

LESSON 22: NUMBERS 13 - 14
MAY 2, 2012

OVERVIEW

- . Twelve scouts sent to explore the land God promised – Numbers 13:1-25
- . The Scouts report – Numbers 13:26 – 14:9
- . God's judgment – Numbers 14:10-45

TWELVE SCOUTS SENT TO EXPLORE THE LAND GOD PROMISED THEM
NUMBERS 13:1-25

- . Israelite timeline and route from Egypt to Kadesh (in the Desert of Paran)
 - . Left Sinai 14 months after the Exodus
 - . 3 months from Egypt to Mt. Sinai
 - . 11 months camped at the base of Mt. Sinai
 - . First stop, Taberah, three days out from Sinai – Numbers 10:33, 11:3
 - . Next stop, Kibroth Hattaavah – Numbers 11:34
 - . From Kibroth it was on to Hazeroth where they camped for an extended period of time – Numbers 11:35
 - . By the end of the second year in the wilderness, they had arrived at Kadesh, in the Desert of Paran – Numbers 12:16, 13:26
- . The sending of the twelve scouts – Numbers 13:1-20
 - . God tells Moses to send some men to explore the land and Moses complies
 - . A representative of each tribe is selected
 - . Hoshea (verse 8), from the tribe of Ephraim, is later renamed Joshua (verse 16) by Moses
 - . Both names mean "God is salvation"
 - . This is our first in depth look at Joshua, who will eventually lead the Israelites in to the Promised Land
 - . Moses gives these men specific instructions on what they are to do
Numbers 13:17-20
- . The exploration of the land – Numbers 13:21-25
 - . Scouts explore land from the Desert of Zin (Negev), north to the Valley of Eshcol – Numbers 13:21-24
 - . Named Eshcol (cluster) after a large cluster of grapes they cut to bring back to the people
 - . Bunch of grapes was so large it took two men and a pole to carry
 - . This image is depicted today of the logo of Israel's Department of Tourism

- . Special emphasis is given to their visit to Hebron
 - . This is where God first promised Abraham the inheritance
 - . This is where Abraham lived
 - . The only land Abraham ever owned was here, at Machpelah, where Sarah was buried
 - . This is also where Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are buried
 - . Finally, this is where Joseph's bones were to be buried, which were still being transferred by the Israelites
 - . This is also where the descendants of Anak are living
- . After 40 days they returned to the rest of the Israelites camped at Kadesh

THE REPORT OF THE SCOUTS – NUMBERS 13:26 – 14:9

- . They report on the fertile land with an abundance of food – Numbers 13:26-28
 - . They also report on the powerful people living in well fortified cities
 - . They saw the descendants of Anak
 - . These people were believed to have come from the Nephilim Genesis 6:4
 - . Godlike giants, filled with evil, that God lashed out against
 - . They report on Amalekites, Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites and Canaanites
 - . The very people that God told Abraham would be living in this land
- . Caleb, alone, says we should not worry about the overwhelming odds against them, rather trust in God, that He will provide
 - . Before the doubting ten could finish their doom and gloom report, Caleb silenced them, encouraging his brethren to stand firm and believe
 - . Caleb was forty years old at this time and it would be another thirty-eight years before he would see Canaan again
 - . Later, at the age of eighty-five, Caleb finally gets his opportunity to conquer Hebron
 - . Never during all those years did he stop trusting the Lord
 - . On the eve of conquering Hebron he delivers one of the great locker room speeches of all time – Joshua 14:6-12
- . The doubting ten work the Israelites in to an unbelieving frenzy
 - . They exaggerate the truth
 - . “The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there were of giant size”
 - . The ten focused on themselves, instead of God, and concluded they alone were not powerful enough to conquer these people
 - . The people fed off of their unbelief and focused more on their fear than on God's power to prevail
 - . This fear and unbelief led to a full fledged rebellion against Moses
 - . They wanted to choose a new leader who would lead them back to Egypt

- . The appeal of Caleb and Joshua – Numbers 14:5-9
 - . By contrast Caleb and Joshua had their eyes fixed on God, rather than on themselves or their circumstances
 - . Instead of comparing the giants to themselves, they compared them to God, and in comparison they (the giants) looked small
 - . “The Lord is with us, do not be afraid” – Numbers 14:9
 - . The majority put the emphasis on great giants, Caleb and Joshua put the emphasis on a great God
- . The great men of the Old Testament learned to look to God first and trust Him, then to look at the circumstances
 - . The greatest example of this is the story of David and Goliath – 1 Samuel 17
 - . “When I am afraid I will trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I will trust: I will not be afraid” – Psalm 56:3-4

GOD’S JUDGMENT – NUMBERS 14:10-45

- . God’s wrath boils over in verses 10-12
 - . After Joshua and Caleb make a final plea to trust in God, the people turn against them and want to kill them
 - . At this point God silences the assembly and addresses Himself to Moses
 - . “How long will these people treat me with contempt”
 - . “How long will they refuse to believe me”
 - . “I will strike them down with a plague and destroy them”
 - . We see a virtual repeat here of the scene in Exodus 32 with the golden calf
- . Moses’ intercession for the people – Numbers 14:13-19
 - . Argument #1 – God’s reputation
 - . Just like in Exodus 32, Moses asks God to consider how others, outside the Israelites, will interpret this
 - . They will say . . . “God was not able to deliver to them the land He promised, so He slaughtered them in the desert”
 - . Argument #2 – God’s grace
 - . Moses acknowledges that the guilty must not go unpunished
 - . He also restates to God what he was taught in Exodus 34, that there are consequences for one’s sins
 - . Yet he pleads with God “to forgive the sins of the people, just as God has pardoned them from the time they left Egypt until now”
- . God’s mitigated judgment – Numbers 14:20-38
 - . God listens to Moses
 - . Instead of killing everyone outright, God declares that no Israelite over the age of twenty, except Caleb and Joshua, will enter the Promised Land – this includes Moses

- . This judgment will ultimately sentence the Israelites to the harshness of the desert for the next thirty-eight years
- . God also strikes the other ten scouts down immediately with a plague
- . A group of Israelites decide to invade Canaan without God's blessing and are defeated Numbers 14:39-45
 - . Despite Moses' warnings, a group of Israelites decide to strike out on their own, without God's presence, and try to defeat those in the hill country
 - . The Israelite army is badly beaten, many are killed and the people were pushed back to Hormah, a town just east of Beersheba on the southern edge of Canaan

NEXT LESSON IS WEDNESDAY MAY 16, 2012: NUMBERS 15 - 19