

Twelve Spies Sent to Canaan (late Summer/early Fall 1445 BC)

Numbers 13

Yahweh Sanctions the People's Desire to Send Spies Into Canaan (see Deut 1:19–25)

1 The LORD spoke to Moses:

2 “Send out men to investigate the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. You are to send one man from each ancestral tribe, each one a leader among them.”

3 So Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran at the command of the LORD. All of them were leaders of the Israelites.

List of Tribal Spies (Moses gives Hoshea the Ephraimite the name Joshua)

4 Now these were their names: from the tribe of Reuben, Shammua son of Zaccur;

5 from the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat son of Hori;

6 from the tribe of Judah, Caleb son of Jephunneh;

7 from the tribe of Issachar, Igal son of Joseph;

8 from the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea son of Nun;

9 from the tribe of Benjamin, Palti son of Raphu;

10 from the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel son of Sodi;

11 from the tribe of Joseph, namely, the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi son of Susi;

12 from the tribe of Dan, Ammiel son of Gemalli;

13 from the tribe of Asher, Sethur son of Michael;

14 from the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi son of Vopshi;

15 from the tribe of Gad, Geuel son of Maki.

16 These are the names of the men whom Moses sent to investigate the land. And Moses gave Hoshea son of Nun the name Joshua.

Moses Gives the Spies Their Assignment

17 When Moses sent them to investigate the land of Canaan, he told them, “Go up through the Negev, and then go up into the hill country

18 and see what the land is like, and whether the people who live in it are strong or weak, few or many,

19 and whether the land they live in is good or bad, and whether the cities they inhabit are like camps or fortified cities,

20 and whether the land is rich or poor, and whether or not there are forests in it. And be brave, and bring back some of the fruit of the land.” Now it was the time of year for the first ripe grapes.

Journey of the Spies

21 So they went up and investigated the land from the wilderness of Zin to Rehob, at the entrance of Hamath.

22 When they went up through the Negev, they came to Hebron where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, descendants of Anak, were living. (Now Hebron had been built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)

23 When they came to the valley of Eshcol, they cut down from there a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they carried it on a staff between two men, as well as some of the pomegranates and the figs.

24 That place was called the Eshcol Valley, because of the cluster of grapes that the Israelites cut from there.

25 They returned from investigating the land after forty days.

The Spies Report to Moses, Aaron and the People

26 They came back to Moses and Aaron and to the whole community of the Israelites in the wilderness of Paran at Kadesh. They reported to the whole community and showed the fruit of the land.

27 They told Moses, “We went to the land where you sent us. It is indeed flowing with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.

28 But the inhabitants are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large. Moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there.

29 The Amalekites live in the land of the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan.”

30 Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses, saying, “Let us go up and occupy it, for we are well able to conquer it.”

31 But the men who had gone up with him said, “We are not able to go up against these people, because they are stronger than we are!”

32 Then they presented the Israelites with a discouraging report of the land they had investigated, saying, “The land that we passed through to investigate is a land that devours its inhabitants. All the people we saw there are of great stature.

33 We even saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak came from the Nephilim), and we seemed like grasshoppers both to ourselves and to them.”

The Israelites Revolt (late Summer/early Fall 1445 BC)

Numbers 14

Rebellion—The People Demand to Return to Egypt

1 Then all the community raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night.

2 And all the Israelites murmured against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, “If only we had died in the land of Egypt, or if only we had perished in this wilderness!

3 Why has the LORD brought us into this land only to be killed by the sword, that our wives and our children should become plunder? Wouldn’t it be better for us to return to Egypt?”

4 So they said to one another, “Let’s appoint a leader and return to Egypt.”

Joshua and Caleb Beg the People to Believe God

5 Then Moses and Aaron fell down with their faces to the ground before the whole assembled community of the Israelites.

6 And Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, two of those who had investigated the land, tore their garments.

7 They said to the whole community of the Israelites, “The land we passed through to investigate is an exceedingly good land.

8 If the LORD delights in us, then he will bring us into this land and give it to us—a land that is flowing 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 has turned aside from them, but the LORD is with us. Do not fear them!”

10a However, the whole community threatened to stone them.

Yahweh Intervenes and Prepares to Destroy Israel

10b But the glory of the LORD appeared to all the Israelites at the tent of meeting.

11 The LORD said to Moses, “How long will this people despise me, and how long will they not believe in me, in spite of the signs that I have done among them?

12 I will strike them with the pestilence, and I will disinherit them; I will make you into a nation that is greater and mightier than they!”

Moses Intercedes for the People for the Sake of Yahweh’s Name

13 Moses said to the LORD, “When the Egyptians hear it—for you brought up this people by your power from among them—

14 then they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that you, LORD, are among this people, that you, LORD, are seen face to face, that your cloud stands over them, and that you go before them by day in a pillar of cloud and in a pillar of fire by night.

15 If you kill this entire people at once, then the nations that have heard of your fame will say,

16 ‘Because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land that he swore to them, he killed them in the wilderness.’

17 So now, let the power of my Lord be great, just as you have said,

18 ‘The LORD is slow to anger and abounding in loyal love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children until the third and fourth generations.’

19 Please forgive the iniquity of this people according to your great loyal love, just as you have forgiven this people from Egypt even until now.”

Yahweh Forgives the People but Will Not Let Them Enter Canaan

20 Then the LORD said, “I have forgiven them as you asked.

21 But truly, as I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of the LORD.

22 For all the people have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have tempted me now these ten times, and have not obeyed me,

23 they will by no means see the land that I swore to their fathers, nor will any of them who despised me see it.

24 Only my servant Caleb, because he had a different spirit and has followed me fully—I will bring him into the land where he had gone, and his descendants will possess it.

25 (Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites were living in the valleys.) Tomorrow, turn and journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea.”

The People Continue to Murmur and Yahweh Pronounces a Death Sentence on Them

26 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron:

27 “How long must I bear with this evil congregation that murmurs against me? I have heard the complaints of the Israelites that they murmured against me.

28 Say to them, ‘As I live, says the LORD, I will surely do to you just what you have spoken in my hearing.

29 Your dead bodies will fall in this wilderness—all those of you who were numbered, according to your full number, from twenty years old and upward, who have murmured against me.

30 You will by no means enter into the land where I swore to settle you. The only exceptions are Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua

son of Nun.

31 But I will bring in your little ones, whom you said would become victims of war, and they will enjoy the land that you have despised.

32 But as for you, your dead bodies will fall in this wilderness,

33 and your children will wander in the wilderness forty years and suffer for your unfaithfulness, until your dead bodies lie finished in the wilderness.

34 According to the number of the days you have investigated this land, forty days—one day for a year—you will suffer for your iniquities, forty years, and you will know what it means to thwart me.

35 I, the LORD, have said, “I will surely do so to all this evil congregation that has gathered together against me. In this wilderness they will be finished, and there they will die!””

The Ten Spies are Immediately Killed by a Plague (Joshua and Caleb spared)

36 The men whom Moses sent to investigate the land, who returned and made the whole community murmur against him by producing an evil report about the land,

37 those men who produced the evil report about the land, died by the plague before the LORD.

38 But Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among the men who went to investigate the land, lived.

The People’s False Repentance

39 When Moses told these things to all the Israelites, the people mourned greatly.

40 And early in the morning they went up to the crest of the hill country, saying, “Here we are, and we will go up to the place that the LORD commanded, for we have sinned.”

41 But Moses said, “Why are you now transgressing the commandment of the LORD? It will not succeed!

42 Do not go up, for the LORD is not among you, and you will be defeated before your enemies.

43 For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and you will fall by the sword. Because you have turned away from the LORD, the LORD will not be with you.”

44 But they dared to go up to the crest of the hill, although neither the ark of the covenant of the LORD nor Moses departed from the camp.

45 So the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country swooped down and attacked them as far as Hormah.

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