

THE TWELVE SPIES AND THEIR REPORTS

BIBLE TEXT : Numbers 13:1-33; Deuteronomy 1:19-24

LESSON 101 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Proverbs 16:7).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Numbers 13:1-33 (KJV)

¹ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ² Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them. ³ And Moses by the commandment of the LORD sent them from the wilderness of Paran: all those men *were* heads of the children of Israel. ⁴ And these *were* their names: of the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur. ⁵ Of the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori. ⁶ Of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh. ⁷ Of the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph. ⁸ Of the tribe of Ephraim, Oshea the son of Nun. ⁹ Of the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu. ¹⁰ Of the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi. ¹¹ Of the tribe of Joseph, *namely*, of the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of Susi. ¹² Of the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli. ¹³ Of the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael. ¹⁴ Of the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi. ¹⁵ Of the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi. ¹⁶ These *are* the names of the men which Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Oshea the son of Nun Jehoshua. ¹⁷ And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this *way* southward, and go up into the mountain: ¹⁸ And see the land, what it *is*; and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they *be* strong or weak, few or many; ¹⁹ And what the land *is* that they dwell in, whether it *be* good or bad; and what cities *they be* that they dwell in, whether in tents, or in strong holds; ²⁰ And what the land *is*, whether it *be* fat or lean, whether there be wood therein, or not. And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land. Now the

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

The Borders of Canaan Reached

The Children of Israel have come to the borders of the land of Canaan. It seems that their journey through the wilderness is about to end. God has promised this land to their forefathers - to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And in fulfilment of that promise He had led the Israelites out of Egypt with a high hand, after utterly defeating every opposition of their enemies.

God's Provision

A path through the Red Sea had opened for them when it seemed there was no way for the Israelites to go, and the armies of Egypt were pursuing them. God had provided food and drink in the barren wilderness; and when the Amalekites had made war against them, God had given victory to this disorganized band of Hebrew slaves. The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night had led them for more than a year. God had always proved that He was able to give them everything they needed.

Now it was time to cross the border to the Promised Land, and they should have just followed the cloud and gone ahead where God led them. Had not God promised them this land? Would He not now give it to them?

Sin of Unbelief

Right on the verge of having their hopes and dreams fulfilled, the Israelites again doubted God. The greatest sin in the world is unbelief. It is the root of all other sins. If people believed the Word of God they would realize that hell will be the reward of the sinner. They would see the terrible suffering forever and ever that will be the reward of those who turn from God, and they would run to Jesus for refuge. When man first sinned in the Garden of Eden it was because he doubted the Word of God that they would die if they disobeyed the divine command. Because they disobeyed God, all humanity became sinners with only one hope of salvation: through the shed Blood of Jesus.

Spies Sent

In Numbers 13:2 God tells Moses to send spies into the land of Canaan to see what kind of country it is. In Deuteronomy 1:22 we find the explanation of why the spies were sent. God wanted His people to believe Him when He told them it was a rich land, and it would not have been necessary for spies to go; but if they insisted, God permitted them to go and see what lay within the Promised Land.

time *was* the time of the firstripe grapes.²¹ So they went up, and searched the land from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath.²² And they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron; where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi, the children of Anak, *were*. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)²³ And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and *they brought* of the pomegranates, and of the figs.²⁴ The place was called the brook Eshcol, because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence.²⁵ And they returned from searching of the land after forty days.²⁶ And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land.²⁷ And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this *is* the fruit of it.²⁸ Nevertheless the people *be* strong that dwell in the land, and the cities *are* walled, *and* very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there.²⁹ The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan.³⁰ And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.³¹ But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they *are* stronger than we.³² And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, *is* a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it *are* men of a great stature.³³ And there we saw the giants, the

God had told them the land flowed with milk and honey. Just a short time before, they had been so tired of the manna that they had murmured against God and had asked for meat to eat. Now they had the opportunity to go where they could eat of all kinds of fruit and meat and honey and milk. But instead of believing God and going in to enjoy the land, they became cowards and wanted someone to go, and see if they could really take that country. They doubted the Word of God, and what terrible trouble came upon them!

God has made great promises to us; and if we will place our hand in His and trust Him in spite of the way the situation looks to us, He will lead us a step at a time, and bring us into the full blessings He has provided.

God let the people send the spies. They chose a man from each tribe, a man who was thought to be wise and who would bring back a true report. But ten of those supposedly wise men did not have any more faith in God than the rest of the people had.

After forty days they returned. All the words God had said had been true: it was a good land which flowed with milk and honey. There were fortified cities with good houses for them to live in. The sample of the fruit they brought back was a bunch of grapes so large that it had to be carried on a stick between two men. Just think how beautiful that land of trees and rivers and vineyards must have looked to them after wandering in the wilderness for more than a year!

Evil Report

But there was more than the beauty of the land. There were people living everywhere. The Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites lived in the mountains; the Canaanites lived on the coast; and the Amalekites, with whom they had already fought one battle and won, lived to the south. The spies seemed to forget that in that battle it was God who had given them victory, and He could surely do it again.

And then there were giants in the land. As the spies looked at those big people they felt as small as grasshoppers beside them. But do we need to be afraid, even of giants, when the Lord is on our side? When David was but a shepherd boy he went out all by himself and fought Goliath, and he won. Do you remember why? This is what David said to the giant: "And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands" (I Samuel 17:47). With God on his side, David could *knock down* the giant with one stone from his slingshot.

The Lord's Battles

We can see how the Children of Israel could have defeated all the people in the land of Canaan. They could have let the Lord fight their battles. God wanted to do it. God wants to do the same for His people today. He does not want us to be worried and to fret when hard things come to us. He wants us to "stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD." He knows our problems so much better than we know them ourselves.

sons of Anak, *which come* of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

Deuteronomy 1:19-24 (KJV)

¹⁹ And when we departed from Horeb, we went through all that great and terrible wilderness, which ye saw by the way of the mountain of the Amorites, as the LORD our God commanded us; and we came to Kadeshbarnea. ²⁰ And I said unto you, Ye are come unto the mountain of the Amorites, which the LORD our God doth give unto us. ²¹ 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. ²² And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come. ²³ And the saying pleased me well: and I took twelve men of you, one of a tribe: ²⁴ And they turned and went up into the mountain, and came unto the valley of Eshcol, and searched it out.

A Different Spirit

There were two spies, Caleb and Joshua, who made a different report. They admitted the cities were walled, and that there were giants; but they were not afraid. They said, "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." All the spies had seen the same things, but through the eye of faith of these two men of God, the land looked different. That is the difference between the man of faith today, and the man who has no faith. The same trials will come to both; but though the man without faith will give up and turn coward, the man with the true purpose of heart to trust God will say, "We are well able to possess it."

Down through church history there has always been but a "little flock" of Christians, but Christianity has survived through the centuries, defying the powers of Satan to stamp it out. "If **God be for us, who can be** against us?" (Romans 8:31). With God on our side we shall always win. But we must let God fight the battle His way.

QUESTIONS

- 1 To what place have the Israelites come?
- 2 How long have they been away from Egypt?
- 3 What was the Land of Canaan like?
- 4 Why did the people want to send out spies?
- 5 What, was the report of the ten spies?
- 6 How did the report of Caleb and Joshua differ?
- 7 Did all the spies see the same thing?