

## Numbers 13 – 14

The Lord said to Moses, “Send men to spy on the land of Canaan which I am giving to the Israelites.”

So, Moses sent 12 men and said to them, “Go into the Negev and the hill country

- and see what the land is like
- Whether the people are strong or weak
- Whether there are few or many
- Whether the towns are fortified or unwalled
- Whether the land is rich or poor
- Whether there are trees or not
- Be bold and bring us some fruit of the land

At the end of 40 days, they returned from spying on the land. They brought a large cluster of grapes hanging on a pole carried by two men. They also brought pomegranates and figs. They said, “The land flows with milk and honey. The people who live in the land are strong and the towns are fortified.”

But Caleb said, “Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it.”

Ten of the other spies said, “No, we are not able to go up against this people, for they are much stronger. Next to them we are like grasshoppers.”

The Israelites raised a loud cry against Moses and Aaron. “It would have been better had we died in Egypt or in the wilderness. Why is the Lord bringing us to this land to fall to the sword? Our wives and children will become slaves. We will choose a new leader and return to Egypt.”

Aaron and Moses fell on their faces before the Israelites. Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes and said, “If the Lord is pleased with us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us. Do not rebel against the Lord and don’t fear the people of the land. They are no more than bread for us when their protection is removed. The Lord is with us.”

But the crowds threatened to stone them.

Suddenly, the glory of the Lord appeared at the Tabernacle and spoke to Moses. “How long will these people despise me? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the signs I have done among them? I will strike them with pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they.”

Moses spoke, “Forgive the iniquity of this people according the greatness of your steadfast love.”

God said, “I will forgive them just as you ask. Nevertheless, as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of God, the people who have seen my glory and the signs I did in Egypt and the wilderness, none of them shall see the land that I swore to give to their ancestors. None of those who despised me shall see it.

“Your dead bodies shall fall in this very wilderness and all of your number from 20 years old and upward who have complained against me, not one of you shall come into the land except Caleb and Joshua because they followed me without hesitation.

“But the children that you worried about shall be brought into the land and they shall know the land that you despised. You shall all wander in the wilderness for 40 years and shall suffer for your faithlessness until the last of your dead bodies lie in that wilderness. You shall suffer one year for each of the 40 days you spied on the land and you shall know my displeasure.”

Then the ten men who brought back a bad report were struck with a plague and died. Of the 12 spies, only Joshua and Caleb remained alive. And the people mourned.

Early the next morning the people said, “We know now that we have sinned. We will go up to the heights of the land God promised us.”

Moses said, “Why do you continue to disobey God? Do not go to the Promised Land for the Lord is not with you. You will not succeed.”

But they proceeded to the heights of the hill country even though Moses and the Ark of the Covenant did not leave the camp. And the people of the hill country came down and defeated them in battle. Many Israelites died by the sword and the others returned to camp in disgrace.

After that the people of Israel turned back into the wilderness where they remained for the next 40 years. And those who opposed God died in that wilderness.