



Way Point Chronicles

Traveling through the Old Testament by Chronological Stories

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Way Point 38

Ten Spies Too Many

Story of the Twelve Spies

Travel Log

Personal Notes

The journey has been long. The trials have been hard. Through it all, from the time of God calling Abraham to separate and become a separated people, God has lead and providentially cared for Israel as the years passed. Now they have Egypt behind, the Law of Moses has been given, the Promised Land lives at their door.

I- Send in the Spies:

The commandment comes from God to Moses to send in men to spy out the land of promise. Please notice these were the men of leadership within each tribe of the nation.

Numbers 13:1-3 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan... 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.

Let us first stop here at this Way Point and make an observation. The leadership that is put in place in any organization is critically important. We must not put men or women in place because of popularity or because they give financially in a big way. We must attempt to select spiritually thinking people for the work of God. Sending in the spies seems like it was God's perfect will until we look at the additional information provided for us by Moses in *Deut 1:22 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.*

It seems by reading the verse prior to this that God intended for them to simply go in a possess the land without spying it out. *Deuteronomy 1:21 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.*

II- The Promise:

These twelve were selected to represent the nation of Israel and attempt to discern the will of God but as have stated the will of God was that they possess the land.

Let us tarry here a moment at the promise in *Numbers 13:2 ...which I give unto the children of Israel...* The God of the universe, who had revealed Himself to them in a multitude of ways in the past few months, tells them to go search out the land that He had given them. This promise harkens back to the promise God made to Abraham.

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Genesis 12:7 And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.

Genesis 13:14-15 And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: 15 For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.

So, the promise that is restated here as the spies are preparing to go into the land is the promise that God had made to Abraham around 500 years before. The timeline of God has seemed at times to move slow as we have previously noticed in our study but God was and is faithful to keep His promises.

III- The Leaders of the Tribes:

In *Numbers 13:4-15* records for us the names of each of the twelve individuals that were sent into the land. The twelve tribes included Ephraim and Manasseh the two sons of Joseph as two of the twelve.

Numbers 13:4 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.

Of special notice for us is the one from the tribe of Judah, a man named Caleb and the one from the tribe of Ephraim, Joshua.

The instruction given to the spies is found in *Numbers 13:17 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 time was the time of the firstripe grapes.*

IV- The Mission and Initial Report:



Coordinates:

Numbers 13:1-14:24

Sights to See:

- 1- The obvious will of God should not be questioned but simply implemented.
- 2- Spiritual criteria should be applied when choosing leadership.
- 3- Majority rule can also be majority wrong if we are not careful.
- 4- God had prepared a land that was abundant in all the resources that were needed for the Children of Israel. By the way this fruitfulness in the land had taken years to achieve in all probability.
- 5- Those who are in leadership must be careful in they wording and ways they give information in order to not discourage others.
- 6- We can see from this and other evidences in the Word of God that rebellion carries with it a high cost.
- 7- We need to learn from these example and apply them to our lives.



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The twelve prepared for the journey and entered the land and searched it out. They would spend the next 40 days in the land searching it out before returning with their intelligence report.

Number 13:21 So they went up, and searched the land ... 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. ... 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.

The report and evidence that they carried back showed that the land was one that was fruitful and a land of plenty in which they could live. The land was prepared for occupation by the Children of Israel.

V- Ten Spies Too Many:

After the initial report they give another view of the land. Yes it is a great land BUT...*Numbers 13:28 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.*

Let me stop and ask a simply question. Does the majority opinion always constitute the will of God? Obviously not. This committee of men had failed to see that the promise of God was secure because the God of the promise was faithful. They looked at how big the giants were not how big God is.

But in the midst of this negative report there was a minority voice of reason. Notice *Numbers 13:30 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.*

Numbers 13:31 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 sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

Notice the parallel passage in *Deuteronomy 1:26 Notwithstanding ye would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God: 27 And ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because the LORD hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us. 28 Whither shall we go up? our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people is greater and taller than we; the cities are great and walled up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there. 29 Then I said unto you, Dread not, neither be afraid of them. 30 The LORD your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes; 31 And in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the LORD thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place. 32 Yet in this thing ye did not believe the LORD your God, 33 Who went in the way before you, to search you out a place to pitch your tents in, in fire by night, to shew you by what way ye should go, and in a cloud by day.*



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This was a trust issue that the children of Israel had. They walked by sight and not by faith. They could only see what they could do and not what was possible with God. May I submit that there were 10 spies too many who entered the land. If there had only been Caleb and Joshua perhaps they would have trusted God more and entered the land immediately.

These were guilty of wanting things to return again to the ways it was in Egypt. They even conspired to appoint a leader who would return them to Egypt. ***Numbers 14:1 And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. 2 And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness! 3 And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? 4 And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.***

Now imagine the scene if they had returned to Egypt. Can you hear them say, “Hey, Pharaoh we’re sorry we ran off. We have come back for you to abuse and work us like dogs. We want to live in bondage and hardship.” Remember memories of the past are always nostalgic at best.

VI- The Judgment for Rebellion:

In the ensuing verses of ***Numbers 14*** we see that Moses pleads the case of Israel to keep God from destroying them. Joshua and Caleb plead for them to reconsider and not rebel against God. ***Numbers 14:5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. 6 And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes: ...8 If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. 9 Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not.***

By this time the people had moved from rebellion to downright evil. They practiced the method of if you don’t like the message kill the messenger. ***Numbers 14:10 But all the congregation bade stone them with stones.***

God threatened to destroy them and raise up a nation from Moses. ***Number 14:10 ...And the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel....12 I will smite them ... and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they.***

God again pardon Israel but lays of the high cost of the rebellion. ***Numbers 14:20 And the LORD said, I have pardoned according to thy word: ... 22 Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; 23 Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it: 24 But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.***

Only the two spies who wanted to follow God’s will were promised to see the land. Rebellion a high cost. Speaking of these events the Apostle Paul wrote ***1 Corinthians 10:10-11 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*** These are example for us to learn from and not make the same mistake.