

Spies Return from Canaan

Teacher Preparation

1. Study lesson.
 - Scripture **Deu. 1:21, 22**
Num. 13–14
Heb. 3:17–19; 4:9–11; 12:6, 11; 14:25
2. Visuals
 - Sinai/Kadesh Map Poster 1.1
 - Key Verse 8 **Heb. 11:6**
3. Objectives: To learn about—
 - 12 spies to Canaan,
 - their report,
 - people believe evil report,
 - Israel must wander 40 yrs.,
 - and Canaanites defeat Israel's warriors.

Lesson 8

★—indicates teacher should read as class follows in Bible

Glancing back

In our previous study, the people of Israel complained about manna; they wanted meat (flesh) to eat, so God sent them **quail**. But many became sick and died in a plague. The others had quail for a month, and loathed it.

Israel continued their journey and came to **Kadesh**, near the southern border of Canaan. [see map](#) →

Plan for spies

Deu. 1:22 says that Israel had planned to send spies to Canaan and have them bring back a report. But Israel failed to wait for God's **plan**, which is like us, and our plans don't work out well.



Sinai/Kadesh Map 1.1

God went along with their plan to send spies, but He had already told Israel to go in and possess the land and **not** be **afraid** nor **discouraged**, for He would give them Canaan.

Sending spies into Canaan was not needed, because **God** had **promised** to **give** Israel the land. The **cloud** that led them from Egypt **could lead** them into Canaan, and God would give them victory. They

should have waited and **trusted** God.

Spies to Canaan

Num. 13:1, 2; 17–24

But the Lord let Israel go ahead with their plan and commanded Moses,

“Send men to search the land of → Map 1.1
Point to Kadesh

Canaan, which I **give** to the children of Israel.

Send a man of every tribe, a **ruler** among

them.” Each tribe was to send a leader.

Israel’s **big test** would be their **response** to

the spies’ **report**.

Class finds passage; then teacher reads.

* **Num. 13:17–20** *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.*



The valley of Eschol was known for its large clusters of grapes that weighed 10 to 12 pounds. The spies returned after **40** days. Then came **Israel’s big test**. They had failed their test when Moses returned from Mt. Sinai and found them worshipping a golden calf, and many died as a result. The spies’ report would again **test** their **faith**.

10 spies’ report

Num. 13:25–29

The **12 spies** returned from Canaan—carrying large clusters of grapes, pomegranates, figs, and other fruit. **Ten** of the **spies** told Moses, Aaron, and the congregation, “The land flows with **milk and honey**; see the large fruits that grow there! Nevertheless, the **people** are very **strong**, and the **cities** are **walled** and very **great**. We saw **giants**, the children of Anak there. And the **Amalekites** dwell in the

south while Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites dwell in the mountains.

The **Canaanites** dwell along the sea and the coast of Jordan.”

But the 10 spies only spoke about **obstacles** and never mentioned God’s promise, nor His **power** to **conquer** Canaan.

Caleb’s good report

Num. 13:30

And when **Caleb** saw its effect on the people, he urged Israel to rely on God for **victory**. “**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.*” Through eyes of **faith**, Caleb saw Canaan as a **challenge**. He did not consider the giants, walled cities, or other difficulties as obstacles! His response was a **faith report**, which contradicted the **10** spies’ **negative** report.

F. B. Meyer commented: (quote) “*Faith as represented in Caleb does not ignore difficulties; it is quite aware of them: but it does not concentrate its gaze on them, but on the living God (Num. 14:8). In every life there are Amalekites, sins of the flesh; and the Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites of besetting sin. None must dare suppose that we must always be overcome by them. But by trusting in God, we may confidently expect that they will be put under our feet (Rom. 6:14)*” (unquote). —Five Books of Moses

When such giants or difficulties make us think we can never have victory over a certain thing in our life, then we are at the same crossroads as Israel. Our future could also be at stake at that point.

Evil report

Num. 13:31–33

The 10 spies continued their negative (evil) report.

* **Num. 13:31–33** *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.

Stressing, “**We are not able**,” showed they did not believe God’s **promise** to give Israel victory in Canaan.

Captain for Egypt

Num. 14:1–4

Consequently, their unbelieving report influenced the people.

*** Num. 14:1–4** *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**.*

The people believed the 10 spies’ report. Then they began to **cry, weep**, and agonize over their situation. They failed to **trust** God to do the **impossible**—like the miracles He did in Egypt, the Red sea, and in their wilderness journey.

They even said, “Let us make a **captain** and **return to Egypt**.” This showed their total **lack** of **faith** in God’s power. It would be like a believer today saying, “I can’t live the Christian life; I’ll just go back to my old life and old sins. I’ll forget about God and live in sin like I used to.”

Israel **failed their test** to believe God’s promise to give them Canaan.

Rebel not

Num. 14:5–9

Immediately, Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before the congregation.

And **Joshua** and **Caleb** rent their clothes, telling the people the land was an exceeding good land. And—

*** Num. 14:8–9** *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. 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**.*

Joshua and Caleb were distressed over Israel's lack of faith; they urged the people **not to rebel** and depart from the Lord's will. The phrase "a land flowing with milk and honey" speaks of **milk** representing the **necessities** of life, and **honey** represents the pleasant, **sweet things** of life. God wants His people to have the best things in life.

Moses intercedes

Num. 14:10–20

The people were so stirred up, they were ready to stone Moses. Then the **glory** of the Lord **appeared**, and the Lord told Moses, "How long will this people **provoke me**? And how long will it be before they believe me, after all the signs which I have showed them? I will **smite them** with the pestilence, and **disinherit** them, and will make of **thee** a greater nation and mightier than they."

Hearing that, Moses immediately began **interceding** for the people and told the Lord that if the **Canaanites** should **hear** that **all Israel** was **destroyed**, they would say it was because Israel's God was not strong enough to conquer Canaan. Moses reminded **God** that His **name** and **reputation** were at stake among the heathen, for they would think that Israel's God was not able to bring them into Canaan.

Moses' great concern was for **God's honor**; therefore, he pled with God to be merciful and not destroy all of Israel. He said, "**Pardon**, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy **mercy**, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now." Moses **interceded** for them before God. "And the LORD said, I

have **pardoned** according to thy word”—Num. 14:19–20. As an intercessor, Moses pictures Jesus Christ. Heb. 7:25 says, “he (Jesus) ever liveth to make intercession” for us.

Not enter Canaan

Num. 14:22–24

God said He would pardon and not destroy Israel, but He would **chasten** them for their **unbelief**. They were His children, and He would not cast them away, but **chasten** them. God still does that. Heb. 12:6 says, “For whom the Lord loveth he **chasteneth**, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” And “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby”—Heb. 12:11.

God also said, “Surely they shall **not see** the **land** which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it: But my servant **Caleb**, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land.” Caleb had led this campaign for **faith**, even as Joshua had earlier led the battle against Amalek. Joshua and Caleb were the 2 spies who gave a faith report.

40 yrs. chastening

Num. 14:25–38

But God would chasten Israel for their unbelief.

* **Num. 14:29–33** *Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from **twenty years old and upward** which have **murmured against me**.*

³⁰ Doubtless ye **shall not come** into the **land**, concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save **Caleb** the son of Jephunneh, and **Joshua** the son of Nun. ³¹ But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. ³² But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness. ³³ And your children shall wander in the wilderness **forty years**, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness.

It was sad news when Israel heard they must return to the wilderness to wander **40** years—**one year** for each **day** the **spies** were in Canaan. And those 20 yrs. and older would **die** during the 40 years and never enter Canaan. But Caleb and Joshua would enter Canaan because they gave a **faith** report.

The **10 spies** immediately “**died by the plague before the LORD,**” for they had influenced the people not to trust God’s promise.

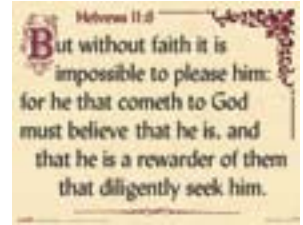
Importance of faith

And the 10 spies had seen the same people, the same fruit, and the same land as Joshua and Caleb, but they saw it **without faith** in God. In our life today, **we** each **choose** how we view our difficulties—either with **faith in God** or **without faith** in God, and that determines our future. God gives each person a free will—to choose to believe Him or not to believe Him. Faith in the Lord is very important.

A **Key Verse** to remember is —————→

Heb. 11:6 *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* (Let’s repeat the verse.)

Key Verse Visual 8



Opportunity passed

Num. 14:39–45; Heb. 3:17–19

After Moses told the people they must return to the wilderness and **wander** for 40 yrs., they mourned and said they would **now go** into Canaan. But it was too late; their **opportunity** for faith and obedience had **passed**. And they even failed to **believe** that. They just “*presumed*” God would still help them conquer Canaan.

Moses warned, “If you go, you will transgress the Lord’s commandment and not prosper. **Do not go!** The Lord will not be with you; you will be smitten and fall by the sword before the Amalekites and

Canaanites. The **Lord is not with you.**”

But the next morning, some warriors marched to the top of the mountain, and said, “We are here and will go up to the place the Lord promised: for we have **sinned.**” But they were **too late.** Immediately they were **killed** by the Amalekites and Canaanites.

Israel wanders

Heb. 3:17–19

Heb. 3:17–19 says, “*But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had **sinned**, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸ And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his **rest**, but to them that **believed** not? ¹⁹ So we see that they could not enter in because of **unbelief.**”*

God never allowed Israel to return to Egypt; they **now** had to wander 40 yrs. in the wilderness. That is like the **carnal** (worldly) **Christian** today who wanders around spiritually **defeated** in the wilderness of this evil world.

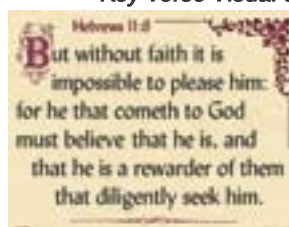
Israel’s basic sin was not trusting God. It is also the Christian’s basic sin.

We are **saved** by faith, and we are to **live** by faith. God wants His children to live a victorious life of trusting Him. We need to every day ask God to increase our faith. Let’s do that now as we pray.

Key Verse Visual 8

Prayer

Review Heb. 11:6.



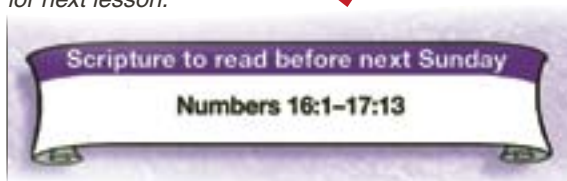
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Distribute Compass #8.

Front



Mention Scripture to read for next lesson.



Back of Compass