

**Second Baptist Church of Doylestown**  
**Bible Study Notes**  
**10-27-21**  
**Numbers 13**

**The Sending Of The Spies - Verses 1-3**

<sup>1</sup> The LORD said to Moses, <sup>2</sup> "Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders." <sup>3</sup> So at the LORD's command Moses sent them out from the Desert of Paran. All of them were leaders of the Israelites.

**13:1-3** Send men to spy out the land of Canaan: These men were on a reconnaissance mission; to observe the land of Canaan and bring back a report to the nation. However, it is worthwhile to ask if they really needed to go on this mission or if there was useful information they lacked, which would prove vital in taking Canaan.

**13:1-3** From each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a leader among them: According to Deuteronomy 1:20-25, the plan to send spies did not directly originate with Moses, but came from the people. Moses told them simply to go and take the land, and the people suggested this plan to Moses (everyone of you came near to me and said, Deuteronomy 1:22). Furthermore, in Deuteronomy 1:23 Moses said, the plan pleased me well.

This expedition had an unfortunate result; it may very well be that Moses was wrong in taking this suggestion of the people. Perhaps the accusations of Miriam and Aaron (petty, false, and self-interested as they were) had made Moses hesitant to take strong leadership. According to the command of the LORD: Nevertheless, this was in the plan of God. God used the report of the spies as a test of Israel's faith.

**The Men Chosen As Spies - Verses 4-16**

<sup>4</sup> These are their names: from the tribe of Reuben, Shammua son of Zakkur; <sup>5</sup> from the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat son of Hori; <sup>6</sup> from the tribe of Judah, Caleb son of Jephunneh; <sup>7</sup> from the tribe of Issachar, Igal son of Joseph; <sup>8</sup> from the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea son of Nun; <sup>9</sup> from the tribe of Benjamin, Palti son of Raphu; <sup>10</sup> from the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel son of Sodi; <sup>11</sup> from the tribe of Manasseh (a tribe of Joseph), Gaddi son of Susi; <sup>12</sup> from the tribe of Dan, Ammiel son of Gemalli; <sup>13</sup> from the tribe of Asher, Sethur son of Michael; <sup>14</sup> from the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi son of Vophsi; <sup>15</sup> from the tribe of Gad, Geuel son of Maki; <sup>16</sup> These are the names of the men Moses sent to explore the land. (Moses gave Hoshea son of Nun the name Joshua.)

**13:4-16** Now these were their names: from the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur: One was chosen from each tribe, so the spies would represent the entire nation, etc. And Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun, Joshua: Joshua was chosen as the leader of the group. His name was first listed as Hoshea, meaning "salvation." Yet his name came to be Ya-Hoshea meaning, "Yahweh is salvation."

We can even imagine when Moses first met Joshua, and asked who he was. "I'm Hoshea" ["I'm salvation"], Joshua would reply. Moses would have smiled and replied, "Ya-Hoshea!" ["Yahweh is salvation!"]. Joshua became his name - and the name of the Messiah, who is our salvation.

### **Moses Commissions The Spies - Verses 17-20**

**17** When Moses sent them to explore Canaan, he said, "Go up through the Negev and on into the hill country. **18** See what the land is like and whether the people who live there are strong or weak, few or many. **19** What kind of land do they live in? Is it good or bad? What kind of towns do they live in? Are they unwalled or fortified? **20** How is the soil? Is it fertile or poor? Are there trees in it or not? Do your best to bring back some of the fruit of the land." (It was the season for the first ripe grapes.)

**13:17-20** Moses decided what information was needed before the people could enter the Promised Land, and he took careful steps to get that information. When you are making decisions or assuming new responsibilities, remember these two important steps. Ask yourself what you need to know about the opportunity, and then obtain that knowledge. Common sense is a valuable aid in accomplishing God's purposes. See Proverbs 12:15 and 15:22.

### **The Twelve Spies In The Promised Land - Verses 21-25**

**21** So they went up and explored the land from the Desert of Zin as far as Rehob, toward Lebo Hamath. **22** They went up through the Negev and came to Hebron, where Ahiman, Sheshai and Talmai, the descendants of Anak, lived. (Hebron had been built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) **23** When they reached the Valley of Eshkol, they cut off a branch bearing a single cluster of grapes. Two of them carried it on a pole between them, along with some pomegranates and figs. **24** That place was called the Valley of Eshkol because of the cluster of grapes the Israelites cut off there. **25** At the end of forty days they returned from exploring the land.

**13:21-25** So they went up and spied out the land: As these spies toured the land, they saw some of the people and the produce of the land. This spectacular produce included clusters of grapes so big, they had to be carried between two men on a pole.

And they returned from spying out the land after forty days: The reconnaissance mission took forty days. When God tested His people, He often used a period of forty (such as forty days or forty years).

## The Report Of The Land - Verses 26-29

<sup>26</sup> They came back to Moses and Aaron and the whole Israelite community at Kadesh in the Desert of Paran. There they reported to them and to the whole assembly and showed them the fruit of the land. <sup>27</sup> They gave Moses this account: "We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. <sup>28</sup> But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there. <sup>29</sup> The Amalekites live in the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live near the sea and along the Jordan."

**13:25-29** God told the Israelites that the Promised Land was rich and fertile. Not only that, he promised that this bountiful land would be theirs. When the scouts reported back to Moses, they gave plenty of good reasons for entering the land, but they couldn't stop focusing on their fear. Talk of giants (descendants of Anak) and fortified cities made it easy to forget about God's promise to help. When facing a tough decision, don't let the negatives cause you to lose sight of the positives. Weigh both sides carefully. Don't let potential difficulties blind you to God's power to help and his promise to guide.

**13:26** Although Kadesh was only a desert oasis, it was a crossroads in Israel's history. When the scouts returned to Kadesh from scouting the new land, the people had to decide either to enter the land or to retreat. They chose to retreat and were condemned to wander 40 years in the wilderness. It was also at Kadesh that Moses disobeyed God (20:7-12). For this, he, too, was denied entrance into the Promised Land. Aaron and Miriam died there, for they could not enter the new land either. Kadesh was near Canaan's southern borders, but because of the Israelites' lack of faith, they needed more than a lifetime to go from Kadesh to the Promised Land.

**13:27** The Promised Land, also called the land of Canaan, was indeed bountiful, as the 12 scouts discovered. The Bible often calls it the land flowing with milk and honey. Although the land was relatively small—150 miles long and 60 miles wide—its lush hillsides were covered with olive, fig, date, and nut trees. It was the land God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

**13:28** The "descendants of Anak" were a race of abnormally large people. The family of Goliath may have been descended from these people (see 2 Samuel 21:16-22).

**13:28-29** The fortified cities the scouts talked about were surrounded by high walls as much as 20 feet thick and 25 feet tall. Guards were often stationed on top, where there was a commanding view of the countryside. Some of the inhabitants, said the scouts, were formidable men—from seven to nine feet tall—so that the Israelites felt like grasshoppers next to them (13:33). The fortified cities and the giants struck fear into the hearts of most of the scouts.

## Caleb's Faithful Objection - Verse 30

**<sup>30</sup> Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it."**

**13:30** Then Caleb quieted the people: Caleb - blessed forever! - commanded the people to immediately (at once) trust and obey God and to take the land, because God had made them able.

Let us go up at once and take possession: It took great courage for this man to stand against the tide of unbelief, of doubt and "despite all that" attitude. Caleb had the spirit of Romans 3:4: Let God be true but every man a liar.

## The Other Spies Respond To Caleb - Verses 31-33

**<sup>31</sup> But the men who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are." <sup>32</sup> And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, "The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. <sup>33</sup> We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them."**

**13:31-32** Imagine standing before a crowd and loudly voicing an unpopular opinion! Caleb was willing to take the unpopular stand to do as God had commanded. To be effective when you go against the crowd, you must: (1) have the facts (Caleb had seen the land himself); (2) have the right attitude (Caleb trusted God's promise to give Israel the land); (3) state clearly what you believe (Caleb said, "We can certainly do it").

**13:33** The negative opinion of 10 men caused a great rebellion among the people. Because it is human nature to accept opinion as fact, we must be especially careful when voicing our negative opinions. What we say may heavily influence the actions of those who trust us to give sound advice.