this faith is an appropriating faith which truly claims the promises of God daily in our lives. When we do manifest this appropriating faith, then, we can claim the benefits of the victorious life such as peace, joy, confidence, and a life of expectancy.

Going back to the Scripture verses in this point, it really doesn't matter how wonderful and appealing the fruit of the Promise Land living is, if we are not willing to pay the price of some possible conflict and battle, we will never get to enjoy the best that God has promised us.

#### B. Their fear calculated that the fruit wasn't worth the commitment. v. 28b

Many years ago, the great preacher, Dr. Adrian Rogers, who is now with Jesus in heaven, made a tremendous statement, which I have never forgotten. I was listening to him preach in a large pastor's conference. Dr. Rogers stated that we evangelical Christians need to stop using the term commitment when we refer to our dedication to God. He stated that we need to stop using this word because we can commit certain parts of our lives to Christ without giving Jesus everything. He further stated that the better word, which we should use, is surrender. For you see folks, to surrender our lives to Christ means to give up complete authority of ourselves to Christ, and by doing so, we hold nothing back, and we hide no uncommitted sections of our lives from our Lord. In other words, Christ must rule and reign in every area of our lives.

So, what we find in the latter part of verse 28 is that the spies came back from Canaan land with a great cluster of ripe grapes hanging on a pole or part of a vine, but they were convinced that the preciousness of the discovered fruit was not worth the effort to be totally committed to going in to the Promise Land to conquer the enemy and enjoy the spoils of victory.

And so, this is what we see all around us in our churches today. We have half-hearted believers giving partial obedience to Christ just because they are not willing to be totally committed to achieving God's best potential for their personal lives and ministries. Therefore, we find hundreds of these people in our churches trying to serve Christ with a faithless commitment; one in which they only are appeasing their neglectful consciences. Rarely ever, do they do anything that requires them to exercise a strong faith and get out of their comfort zones to wholeheartedly serve the Lord and take possession of the God-given blessings of the Promised Land of victorious Christian living! Thus, we find our mission fields and many of our pulpits empty because of the half-hearted commitment of those who won't go all the way with Christ. In other words, like the Israelites, the delicious taste of the precious fruit of the Promised Land of blessing is not really worth the cost and commitment that is required to claim what God has promised every child of God here on this earth.

#### C. Their fear calculated that the fruit wasn't worth the combat. vs. 28b-29

I believe this would be a good time for us to take a deeper look at the origin of the spies going into the Promised Land. I say this because when the 12 spies returned from their investigation, it just seemed that God's plan had failed. But, we need to know that the idea for the spies to go in and spy out the land was an obvious idea of some of the Israelites just simply because they didn't really believe the promises of God, and, they didn't have enough faith in God to believe that He would be victorious over every enemy they would face. So, the leadership of the people decided that they would be smarter than God and send spies into the land just to make sure that what God had promised could be accomplished by their plan and effort. Please notice the following verses from the Book of Deuteronomy. **Deut. 1:21-22, "Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged. And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, We will send men before us, and they shall search out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come."** So, the idea for sending the spies into the land was not God's idea, but it was the idea of reluctant faithless men who thought they were smarter than God.

I am mentioning this here because when the spies did in fact go into the land with only the tolerance of God, ten of them came out defeated, discouraged, and dilatory in obeying God's initial command. Therefore, it should be noticed that people who start out trying often to limit the risks involved in a Godly-designed project, will most invariably come back defeated and deterred from God's plan. Why? Because, their faith falters almost every time. These self-sufficient, self-seeking Israelites who wanted to do it their way instead of obeying God and go straight into the Promised Land, came out of the land defeated and gripped by fear. These negative spies came back with no desire to move ahead because they didn't want to have to fight the enemy in the Promised Land. In other words, they wanted the beautiful grapes of Eschol, but they didn't want the combat they might have to have in order to get them. As an old time preacher, Leonard Ravenhill once entitled a book he wrote, they wanted the "Blessings Without The Buffetings."

#### **IV. PLEASE NOTICE THE SUDDEN CHALLENGE. v. 30**

As we move on to verse 30 in our text, we suddenly see the great man Caleb standing up boldly in the face of the negative spies and confronting their cowardly like of faith. In this verse, the Bible says that Caleb "stilled" the people. The way this is written in the Hebrew is that Caleb strongly rebuked the people who were screaming we can't, and he literally told them to "to shut up." Please notice what Dr. Rod Mattoon says about this verse. He states, "It is interesting to note that Caleb's name means dog. And, he acted like a bull-dog that wants to sink his teeth into God's will." Then notice this, "What is the difference in Caleb? His focus is upon the power and greatness of God Almighty."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Treasures From Numbers, By: Dr. Rod Mattoon, Land Of Lincoln Baptist Church, page 225.

May I say that the entire problem with the situation at Kadesh-Barnea was truly a spiritual one. In fact, the name Kadesh means "to be holy, consecrated, purified, sanctified, prepared, or dedicated." Yet, when the Israelites came to Kadesh-Barnea they were very far away from being dedicated to God, because if they had, they would have gone ahead and obeyed the command of the Lord to go straight into the Promise Land and conquer it. But, they were fearful, timid, cowardly, and they had very little faith. So, the ten spies were murmuring and complaining about why they shouldn't go in at that time. Thus, Caleb gave them a blunt sermon about their disobedience to God.

"There will be no "wondering" if you should do what the Lord commands while trying to make up your mind. You will just obey! Doubt and disobedience to the Lord denies the promises of God, distracts from Godly priorities, and delays or discourages disobedience to the Lord."<sup>2</sup>

#### A. Caleb's challenge was a calming challenge. v. 30a

I have told you already that Caleb bluntly told the people to be still, and stop their negative complaining. You might say that these negatively guilty Israelites were just procrastinators. They knew that the land was full of milk and honey, and they vividly saw the fruit that the land could produce. But, they were too scared to move ahead in obedience to God's command. Therefore, Caleb had to still the angry mob with a blunt word of denunciation. It was time that these people should be preparing to go into the land and possess what God had promised them, but they were just too faithless to claim the promises of God. And, we should certainly remember that not only did these 10 negative spies die eight weeks later with a plague, but their negativity caused the entire almost two million Israelites to spend the next forty years wondering in the wilderness, and all of the original people died except for Caleb and Joshua.

There is a great message here for church leaders in this modern generation. We better be extremely careful about negatively influencing others to doubt God and detour from His planned journey for us, because we may just be consigning a lot of people with tremendous potential to a life of wilderness wondering until they eventually die prematurely in the desert of procrastination.

Our goal as leaders in the Kingdom of God should be to inspire, encourage, and yes, even push just a little, those whom God has called to the promised lands of spiritual accomplishment. We should never be guilty of hindering or contributing to the fearfulness of the challenge God has placed before His servants.

#### B. Caleb's challenge was a courageous challenge. v. 30b

Please notice the second part of verse 30. This phrase says, ".....**Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.**" I think we can rightly say that Caleb was truly a man of strong faith who believed that his God was bigger than any problem or enemy he had to face. Yet, the negative ten spies could

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, page 225.

only see the problems or obstacles, rather than seeing the opportunities and the fulfilled promises of a great and mighty God. Caleb was truly a courageous man, but yet, the multitude followed the leadership of the loud naysayers, rather than believe Caleb, the positive servant of God.

#### C. Caleb's challenge was a claiming challenge. v. 30c

In the third phrase of this verse, we see that Caleb sincerely challenged the people to get together and go up immediately and rightfully possess what God had promised His people. He was one of those men who truly believed in the true and living God, while the other leaders said they believed in the true God, but they weren't practicing what they had been preaching. They were religious phonies who had little faith, but a lot of fear. Therefore, Caleb's challenge was rejected and probably given much disdain, as it does in many of our churches today where there might be a pastor with a passion to win people to Christ immediately, but the people are negative and refuse to follow this preacher's leadership. But, the sad result is that scores of lost people who could be possessed for Jesus will die and go to hell because their maintenance-minded church members are more interested in the color of the church pews than they are the lostness of people without Christ!

#### D. Caleb's challenge was a conquering challenge. v. 30d

In this very last phrase in this short verse, Caleb's strong dynamic faith comes forth dramatically. While the ten negative spies and their friends were complaining and grumbling about why they should not go in and take the Promised Land immediately, Caleb's strong faith and positive attitude was ready to lead an immediate assault into the land from Hebron in the south up to Rehob way up near the Sea Of Galilee in the north of Israel. Had the ten spies and the other people listened and obeyed the challenge of Caleb, they would never have had to spend the next forty years in the wilderness.

May I stop and insert a personal story here concerning forty years wandering in the wilderness. Many years ago, my older brother was called by God to preach the Gospel, just like God called me later. At the time my brother was called by God, he was married with three children, and it seemed to me that God would really use this man. In fact, I heard him preach his first sermon in my home church, and he really did a wonderful job. When I heard that sermon, I knew for sure that God had truly called my older brother to preach the Gospel.

Well then, my brother was brought to a Kadesh-Barnea in his life. At the time of his call to preach, he had a lot of debt and financial responsibility. So, in order for him to go away to the Bible Institute to study for the ministry, he decided to get another job driving long distance for a trucking company. He just knew that if he could work on this job for a while, that it would not take him very long to pay off his debts, and he would be ready to go off to the Bible Institute to study for the ministry. So, he got the truck driving job and began to work very hard. But, Satan had plans to destroy my brother's life and future ministry.

Not long after my brother started driving for the trucking company, he had a marital affair with a secretary who worked in the office of the trucking company. A child was conceived through this illicit relationship while this new girl friend's husband was out of the country serving in the military. As a result of this act of sin, my brother lost his original wife and children, and now, his chances for his call to the ministry were gone. I will commend him and his new wife, which he married, for trying to put things together after a terrible divorce. But, his Kadesh-Barnea experience went sour, and for the next forty years, my brother, whom God called to the ministry, was sick with scores of diseases and every kind of problem that a human being could possibly face. He did retrieve a pretty good relationship with his children from the first marriage, but he was one of the most miserable professing Christians I have ever known. Just a week before my brother entered the hospital for the last time, I was visiting in his home and just trying to talk with him about some spiritual things, and he assured me that he was truly saved. But then, he asked me this question, "Stan, if I started to the Bible Institute after all of these years, do you believe I could do the work and pass the grades." I assured him that I thought he could, but within two weeks, he passed into heaven as a broken man who had lived over forty years in the wilderness of sin. I am happy to report that some of my brother's children have been successful in the secular world, but only one of them has become a truly dedicated servant of God. Just like the illustration of Moses who was not allowed to enter the Promised Land of blessing because of his disobedience, my dear brother just got a glimpse of what could have been. It is my prayer that not one truly saved child of God will ever have to go through what my brother did because of his or her refusal to go into the promised land of blessing when God brings this person to his or her Kadesh-Barnea experience.

I sincerely love the following verse from the Book of Romans. Please pay attention to this verse. **"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us (Romans 8:37).** This is truly a great promise given to us through Paul the Apostle, but we must remember that we will not be conquerors if we don't demonstrate great faith. And we know what the Bible says in **Romans 10:17, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."** If we are going to be conquerors, then, we must study the Word, claim our promises, and move forward by faith and confidence in the perfect will of God. I don't know about you readers, but I want to live a life of victory and be a conqueror for Christ until He calls me home, or until He comes again.

#### **V. PLEASE NOTICE THE SAD CRY. vs. Numb. 13:31-14:1**

"Caleb says, 'We can win!' The other ten men said, 'No, we can't!' We are not able! They brought an 'evil report' which means they uttered a slander. The people ended up hating the Promised Land.

Doubt and disbelieve despise the things of God. Doubt despises morality, the Word of God, decency, honesty, prayer, church, tithing, soul-winning, and Jesus Christ. When you forget God, you tend to focus on your circumstances. When you leave God out of the picture, nothing seems possible. Without God, the picture looks dark and black. This is why people say, 'The grave ends it all.' 'There is no God or

heaven.' This is why they feel hopeless. Some folks say, 'Live it up!' When they do, they still feel 'down' and hopeless. When you measure your life, trials, struggles, and difficulties by your own strength, you will be overwhelmed by the smallest problems. You will sound like Israel, 'We are not able!' Beloved, realize that God is able even though we are not! He helps us with our battles."<sup>3</sup>

"If the eyes of the people were on the Lord, their enemies would have looked like grass-hoppers. Their doubts are going to rob them of blessings, victories, joy, peace, and security. Our doubts affect us the same way today. Doubt in the Lord disables the Christian from doing what the Lord wants him to do."<sup>4</sup>

A. This sad cry was the result of a misplaced trust. vs. 31-33

Maybe I should begin this point by asking you, "Are the challenges you are facing bigger than you can imagine?" "Do you envision the people who are your opponents to be much larger than they actually are?" If you said yes to either of these two questions, you need to recognize that the problems you have are not too big challenges or bigger than life opponents. You really only have one problem, and that is that you have too small a faith to believe that God is Almighty and can defeat any enemy or problem we face, even if Satan may send us a direct demon force. God is much bigger and more powerful than all of the forces in hell or here on earth! Therefore, I plead with all of us, "Let's not put our trust in our abilities, other people's human ingenuity, human appraisals, human plans or any other thing, but, let us trust God Who knows everything about each of us, and He has a perfect will and plan for us. Thus, if we will trust Him, live in His perfect will, and move forward at His command, He will empower us to take possession of the potential He has for us. Let's completely and totally trust Him and not them!

B. This sad cry resulted in multiplied tears. v. 14:1

As we enter Chapter 14, I can't help but feel sorry for these weeping Israelites. But, my sorrow is not because they are hurting because of their disappointment, but my sorrow is because they mistrusted God and brought this sad experience on themselves. If they would have believed God instead of the negative report of the spineless and cowardly ten spies, they would have been on their way to possessing the land that God had promised to them. But, here they were, crying and weeping over their loss, even after all they had gone through for almost two years out in the desert at the foot of Mount Sinai. It suddenly hit them that God must have let them down, but the truth was, they didn't have enough faith to believe God could and would defeat all of the enemies in the Promised Land. So, their misplaced trust resulted in multiplied tears. **FOLKS! IT WAS THEIR OWN FAULT!**

Now, did you get it? It was their own fault! And, having been a pastor for 54 years, I have watched and seen over and over that most people suffer because of their wrong decisions based upon trying to do their lives their own way, and not

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, page 226.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, page 226.

God's way. I have worked in prisons for over forty years, and I promise you that I have seen the results of the worst decisions that could have ever been made. Here in America, there are 2.5 million people in our prisons, most of which made tragic wrong decisions. These wrong decisions have placed them behind bars and in cramped and dirty cellblocks just because they were doing it their way, and not God's way! Truthfully, as my wife and I have seen over and over in the prisons of the world, the only hope that these people have is found in our Lord Jesus Christ. This is why after all of these years, and now in our deteriorating bodies, we still try to keep going in order to see lost people get saved and their lives changed. We want so much to get them into their Promised Land before they die and stand before Jesus in judgment! This is the only reason we have worked in the prisons and schools of Africa for the past 35 years. May I say, "if you have been in the wilderness because sin and/or wrong decisions, it is time you come to Christ for the first time, or return to Him like the prodigal son did to his father before it is too late. God still wants to give you a life of fruitfulness and fulfillment before you leave this world. Quit crying and weeping, and come out of the desert and start into your Promised Land. The Israelites had been given many opportunities to obey God, but this last mistake at Kadesh-Barnea was their last one because they eventually died in the wilderness. So, while God is still offering you another opportunity to redeem the time and your life potential, come to Him immediately and repent.

#### **VI. PLEASE NOTICE THE SINFUL COMPLAINTS. vs. Numb. 14:2-4**

Well now, the sad crying of the Israelites turned into sinful complaints because the people were obviously feeling extremely sorry for themselves, and of course, they were now blaming their leaders, Moses and Aaron. This is the way it usually is when people disobey God's commands from His Word and end up in the valley of despair. They make these bad choices because they are not ready to go all out for God, and then, when they get themselves in trouble, they start blaming the people who have been trying to help them the most.

##### **A. Please notice the evil direction of these complaints. v. 2a**

We now move forward in these verses, and we see these sad weeping people turn into loud wicked complainers. And now they start saying, "we want to go back down to Egypt." Can you believe this horrible behavior by people who have been delivered from bondage, and even death, and they now begin to reminisce about the good old days back there in Egypt? It is utterly absurd that these people who had seen so many miracles performed on their behalf for more than two years are now acting like stupid silly children. Let me share some wonderful commentary by Dr. Rod Mattoon with you again.

"Their plan was to go back to Egypt, which was nuts! Egypt was obliterated by the Lord and plundered by the people. It was the land where the sting of death of the firstborn was still being felt. It was the land whose army and Pharaoh were drowned in the Red Sea. Do you think that the current Pharaoh would greet them back with open arms and risk another tragedy? I don't think so!



I have repeatedly found over the last 33 years of being a Christian that those who are backslidden do not think straight at all. Their goals, philosophies, and the basis of their decisions are based upon fantasy instead of reality, and they end up getting into big, big trouble. The fact they want a new leader speaks well of Moses, who was not intimidated or pressured to go backward, but forward, in spite of what the majority wanted."<sup>5</sup>

B. Please notice the evil desires of these complaints. vs. 2b-3

As we look further at these complaining Israelites, we find them so mad and angry that they have now lost their minds by saying, "**would to God that we would have died in Egypt.**" This is truly a stupid statement, but it was coming from self-centered selfish people who didn't have enough faith to follow the leadership of Caleb and Joshua and go into the Promised Land. They were so depressed and dejected that they just lost all common sense.

Then too, in verse three, they turn from blaming their leaders to blaming God for their present circumstances. In this verse, they cry out, "What kind of God would do this to His people?" This is exactly what happens in so many modern Christians' lives today. They end up making wrong decisions when God brings them to their Kadesh-Barnea, and then, when the challenge before them seems to be impossible, they get angry at God and start making accusations toward Him. And folks, I hate to admit this, but several years ago when I had a terrible vehicle accident in Africa, and one of my best friends and staff member was killed, I went through a time of blaming God for what had happened. I must tell you that situation was different because we had gone to Uganda in obedience to God's call to win people to Christ, and therefore, my depression and despair was not because we had said no to God, but it was just simply because I could not understand why the great loving God that I served let this terrible thing happen just after we had seen 1,200 people come to Christ in the country of Uganda. But yet still, because I couldn't figure out why God would let this happen, I turned against God. This was wrong, and later I really had to repent of my anger and attitude in order to get back with God in intimacy with Christ. But, in spite of the fact that I did get angry and complain like the Israelites, it was not because of a wrong decision, but because of my lack of faith.

C. Please notice the evil decision of these complaints. v. 4

In verse 4, we discover that the Israelites were so determined to return to Egypt, they had a meeting and tried to decide who would be their leader to take them back to Egypt. They were angry at God and Moses and Aaron, and they just were not going to follow any of their leadership again. It just didn't matter what God and these two brothers had done for them in the past, they were hell-bent on going back to their old life of sin and bondage.

Folks, I will tell you that through my 54 years of ministry, I have met some of these angry and backslidden people who were just determined to never follow the

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, page 230.

leadership of God, or even one of His servants. They just decided that for the rest of their lives they would do it their way, or no way at all! And, I will tell you that these people are some of the hardest people to deal with on the earth. I will just be totally honest and tell you that when people become this way, I just don't want to be their pastor, but I don't even want to be near these corrupt and complaining people.

Please notice some further comments from the old Jameson Fausett Brown Commentary. Please notice these words carefully. "Such insolence to their generous leaders, and such ingratitude to God show the deep degradation of the Israelites, and the absolute necessity of the decree that debarred that generation from entering the Promised Land. They were punished by their wishes being granted to die in the wilderness. A leader to re-conduct them to Egypt is spoken of as actually nominated. The sinfulness and insane folly of their conduct are almost incredible. Their conduct, however, is paralleled by too many amongst ourselves, who shrink from the smallest difficulties, and rather remain slaves to sin than resolutely try to surmount the obstacles that lie in their way to the Canaan above."<sup>6</sup>

I sincerely pray that these words from this old commentary might just challenge you to keep pushing onward, and not to be thinking about the futility of serving Christ because of so much opposition and combat. The promised land of victorious living is just ahead for all of us, if we are willing to remain faithful and reach that land and claim what God has promised us.

## **VII. PLEASE NOTICE THE SERVANT'S CONFIDENCE. vs. 5-9**

### **A. This confidence is burdened with tears. vs. 5-6**

Now, we come to a very special event in this difficult Kadesh-Barnea experience. Moses and Aaron fell down on their faces before the entire congregation of the Israelites in broken remorse and humility. No doubt, these men of God shed tears before the Lord right in the presence of the entire nation of Israel. They were not too proud to manifest this brokenness and set an example for the people to follow just before they would make a special plea to the people one more time to try and get them to follow their leadership and go into the land of promise.

Then, in verse 6, we discover Joshua and Caleb joining in this time of broken repentance before the Lord and before the people. They literally ripped their clothing as a Jewish sign of brokenness and humility, and then they started one more time to plead with the faithless people to please not miss the great blessings of the Promised Land because of their fear or faithless disobedience. In fact, Joshua and Caleb reminded the people that had seen the blessings and the challenges in the Promised Land that they would have to face, but because they trusted God and had a confidence that God would go with them and help them become victorious. And then, once more, they told the people that the land before them was a land filled with great blessings, and if God would delight in their obedience, He would help them possess the land, which flowed with milk and honey.

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<sup>6</sup> Jameson-Fausset-Brown, Commentary on Numbers, page 548.

This milk and honey may have been referring to the possibility of great agriculture, great cattle raising, and even great herds of sheep and goats. Then, the honey was probably referring to the beautiful flowers and bloom in the land which would make it a pleasant place for the bees to dwell, and also, a beautiful environment for the people to raise their children and families. They would have plenty of milk to drink, food from agriculture products, and of course, there would be meat from the herds of cattle, sheep, and goats. And additionally, there would be sweet honey for the people to enjoy most of the days of the year.

B. This confidence is built with truth. v. 7

As I just mentioned in the previous few paragraphs, Joshua and Caleb tried to convince the people that whatever the price or cost would be for their entrance into the land of promise, it would surely be worth it because they had been in the land for forty days, and they had determined that the land was an exceedingly good land, and a fine place to raise their families. So, what Joshua and Caleb told the people was simply the truth. Now, the people just had to decide whether to accept the truth from God's servants, or reject this truth and rebel against God and His servants. We will see their rebellious response in verse 9.

C. This confidence is buoyed with trust. v. 8

In verse 8, we discover for sure that Joshua and Caleb truly believed in God as their Father, protector, provider, warrior, and most of all, their defender. So, they said to the people, **"If the Lord will delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey."** In other words, these two servants of God were completely confident that God would take delight in them, if the people would obey God, exercise their faith, and trust Him completely. And I will say, this is still what God expects from all of His children, even in this modern day in which we live. If we are to possess the Promised Land of victorious rest and living, we must trust in God, trust in His Word, and trust in the power of the Holy Spirit in order to live a life of victory and reach the potential which God has planned for us. I would remind you **"that without faith, it is impossible to please God," (Hebrews 11:6).**

D. This confidence is blessed with triumph. v. 9

Well now, in this verse 9, Joshua and Caleb give a final word of encouragement to the people trying to inspire them to get with the program and go with them into God's Promised Land. These two servants of God pleaded with the people to please not rebel against God and His promises. But, just simply trust God and His servants and they would be victorious in defeating the enemy in the land. They were admonished to know that God would go with them, and that their triumph would be like eating fresh bread while breaking down the walls of the cities and villages. It was almost like saying in our modern terminology, " this is going to

be a cake walk." And the last thing they said to the people, "please don't fear the people in the land."

What a great challenge this was from Joshua and Caleb! They just did their best to get the people to change their minds and go with them into the Promised Land, but as we will see clearly in the next verses, the people rejected the message and almost stoned these two servants of God. But also, we will see that God intervened on their behalf. May I tell everyone of you readers who knows for sure that you are saved, it is never right to reject the messages of true men of God, and decide to go on your own way trying to live for God according to your rules and not His! These Israelites were offered triumph and victory if they would only believe and step out by faith and follow the words of God's men. But, they did not accept the Word of God, and they set themselves up for forty years of suffering and the loss of their Promised Land. And, I am sad to remind you, but scores of God's people are still making these same faithless decisions, and they are bringing catastrophic consequences to their families and churches. I would to God to see some true servants of God step forward and say, "Lord, where do you want me to go, and what do you want me to do?" "I am ready to obey your will for my life!"

#### **VIII. PLEASE NOTICE THE SOVEREIGN'S CONDEMNATION. vs. 10-12**

Well folks, God's patience with Israel had now run out. Since leaving Egypt almost two years ago, the people had complained, murmured, rejected God's Word, and they viciously rebelled against the great and Almighty God Who had loved them, delivered them from slavery in Egypt, and had made them the great promise of getting into the Promised Land, where they could be at home finally. But, because of the people's persistent rebellion, God said to Moses and to the other leaders that enough was enough. Now, instead of grace and patience, it was time for God to bring punishment to the people who had rebelled against Him. So now, let us look at these next three verses and see the cause and the content of God's condemnation. I will remind all of us that we must not just keep rebelling against God's Word and His plan for everyone of us. If we do, we will not only be punished or chastised by the Lord, but because of our decision to live in disobedience, our children and families will suffer for many years just like these people that God so graciously brought out of Egyptian bondage.

##### **A. Please notice the cause of this condemnation. vs. 10-11**

There are several reasons listed in verses 10-11 about why God said enough was enough, and now, He was condemning how these rebellious people had rebelled against Him. I believe the following are the main reasons that God's patience wore out with these Israelites.

1. He was condemning them because of their rejection and abuse of their God-chosen leaders. v. 10a

When these wicked disobedient Israelites couldn't get their way, and when they were confronted about their lack of faith and trust in God, they turned against Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb, and wanted very much to stone them to death. Can you believe how these God-blessed people suddenly wanted to kill the very people that God used to bring them out of the bondage in Egypt? Truly, Satan moved in and twisted the minds of people who very evidently should have known better.

2. He was condemning them because of their obvious failure to worship and give glory to God. v. 10b

Just as soon as the people started to stone their Godly leaders, suddenly, the fire of God showed up in the Tabernacle. I have no doubt that God did this to remind these doubtful and somewhat wicked people that He was still in charge. Now, what I am saying here may be disbelieved, but if these people had been worshiping God the way they should have, they would have had a greater faith, and they would have more likely responded positively to the good reports of Caleb and Joshua when they returned from their forty day investigative journey into Canaan. I must tell you that when God shows up in His glory anywhere, people will be brought to their knees in reverential fear. Thus, God's glory and presence was truly a reminder to these disobedient people that their fellowship with God was not very good.

3. He was condemning them because of their sinful rebellious provocation of God.  
v. 11a

It is utterly amazing to me how these God-blessed people could just go on in rebellion against the God that loved them so much. They had to have closed their minds and just have forgotten the goodness of God to them and their families. Truly, they had willfully removed any thoughts about how God had saved them, protected them, and constantly provided for them in the wilderness on the way to the desert at the foot of Mount Sinai.

Just like today in this so-called modern world, there are multitudes of people who profess to be saved and know Christ, while at the same time never thinking about or testifying to how good God had been to them. If you don't believe this, just go to a prayer meeting in your church and listen to a list full of painful prayer requests that never end, but on the other hand, there is very little of praise for the marvelous things God has done for them. And folks, I can tell you by experience because of the many trials in my family's lives that it is much easier to complain and murmur than it is to be positive and praise God for His habitual goodness. We need to understand that negativity breeds more negativity. So, let's stop being like the Israelites, who truly missed God's best and wandered in the wilderness for forty years.

4. He was condemning them because of their constant rejection of truth. v. 11b

In the last part of verse 11, God raises the question to Moses, "How long will it be before these Israelites start believing the truth of God's Word and His promises?" God told Moses and the other leaders that He had performed so many

miracles and signs to give validity to His message, but these rebellious people persisted in refusing to believe God's Word as absolute truth.

Now, we have really come to a modern-day problem in our churches and in our culture. Very few people want to believe that the Bible, God's holy Word, is absolute truth for every generation. Instead of believing that God's Word is final authority, so many professing believers want to interpret the Bible according to their feelings, or they want to change the Word in order to contextualize it into their culture. Thus, it is not any longer what God says, but it is how we feel about what God says in His Word. So, what we have done is to reject the final absolute truth of God's Word, and we now want to change the word in order to take the sting out of any passage of Scripture in order to make it bless us, instead of convict us for the sin we are committing.

Therefore, just like the rebellious Israelites trying to do it their own way, we too are in the process of bringing down the final judgment upon our nations, upon our cities, upon our immoral behavior, and upon our family units as well. God just doesn't take to rebellion very kindly. **In I Samuel 15:23**, we are told that "**rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.**" And then **in Isaiah 30:1**, we find the following words: "**The rebellious cover their sin and do not take counsel from God.**" My, what tremendous words from the Word of God! Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and then, the rebellious rebel against God trying to cover their sin, and for sure, they will not take counsel from God, from God's Word, or from any of God's servants. They have an arrogant "holier than thou attitude," and their hearts become hard as stone.

Now, I want to give you a list by Dr. Rod Mattoon which he put together in order to describe what damage rebellion does. Please read this list carefully.

- "1. Rebellion robs you of God's blessings.
2. Rebellion ruins your testimony for Jesus Christ.
3. Rebellion ripens your heart for sinful pleasures.
4. Rebellion raids your mind with bitterness.
5. Rebellion releases defiant thoughts toward God.
6. Rebellion reveals a miserable future.
7. Rebellion receives God's punishment and justice.
8. Rebellion recommends you live for yourself.
9. Rebellion rewards you with misery and unhappiness.
10. Rebellion reduces your ability to discern spiritual truths from God's Word.
11. Rebellion rejects those who have concern for your life and love you.
12. Rebellion relaxes your attitude towards prayer and Bible study.
13. Rebellion resists the friendship of godly Christian friends.
14. Rebellion replaces God's authority with self or Satanic authority.
15. Rebellion revives old, sinful habits you once conquered.
16. Rebellion rushes you into making hasty decisions before God's timing."<sup>7</sup>

B. Please notice the content of this condemnation. v. 12

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<sup>7</sup> Treasures From Numbers, By: Dr. Rod Mattoon, Land Of Lincoln Baptist Church, page 233.

We now come to verse 12, which describes God's impending judgment upon the Israelites because of their rebellion against God and His Word. These people had rebelled ten times against God and his chosen leaders, and now God says no more! So, we find in this verse three things that God would do to punish these disobedient people.

1. The first thing God says He will do is to smite the people with a pestilence. v. 12 a

In these words, God is going to kill a lot of these rebellious people. We don't know how many people actually died in this great pestilence, but we do know from verses 36-37 in this chapter that the ten negative spies died of the plague just eight weeks after their horrible complaints and murmuring after they returned from the forty days in Canaan land. Notice these verses. **"And the men which Moses sent to search the land, who returned, and made all the congregation to murmur against Him, by bringing up a slander upon the land. Even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land died by the plague before the Lord (Numbers 14:36-37).**

I think that I should mention to you what the word slander means in verse 36. This word means whispering defamation, or telling a lie about others. In other words, when the spies got back from their 40-day journey into the Promised Land, the ten spies began to murmur and defame their leaders and did so without reservation. They literally turned against God and His servants.

2. The second thing God said He would do was to disinherit the people of Israel who had rejected the opportunity to go into the Promised Land. v. 12b

The second part of verse 12 is a very stern promise that God makes to the disobedient Israelites. He tells them that He is going to take away their Jewish inheritance. In other words, God was going to disown these people who claimed to be followers of Him. His patience has run out, and now, they would lose their inheritance because of their constant rebellion against God, and yes, against God's servant leaders who God chose to lead and direct the people into the Promised Land of blessing. We might just say that God was going to cut the people off, and never let these two plus million people die in the wilderness having never claimed the Promised Land God promised to them.

Now, some of you may be saying, "Wasn't God too harsh on these people?" I should say not! God had blessed these people by delivering them from Egyptian slavery, and for the past two years, he had brought them through the desert, fed them when they got hungry, and watered them when they grew thirsty. He had poured out His divine blessings upon them by miracle after miracle. And yet, the people insisted in rebelling against God, and God said, no more!

There is a great lesson here for all of us who call ourselves Christians. Salvation is truly a free gift, but, once we get saved, we are expected to practice what we profess, by believing and trusting God's Word. We must learn that although we are saved by faith through grace, we are expected to remain faithful, be diligent in

our service, and yes, follow the leadership of God Almighty, even if He leads us into some troubled areas. In other words, day-by-day future blessings are conditional based upon our obedience. If this multitude of negative Israelites would have just trusted the promises of God, they would never have been placed under God's chastisement. Thus, we better learn from the bad things that God promised to bring down on the Israelites. Yes, just after this terrible experience, Moses truly interceded on behalf of these grumbling people. But, we must remember that all of the original group which came out of Egypt died in that horrible wilderness, except for Joshua and Caleb. Sometimes God delays his punishment, but even with a delay of forty years in the wilderness, He still fulfilled his promised chastisement of the people. We better never forget that God may hold off punishment for our disobedience for a while, but if there is not repentance and a turning from sin, that chastisement will ultimately come.

3. The third thing God said He would do was to embarrass the older generation by bringing a newly blessed younger nation into the land and make them mightier than their parents and grandparents. v. 12c

The last part of this verse is a strong promise from God to the children and grandchildren of the Israelites, but it is truly a slap in the face to those who disbelieved God's Word and promises. They murmured and complained because they didn't want to do it God's way. They had pushed Moses to send spies into the land, but this was not God's intention. He wanted the people to trust Him and go forth into the Promised Land immediately, believing with all their hearts that God would go before them and with them into this new promised land of blessing. But, the people would not follow Caleb's and Joshua's report, but instead, they went along with the ten negative spies. Therefore, they would lose the Promised Land, but their children would be allowed to go in. In fact, we are told in verse 29, that all of the people 20 years and older, who had murmured and complained, would not be permitted to enter the land. But, the younger generation would be allowed, and once they got there into the Promised Land, they would be a much greater nation than their fathers and mothers would ever have become.

#### **IX. PLEASE NOTICE THE SERVANT'S COMMUNICATION. vs. 13-19**

What we are about to see in these verses is the enormous love and respect that God had for Moses, in spite of the fact that he had made so many mistakes. For when Moses heard God telling of the judgment that He was about to bring on the faithless Israelites, Moses became the advocate or intercessor for the people. I am not too sure that God needed Moses' entire rationale to convince Him to not send the immediate judgment upon the people, but it is obvious that Moses was trying to use every reason or excuse for God not to send the judgment upon his people. We might be inclined to think that Moses might have been exaggerating somewhat, but what he was saying was probable, and surely there would have been some questioning of God's ability to complete what He had started. So, as we will see in the next several verses, God forgave the people for their sins, but it was too late for



them to be allowed to go into the Promised Land. Therefore, God determined that only those who were below 20 years of age would eventually be allowed to enter the Promised Land.

The question was solved about whether the people would be allowed to enter into the land of promise, but their rebellion against God ten times had exhausted the patience of God, and the consequences of their negative belief were already on the way. The older generation would die during the next 38 years in the wilderness, but the younger children and grand children would be allowed to take possession of the Promised Land. So now, let us take a good look at Moses' sincere communication with God on behalf of the people.

#### A. Notice the logic found in Moses' communication. vs. 13-16

As we enter the study of these next few verses, we must not forget that these angry Israelites had just tried to stone Moses and the other three leaders to death. But, we see Moses drop on his knees and begin to pray fervently for God to forgive these wicked people who had defiantly rebelled against God.

Moses begins in verse 13-14, by appealing to God's reputation before Egypt and the rest of the world, if He chose to kill all of the people. Moses prays to God and tells Him, "Lord, please don't forget what you did when you delivered the Israelites from Egyptian bondage." If you forget and go ahead with this judgment on the people, then, your reputation will be blackened and people will not believe that you are the God Almighty of the universe." Then, Moses tried to remind the Lord, (like He needed to be reminded) concerning the possibility that His reputation would be besmirched, and people would believe that His love and daily protection for the Israelites was just a joke. Then, Moses told the Lord that if He went through with this judgment on the people, then the message of God's anger would travel near and far through the gossipers and those who would spread lies.

Then, as we look at verses 15-16, we find where Moses told God that if He went through with His judgment on the Israelites, He would be known as a ruthless God with no compassion, and because of His weakness and inability to bring the people into the Promised Land, He would probably just slay everyone because He had failed to reach the goal of taking the people to the land where He had promised. The point of Moses' intense prayer was that he thought God's credibility and integrity would be at stake if God did indeed kill the Israelites as He was almost ready to die. Of course, we know that He didn't kill the people immediately, but over the next 38 years, He let the older generation die without going into the Promised Land.

#### B. Notice the longing found in Moses' communication. vs. 17-19

As we continue to look at these Scripture verses describing Moses' prayer to God for Israel, we not only see him reminding God of the possibility that God's name could be besmirched if He killed the disobedient people, but we see Moses begging God to show His manifested power and forgive the sins of the people. Moses reiterates the power of God, which he had seen demonstrated in the Exodus from

Egypt, and also, the protective power of God through those first two years of wandering through the wilderness. Therefore, Moses reminds the Lord of His longsuffering, His great mercy, and His ability to forgive the people for their sins.

Moses just longs for God the Father to step in and forgive the people, because he doesn't want to see them killed by the justice of Almighty God. And, in verse 19, he, Moses retells the story of God's great forgiveness, which brought the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage. What Moses was trying to say was, "Lord you have forgiven these people in the past, please do it again." Although Moses had often demonstrated anger toward the people, and even toward God Who called him to lead them, at this point he was begging for God's mercy.

#### **X. PLEASE NOTICE THE SORROWFULL CONSEQUENCES. vs. 14:20-45**

In these last several verses in this chapter, we are going to discover that God did pardon the sin of the Israelites, but because of their defiant spirit against going into the Promised Land of blessing at that time, the people suffered some extremely bad consequences. I am sure that these disobedient people never stopped to realize that their sin of rebellion would produce bad fruit for many years to come. Just stop a moment and try to meditate on where the people were at Kadesh-Barnea with the Promised Land of blessing on one side of them, and the wilderness desert on the other side. They were put into a time for a decision of faith, or for a decision of fear. But, we know which choice they made, and that choice brought the chastisement of God, a sinful influence upon their children and grandchildren, and a negative testimony to the goodness of God and His protective blessings of victory and triumph.

Let me give you some more valuable words for Dr. Rod Mattoon concerning the negative influence of people who distrust and disbelieve in God's power and protection. "Sin may be forgiven, but the consequences of sin may endure for a long time. The failure to trust God will bring greater problems than those they originally faced. The same hold true for us too! Those who were twenty and older would not enter the Promised Land. God's people named their own judgment. Their own tongues named their destiny. God says, 'You wanted to die in the wilderness, then that's where you will die.'"<sup>8</sup>

"God says, 'The little ones you didn't think I could care for, they will go into the Promised Land (Numbers 14:3). They would have to wander in the wilderness for a total of forty years. One year for every day they searched the Promised Land. Death could have been immediate. Instead, the Lord gives them a detour for 38 more years. They were pilgrims; now they are wanderers. Because they disobeyed the leading of the Lord, they would take a detour in the wilderness of disappointment, despair, regret, guilt, frustration, and wondering what could have been. Does this describe you? Are you on a detour because of disobedience to the Lord?'"<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, page 240

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, page 240.

A. Notice the extent of these consequences. vs. 20-23; 25-29; 31-35; 39-45.

1. These consequences included great deprivation. vs. 20-23

These verses reveal to us the seriousness of what the Israelites did in rebelling against God's command to go directly into the Promised Land. Sometimes we might be prone to take the disobedient actions of the Israelites as nothing to worry about. But, I can tell you that if one of these Israelites could show up here today, that person would describe in detail the terrible consequences of not only losing the promise of God, but also, losing the provisions and protection of God. When the people said defiantly to God, "we don't won't to obey you," the Lord said, then, I will let you see how well you can function without me. Truly, God would forgive and pardon them for their rebellious sin, but they had to live with the daily consequences of saying "Not now Lord." In other words, these people were like so many today; they were devoted procrastinators. And so are multitudes of today!

"An incident from the American Revolution illustrates what tragedy can result from procrastination. It is reported that Colonel Rahl, commander of the British troops at Trenton, New Jersey, was playing cards when a courier brought an urgent message stating that General George Washington was crossing the Delaware River. Rahl put the letter in his pocket and didn't bother to read it until the game was finished. Then, realizing the seriousness of the situation, he hurriedly tried to rally his men to meet the coming attack, but his procrastination was his own undoing. He and many of his men were killed, and the rest of the regiment was captured. Nolbert Quayle said, 'Only a few minutes delay cost him his life, his honor, and the liberty of his soldiers. **EARTH'S HISTORY IS STREWN WITH THE WRECKS OF HALF-FINISHED PLANS AND RESOLUTIONS THAT WERE NOT EXECUTED. TOMORROW IS THE EXCUSE OF THE LAZY AND THE REFUGE OF THE INCOMPENTENT!**'"<sup>10</sup>

This illustration provides a great lesson for us to learn. When we say no to the immediate commands of the Lord to move forward, we then set ourselves up to lose the guidance of God, the protection of God, and the promises of God. We can blame no one else for our deprivation and loss, if we have boldly said no to the commands of our God.

2. These consequences included gradual death. vs. 25-29

These verses, 25-29, are actually a death sentence from God for those Israelites who complained and murmured against Him, and then rebelled against God's command to go immediately into the Promised Land. They had even told Moses that they would rather die in the wilderness than attempt to go into the Promised Land where there were impregnable walls and big giants. So, in verses 25-29, we see God declaring a death sentence upon the rebellious people who had rebelled ten times against God since they were set free from Egyptian bondage. Let me give you another good word, which I read from the Gospel Herald.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, page 221.

"They had expressed that they might die in the wilderness and again the Lord gave them their request. As the rebels were in the act of stoning Caleb and Joshua for telling the truth, the Lord interposed in their behalf. '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, couched terror-stricken, and with bated breath sought their tents. In their rebellion the people had exclaimed, 'Would God we had died in the wilderness.' Now their prayer was to be granted. The Lord then sentences them to an additional 40 years in the wilderness until their wish was fulfilled."<sup>11</sup>

### 3. These consequences included guideless descendants. vs. 30-35

Verses 30-35, are more verses with a tragic projection. In these verses, God tells the Israelites that they are going to die in the wilderness over the next forty years, but there will be a day when Joshua and Caleb will take the younger generation into the Promised Land after their rebellious mothers and fathers have died in the wilderness. In telling the people this, God was stating that these rebellious parents would not be there to guide their children, but they would have two positive people, Joshua and Caleb, who would in their very old age lead the next generation into the Promised Land.

Now, please get a vivid picture of this. The parents have been given a death sentence, and the children are told that in forty years, they will be able to go into the Promised Land and claim the land God had promised them. May I ask you the reader, "how would you feel, if God told you that you were going to die over the next forty years, and your children would be on their own to follow two other servants into the land of promise?" I imagine that you might get extremely angry with God, and this is exactly what happened to these older leaders of the Israelites. They had complained and murmured for almost two years since coming out of bondage. In fact, they boldly did this ten times, and as I stated before, "God said, enough was enough." It is now time for the judgment of God to begin to fall on these people, and it is no wonder that they became so angry.

I would really like to insert a tremendous lesson here for all of us. It is extremely important that we parents and grandparents really be careful when we make decisions concerning our obedience to God. If when we are seeking God's will for our lives, and He shows us some challenge that scares us, we better not hurriedly say no to Him. For, if we do make wrong decisions based upon our lack of faith or fear, it will ultimately affect our children, our grandchildren, and everyone around us. We need to stop and see that every decision we make concerning what God wants us to do, or where God wants us to go, will truly influence everyone around us in a negative way. Yes, it will also eventually affect those family members that try to push you to stay close to home, and to not leave your extended family members to go to a church in another state, or to another country to be foreign missionaries.

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<sup>11</sup> The Gospel Herald website, By Taylor Bunch, page 391.

So, the older Israelites were told that because of their lack of faith, they were going to wonder in the wilderness and eventually die there. Thus, their children would be without positive guidance during all of those years in the wilderness because of their unwillingness to enter the Promised Land at the moment God told them.

4. These consequences included gruesome destruction. vs. 36-37

My friends, how seriously do you take the commands of God when He speaks to your hearts? I have a fear that here in America especially, a lot of believers just don't take the call of God or the perfect will of God very seriously in the days in which we now live. This is a very tragic thing because it is a very serious matter when it comes to God's plan and purpose for our individual lives.

Here in these two verses, 36-37, we find that God's patience with the negative ten spies didn't last very long. Why? Because in just eight weeks, these ten spies died a horrible death caused by the plague, which God allowed to consume them.

5. These consequences included gloomy discouragement. v. 39

Now, we come to a very little short verse which we have jumped ahead to, just to discover the gloomy response that the people had when Moses, the great man of God, told them what God was about to do to them. This verse tells us that when Moses told the people what God was going to do to them, they broke down in tears. Let me ask you to really think about what these Israelites did. When the time came for them to go into the Promised Land, they whined and complained about the severity of the task of going into the land, and they just stopped and cried because they were disobedient to God. Pay attention! These people had been delivered from Egyptian bondage by the power of God through the leadership of a reluctant Moses, and he had carefully led them for almost two years from crossing the Red Sea all the way to the foot of Mount Sinai, and then, on up to Kadesh-Barnea. And, during this period of time God had protected the people, and provided everything these people needed for this expedition through the desert. And yet, when they finally arrived at the entrance to the beautiful Promised Land, the people rebelled and said no to Moses and to God. They had gone into a great period of gloom when they stopped at the brink of the Promised Land, and now again, they broke down in tears because of the obvious judgment of God, which was coming.

6. These consequences included godless duty. vs. 40-41

"After Moses informs the people of 38 more years of wandering and the death of all the men over 20, the people get concerned. They mourn over the message of judgment, not over their sin. Their attitude is, 'We really got problems now!' Unfortunately, their mourning was not genuine repentance. It was regret over their punishment. They admitted they had sinned and said, 'We will go to the Promised Land.' Admitting, however, is not the same as confessing their

disobedience. Confession means to 'agree with God' about their sin and disobedience. Beloved, opportunities from the Lord today may be lost tomorrow. For these people, 20 and older, it's too late to go into the Promised Land."<sup>12</sup>

The disobedient Israel had been caught with their hand in the cookie jar, so to speak. They had rebelled against God ten times, and in this last rebellion, they said they could not go into the Promised Land because of the danger, and because of too much cost. But, when they suddenly realized that they were placed by God under impending judgment, with death in the wilderness, they changed their tune. They cried out that they had sinned, but as we just read in the above paragraph, this was not sincere repentance. You see folks, regret is not repentance. A lot of people say they need to repent because they just get caught. Thus, they want to try and reconcile the situation, but we can't be right with God unless we genuinely repent and agree with God that what we have done is sin against Him.

So, these rebellious people try to confess their sin, and then in strict disobedience to God one more time, they say they needed to go into the Promised Land immediately. The point I want to make here is, that now they want to run into the Promised Land to appease God, and probably their own consciences as well. But, the truth of the matter is that if they went plunging into the Promised Land now, God would be nowhere to be found for them along their conquest. They wouldn't go when God said He would be with them, and now, they insist on going, when God will not go with them. Their new attempt to go into the land of promise would be trying to carry out a godless duty.

I would like to stop for a moment and tell you the reader that so many people in our modern churches act just like these rebellious Israelites. God calls people to certain jobs and responsibilities, but, the people so often rebel against God's call. Then, God allows something to come their way to punish them for their disobedience. After this, they blatantly decide they have figured everything out just how they will be able to answer the call of God and do God's will their way. Now, I know from experience that part of this made up plan is to go when they want to go, do the work the way they want to do it, and then, they do their best to remove all of the anticipated hindrances. They do this because they don't have enough faith to move them forward when God first calls them. But, I will tell you this! I have never seen a person respond by delay and then implement his or her own plan, and then receive the blessing of God upon the task God has called them to. Our problem is that we want God when He calls us to lay everything out in perfect order, show us ever possible challenge or opposition, and then, show us exactly where we will be going. Of course, this is not the way we should respond to the call of God. When God calls, we should respond immediately and go forward doing His will, His way! We must forever remember how God called Abraham as it is found in the Book of Genesis. God called Abraham to leave Ur of the Chaldees without telling him at the beginning where he was going. Yet, by faith Abraham obeyed God, and left Ur. on his way to the Promised Land of Israel. You see folks, if you respond to the call of the God of the entire universe, you need not know where you are eventually going to

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<sup>12</sup> Treasures From Numbers, By: Dr. Rod Mattoon, Lincoln Land Baptist Church, page 243.

end up. All you need to do is to trust and obey, for there is no other way. These rebellious Israelites tried to go into the Promised Land in their own way, but it was not to be, because they were defeated, as we will see in the next couple of verses.

7. These consequences included a general defeat. vs. 42-45

"Moses informs the people that they are not to go up to the land. It was too late for that now. The opportunity was gone because the Lord was not with them. He warned that their enemies would smite them. Though warned, they disobey again and are defeated. They 'presumed to go up' which means to be lifted up, proud, arrogant, swelled up with one's own importance.' When God wanted them to go, they stopped. When God said 'stop,' they went their own way and were defeated. Presumption led to peril.

There are several insights that we will note here. First of all, the efforts of men without the Lord's blessings, does more harm than good. **John 15:5, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.**

The second truth we will note is there is no victory when there is no submission to the will of God. Their presumption got them into serious trouble. It will do the same to us too. The Bible has a lot to say about our presumptions, assumptions, and taking matters for granted. It warns us about getting ahead of God."<sup>13</sup>

So, the arrogant proud Israelites with a false repentance and a defiant determination decided they would go into the Promised Land, even if God refused to go before them and with them. But, even with the warning that God gave them, their mad and sinful defiant determination caused them to reject once more the warning of Almighty God. This rejection this time was quickly rewarded because Moses kept the Ark of the Covenant down at the foot of the mountain, instead of allowing it to go with the rebellious people. This decision by the people to go without the ark was one that surely would end in defeat, because the presence of God dwelt in that ark. But, the people were determined, and because of their defiant determination to go without God's presence brought sure defeat because the Amalekites and Canaanites which dwelt at the entrance of the Promised Land came down the mountain and defeat these defiant Israelites who were determined to do God's will their way. And may I say right here that it rarely takes much time before a backslidden believer is truly defeated in whatever attempt he or she tries to make simply because the presence of God will not be with them in power and illumination.

B. Please notice the exceptions to these consequences. vs. 24; 30; 38.

The exceptions concerned Joshua and Caleb.

1. Joshua and Caleb were men who saw God instead of giants. v. 24

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, pages 243-244.

Let me quote this verse so that we can see just how different Caleb was, and of course, Joshua followed Caleb's great example. **"But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land where into he went: and his seed shall possess it."** Because of His tremendous faith, when Caleb went into the land of promise, his and Joshua's vision was completely different than the other ten spies. They saw how big and mighty God was, and thus, even though some of the people looked like giants, they would be no problem for the God of the universe to destroy and remove them from the land. Let me give you a brief statement about this verse 24.

"Caleb was different than the other ten spies. He listened to the drumbeat of a different drummer. He was totally sold out to the Lord, following Him fully. Caleb had the attitude that Paul described. **Philippians 3:7-8, 'But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.'**"<sup>14</sup>

Caleb was such a righteous and positive man of God. He believed the promises of God when the others did not. He was a man with the power of the Holy Spirit there in the Old Testament. Therefore, because of his faithfulness and integrity, he did not die when the plague came eight weeks later, and he would be permitted to bring the children of the defiant rebellious people into the Promised Land. Truly, Caleb, along with Joshua were men with different spirits than the other ten negative spies. So, it would take another 38 years, but Caleb would get that mountain that he wanted so much!

2. Joshua and Caleb were men who saw good instead of gloom. v. 30

Let me give you the quote of this verse 30. Pay attention to the difference in the consequences of God's judgment, which would not fall on Joshua and Caleb. **"Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua, the son of Nun."** In the previous verse, 29, God told the defiant and rebellious Israelites that everyone 20 years and older would not get to enter into the Promised Land, but that they would die in the wilderness over the next 38 years. Only their children would be allowed to enter the Promised Land, and they would be led by two old men at that time, Joshua and Caleb. These two men were filled with optimism and trust in God, while the other ten spies were weak in faith, and they were fearful of the battles they would have to fight to possess the Promised Land. Yes, they saw good while others saw gloom. It is only the faithful servant of God who completely trusts God's Word, and thus, when battles come, he or she will be victorious because of their powerful faith!

C. Joshua and Caleb were men who saw opportunities instead of obstacles.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, page 241



There is no doubt but Joshua and Caleb had a divine vision of the Promised Land, and when they went in as spies, they never majored on why they could not, but they knew that if God would go with them, they would be gloriously victorious because they served a mighty God. They went into the land with a positive vision and when they saw the beauty and fruitfulness of the land, they came to report to the multitude of Israelites that there were so many opportunities, and even with some obstacles, they still would be victorious because they had faith in the promises of God. God had promised to take them into the Promised Land, and Joshua and Caleb believed God at His Word.

D. Joshua and Caleb were men who possessed courage instead of cowardice.

Right now, I want to give you some wonderful commentary from the Gospel Herald once again. Please read the following paragraph very carefully.

"When Moses revealed to the rebels the sentence of God, they expressed their dissatisfaction with it. Realizing what they had lost, they decided that they would reject the sentence and fight their way into the Promised Land, whether led by the Lord or not. Their utter defeat brought more discouragement than ever. 'The night was spent in lamentation; but with the morning came hope. They resolved to redeem their cowardice. When God had bidden them to go up and take the land, they had refused; and now when He directed them to retreat, they were equally rebellious. They determined to seize upon the land and possess it; it might be the Lord would accept their work, and change His purpose toward them—'We have sinned against the Lord,' they cried; 'We will go up and fight'. It was not His purpose that they should gain the land by warfare, but by strict obedience to His commands.'"<sup>15</sup>

Folks, it is extremely important to know that Joshua and Caleb would have to share in the sentence of wandering in the wilderness for the next 38 years because of the sins of others. This seems so unfair when you consider that they both were courageous and not cowards. Yet, they seemed to have accepted God's judgment on this matter even with expectancy. But truthfully, I would just like to say that I can't even come close to imagining what they had to endure during those 38 years until the older generation died, except for them. Without question, they were great men of God with a faith that transcended the faith of most believing children of God.

E. Joshua and Caleb were men who possessed confidence instead of complaints.

I have been a preacher, a pastor, an evangelist, and a missionary for almost 54 years. And, during this time I have pastored eleven churches, preached over 1,000 revival meetings in 33 states here in America. Also, I have made 85 international mission trips, 70 of which were to our beloved Africa. God has truly blessed our labors through all of these years. But, let me tell you that some of the most painful experiences we have ever experienced down through these years has been those professing Christians in our churches that just complained about

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<sup>15</sup> The Gospel Herald Website, By: Taylor Bunch, page 392.

everything we tried to do. Truthfully, there are some people in our past church ministries that we probably wouldn't even remember them unless it was because of the hurt they brought to our lives because of their complaints and murmuring.

For instance, in one of the churches that I pastored, God led us to start a new Christian school, but one man in this church murmured and complained so much that he literally delayed the founding of our school because of his negative attitude for two years. This fellow is still living today, and every time I see him, I can only remember the hurt he brought to me as a pastor, and also, to my wife and family. But in addition, he held up God's project for two years because of his know-it-all attitude and his whining! And may I say, he still has never repented or asked anyone's forgiveness. He was simply like the ten spies that ended up sending the entire Israelite people into another 40 year so-journ in the wilderness.

Folks the reason the Israelites who were young had something positive to look forward to, was because of the confidence of both Caleb and Joshua. They were men of confidence in God, and they were not given to complaining like so many today in the modern church. Truly, we need some positive people with a tremendous faith in the promises of God, if we are going to build the Kingdom of God by winning people to Christ in obedience to the Great Commission. I seriously believe that one day when all believers stand before the Bema or Judgment Seat of Christ, there will be a lot of people who will stand there and give an account of their lack of faith, their endless complaining, and for the terrible ways they have hindered the work of God here on this earth in all of our communities. This judgment will especially be serious and severe for those who have hurt leaders by castigating and criticizing them, and for hindering or delaying the work of God because of their lack of faith and unbelief in the promises of God.

## Conclusion

Well folks, we have covered these two great chapters from the Book of Numbers in outline and detail. I know for sure that I have been blessed tremendously through this study. I have determined that I don't want to be a complaining naysayer because my faith falters, because if this happens, I will miss out on God's planned potential for my ministry and me. I love being a servant of God, and I have always tried to follow the leadership of God when He leads me through an open door, and in spite of the fact that many times, God has challenged me to get out of my comfort zone, my wife and I have tried very hard to walk through the open doors without fear. And truthfully, I can't remember but two times in 54 years of ministry that I believe I missed God's perfect will. But, those two misses have bothered both my wife and me, but I can honestly say that I was trying very hard to follow the will of God. So, I supposed these wrong decisions may have caused some hurt and misery for my wife, my family, and myself. But, I made two honest mistakes in seeking the will of God. So, this study on the Kadesh-Barnea has been a rich one because it has really provided a big warning sign for future decisions that I have to make for my ministry in whatever time I have here on earth before I finish the journey and go home to be with Jesus. But now, let me give you some other information that might really help you as we conclude this great study. If some of you are trying to find the will of God for your life, and you are having some trouble doing so, please contact me at: [gimi@charter.net](mailto:gimi@charter.net).

"What was God's purpose that had to be altered, and his promise that had to be revoked because of the rebellion of Israel at Kadesh-Barnea? It was God's promise and purpose to lead them directly into the Promised Land from Mount Horeb through the gateway of Kadesh. That this was the Lord's purpose and plan there can be no question. See Hebrews 3:17-19, 'God had made it the 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.'"<sup>16</sup>

"It was not the will of God that Israel should wander forty years in the wilderness. He desired to lead them directly into the land of Canaan, and establish them there a holy, happy people. But they could not enter in because of unbelief. After the forty years of wandering were over and the city of Jericho had miraculously fallen into their hands, of God's original purpose we read: 'Long had God designed to give the city of Jericho to His favored people, and magnify His name among the nations of the earth. Forty years before, when He led the Israelites out of bondage, He had purposed to give them the land of Canaan.'"<sup>17</sup>

"A few unconsecrated leaders who depended on human strength and numbers instead of the Lord turned the Exodus Movement back into the wilderness for a forty year delay in reaching their goal. There were some who had faith enough to go directly in, but they had to remain with the movement, which was under divine leadership. Through no fault of their own, Caleb and Joshua had to share the

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid, page 392.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, page 392.

sentence of the rebellious and faithless hosts of Israel to wander forty years in a barren wilderness. However, they did not die in the wilderness as did the rebels."<sup>18</sup>

Well friends, we have come to the end of this wonderful study of Numbers 13 and 14, and we have dug deeply in some other supporting passages of Scripture. It is truly my supreme desire that all of you who read this exposition will be changed to the point to where you will have a new positive attitude and expectant faith about reaching your Kadesh-Barnea experience, and at that point by faith move immediately into your Promised Land. Please let me remind you that for us as believers, the Promised Land doesn't represent heaven. Although many of our old hymns and spiritual songs use the analogy of the Promised Land to be our heaven. But, the truth is that the Promised Land or Canaan Land, which represents the victorious Christian life, in an effort to reach God's personal plan and potential for our lives. So, may God give us the spiritual fortitude to move forward, discover God's plan, claim His protection and power by faith, and then possess the land that He has for each of us down here on this earth in preparation for our true and genuine heaven to come. As an older man, I am tired, sick and somewhat worn out. But, as long as I have breath in my body, and mind stays good, I want to keep moving forward in possessing God's plan and potential for me. I do not want to miss out on anything He has in store for me and my dear wife. Therefore, let's pray together that our faith won't falter, and our Kadesh-Barneas won't be negative experiences, and that we won't revert back to spending our last days dying in the wilderness of sin because our faith in God has waned away! Thank you so much for reading this exegesis of Scripture. May God bless the practical application of the truth found here in all of our lives!

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, page 392.

