



Lesson 11

The Twelve Spies

Numbers 13-14



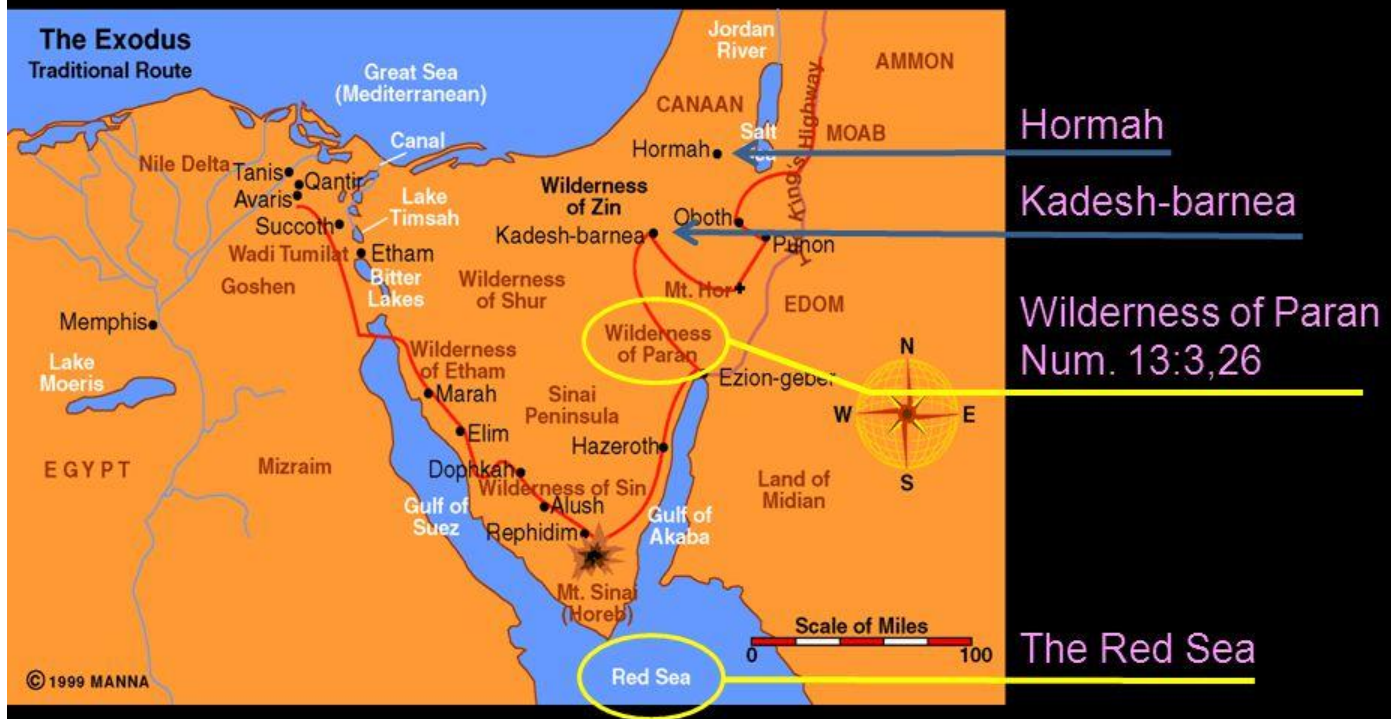
Setting:

- Numbers 10 – Israel leaves Mt. Sinai
- Numbers 11 – people complain, elders appointed to assist Moses, plague from God
- Numbers 12 – Aaron and Miriam speak against Moses
- Numbers 13 – on the cusp of Canaan

Numbers 13

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²“Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the people of Israel. From each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a chief among them.” ³So Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran, according to the command of the LORD, all of them men who were heads of the people of Israel.

Geographical Location of Events (Numbers 13-14)



⁴ And these were their names:

From the tribe of [Reuben](#), **Shammua** the son of Zaccur;

⁵ from the tribe of [Simeon](#), **Shaphat** the son of Hori;

⁶ from the tribe of [Judah](#), **Caleb** the son of Jephunneh;

⁷ from the tribe of [Issachar](#), **Igal** the son of Joseph;

⁸ from the tribe of [Ephraim](#), **Hoshea** (Joshua) the son of Nun;

⁹ from the tribe of [Benjamin](#), **Palti** the son of Raphu;

¹⁰ from the tribe of [Zebulun](#), **Gaddiel** the son of Sodi;

¹¹ from the tribe of [Joseph](#) (that is, from the tribe of [Manasseh](#)), **Gaddi** the son of Susi;

¹² from the tribe of [Dan](#), **Ammiel** the son of Gemalli;

¹³ from the tribe of [Asher](#), **Sethur** the son of Michael;

¹⁴ from the tribe of [Naphtali](#), **Nahbi** the son of Vophsi;

¹⁵ from the tribe of [Gad](#), **Geuel** the son of Machi.

¹⁶ These were the names of the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land. **And Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun Joshua.** [*Hoshea* = he saves; *Joshua* = the LORD saves]

¹⁷ Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan and said to them,

1. "Go up into the Negeb and go up into the hill country, and
2. see what the land is,
3. and whether the people who dwell in it are strong or weak,
4. whether they are few or many,
5. and whether the land that they dwell in is good or bad,
6. and whether the cities that they dwell in are camps or strongholds,
7. and whether the land is rich or poor,
8. and whether there are trees in it or not.

9. Be of good courage and bring some of the fruit of the land.” Now the time was the season of the first ripe grapes.

²¹ So they went up and spied out the land from the wilderness of Zin to Rehob, near Lebo-hamath. ²² They went up into the Negeb and came to Hebron. Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the descendants of Anak, were there. (Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in



Egypt.) ²³ And they came to the Valley of Eshcol and cut down from there a branch with a single cluster of grapes, and they carried it on a pole between two of them; they also brought some pomegranates and figs. ²⁴ That place was called the Valley of Eshcol (means: cluster), because of the cluster that the people of Israel cut down from there.

²⁵ **At the end of forty days** they returned from spying out the land. ²⁶ And they came to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the people of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh. They **brought back word** to them and to all the congregation, and **showed them the fruit of the land.** ²⁷ And they told him, “We came to the land to which you sent us. It flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. ²⁸ However, the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large. And besides, we saw the descendants of Anak there. ²⁹ The Amalekites dwell in the land of the Negeb. The Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the hill country. And the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and along the Jordan.”

Spy Check List

1. “Go up into the Negeb and go up into the hill country,
2. see what the land is, - **flowing with milk and honey**
3. whether the people who dwell in it are **strong** or weak,
4. whether they are few or **many**,
5. whether the land that they dwell in is **good** or **bad**,
6. whether the cities that they dwell in are camps or **strongholds**,
7. whether the land is **rich** or poor,
8. whether there are trees in it or not.
9. Be of good courage and bring some of the fruit of the land.” Now the time was the season of the first ripe **grapes**.

³⁰ **But Caleb quieted the people** before Moses and said, **“Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it.”** ³¹ Then the men who had gone up with him said, **“We are not able to go up against the people**, for they are stronger than we are.” ³² So they brought to the people of Israel a bad report of the land that they had spied out, saying, “The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, **is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are of great height.** ³³ And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and **we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them.**”

- Seeing through human eyes and only the “bad”
- Not seeing through the eyes of faith, not seeing bounty, not relying on God’s Word

Numbers 14

Then **all the congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night.** ² And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The whole congregation said to them, **“Would that we had died in the land of Egypt!”** ^{*} **Or would that we had died in this wilderness!** ³ **Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword?** Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. **Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?**” ⁴ And they said to one another, **“Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt.”** ^{*}

- Notice the discrediting of God and misrepresenting Him, cf. Adam in Eden, Golden Calf, etc.

⁵ Then **Moses and Aaron fell on their faces** before all the assembly of the congregation of the people of Israel. ⁶ And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, **tore their clothes** ⁷ and said to all the congregation of the people of Israel, **“The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceedingly good land. ⁸ If the LORD delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey. ⁹ Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not fear the**

people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection is removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them.” ¹⁰ Then all the congregation said to stone them with stones. But the glory of the LORD appeared at the tent of meeting to all the people of Israel.

¹¹ And the LORD said to Moses, “How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them? ¹² I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they.”

¹³ But Moses said to the LORD, (interceding just as with Golden Calf) “Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for you brought up this people in your might from among them, ¹⁴ and they will tell the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that you, O LORD, are in the midst of this people. if riches increase, set not your heart on them. For you, O LORD, are seen face to face, and your cloud stands over them and you go before them, in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. ¹⁵ Now if you kill this people as one man, then the nations who have heard your fame will say, ¹⁶ ‘It is because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land that he swore to give to them that he has killed them in the wilderness.’ ¹⁷ And now, please let the power of the Lord be great as you have promised, saying, ¹⁸ ‘The LORD is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but he will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, to the third and the fourth generation.’ ¹⁹ Please pardon the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of your steadfast love, just as you have forgiven this people, from Egypt until now.” [confession]

²⁰ Then the LORD said, “I have pardoned, according to your word. [absolution] ²¹ But truly, as I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD, ²² none of the men who have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have put me to the test these ten times and have not obeyed my voice, ²³ shall see the land that I swore to give to their fathers. And none of those who despised me shall see it. [consequence, cf. Eden, David, etc.]

²⁴ But my servant Caleb, because he has a **different spirit** and has **followed me fully**, I will bring into the land into which he went, and his descendants shall possess it. ²⁵ **Now, since the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwell in the valleys, turn tomorrow and set out for the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea.**”

- What a blow! Imagine the disappointment—so far they have come, so near they are to the Promised Land, but turn and go the other way.

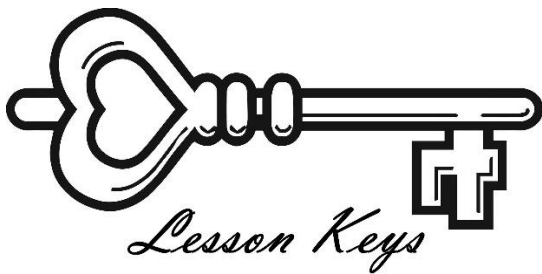
²⁶ And the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, ²⁷ “How long shall this wicked congregation grumble against me? I have heard the grumbings of the people of Israel, which they grumble against me. ²⁸ **Say to them,**

‘As I live, declares the LORD, what you have said in my hearing I will do to you: ²⁹ your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness, and of all your number, listed in the census (cf. Numbers chapter 1) from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against me, ³⁰ **not one shall come into the land where I swore that I would make you dwell, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.** ³¹ But your little ones, who you said would become a prey, I will bring in, and they shall know the land that you have rejected. ³² But as for you, your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness. ³³ And your children shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years and shall suffer for your faithlessness, until the last of your dead bodies lies in the wilderness. ³⁴ **According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, a year for each day, you shall bear your iniquity forty years, and you shall know my displeasure.**’ ³⁵ I, the LORD, have spoken. Surely this will I do to all this wicked congregation who are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall come to a full end, and there they shall die.”

³⁶ And the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned and made all the congregation grumble against him by bringing up a bad report about the land— ³⁷ **the men who brought up a bad report of the land—died by plague before the LORD.** ³⁸ Of those men who went to spy out the land, only Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive.

³⁹ When Moses told these words to all the people of Israel, the people mourned greatly. ⁴⁰ And they rose early in the morning and went up to the heights of the hill country, saying, “**Here we**

are. We will go up to the place that the LORD has promised, for we have sinned.” ⁴¹ But Moses said, “Why now are you transgressing the command of the LORD, when that will not succeed?” ⁴² Do not go up, for the LORD is not among you, lest you be struck down before your enemies. ⁴³ For there the Amalekites and the Canaanites are facing you, and you shall fall by the sword. **Because you have turned back from following the LORD, the LORD will not be with you.** ⁴⁴ But they presumed to go up to the heights of the hill country, although neither the ark of the covenant of the LORD nor Moses departed out of the camp. ⁴⁵ Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down and **defeated them and pursued them, even to Hormah.**



1. See the faithfulness of God vs. the rebellion of the people (again)
2. Moses' role as mediator, just as with the Golden Calf—again, a type of Christ (Deuteronomy 18:15, 1 Timothy 2:5).
3. Confession...Absolution...still consequence; the consequence does not diminish the forgiveness
4. Historically how Israel came to “wander” 40 years in the wilderness
5. The lesson of Joshua and Caleb—where to look, on what to rely