

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

NUMBERS 11-14

Not long ago, I was asked how to get to the soccer fields in Norcross... *Now understand, for years my son practiced on those fields... I drove to and from those fields many times...* yet I drew a blank... I'm lousy with directions. I've gotten lost from home to church. I told the guy, "I can tell you how to get to heaven, but if you want to go anywhere else you'd better ask my wife." Kathy is the Adams who's good with directions.

But even I would've had a difficult time turning a two week journey into forty years of wandering... *There must've been more to it than a poor sense of direction!*

We start to see the problem in Numbers 11, "Now when the people complained, it displeased the LORD; for the LORD heard it, and His anger was aroused."

They say the odds of being struck by lightning are 1 in 1.9 million, *unless you're grumbling about the Lord's provision* - that's when the odds increase dramatically. When people complain and murmur, God gets angry.

And look at what happens, "So the fire of the LORD burned among them, and consumed some in the outskirts of the camp." Perhaps, the malcontents had huddled up to roast Moses, instead they get roasted. *When God bowls a lightning bolt it's always a strike.*

"Then the people cried out to Moses, and when Moses prayed to the LORD, the fire was quenched. So he called the name of the place Taberah, (which means "you may get burned.") because the fire of the LORD had burned among them." God had mercy on the surviving *whiners*, but with a *warning*... maintain a disgruntled attitude, and you too may get burned!

Well, after God's judgment you'd think the grumbling would end, but not so... "Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: "Who will give us meat to eat?" Note from where this murmuring arose, "*the mixed multitude.*" This was a group of people traveling with Moses who weren't pure Hebrew.

They probably included *a few Egyptians, some foreign slaves, and some descendants of the Hebrews who had intermarried with Egyptians.* But these were certainly people influenced by idolatrous culture.

The mixed multitude wanted *freedom*, but they had no *faith*. They were use to the

conveniences and comforts of Egypt... Think of a prisoner who longs to be free, but isn't ready for its responsibility. He likes the three square meals and warm bed he's given in prison.

Well, this was the attitude of the mixed multitude. They hated the bondage, but liked the free food and predictability of Egypt. *It required no faith to be a slave.*

And the same is true of a slave to sin... There are folks who hate their bondage to drugs, or sex, or an abusive relationship, or a crippling fear, or chronic unemployment... and though God promises freedom, they prefer what's familiar, and convenient, and safe. They fear the challenges and changes faith requires.

The mixed multitude wanted the security of Egypt **and** the blessings of God - *but that's not how it works*. If you want the life God promises you've got to believe enough to leave the old behind and enter a new land.

This mixed multitude murmured, *We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; but now our whole being is dried up; there is nothing at all except this manna before our eyes!* Remember, "*manna*" was a derogatory term. It means, "*What is it?*"

God always referred to the manna as "*bread from heaven.*" Psalm 78:25 calls it, "*angel's food.*" Manna was the first *angels' food cake*. It was God's "*wonder bread*" - apparently, the perfect food for desert life.

But the fallen, corrupt nature of humanity gets tired of even good and perfect gifts. Eventually even *miracles* get *monotonous*... and we begin to complain.

Verse 7 offers a physical description of the manna. "*Now the manna was like coriander seed, and its color like the color of bdellium.*" It was grainy and white. "*The people went about and gathered it, ground it on millstones or beat it in the mortar, cooked it in pans, and made cakes of it; and its taste was like the taste of pastry prepared with oil.*" The word "*pastry*" doesn't mean a crème filled donut. Manna didn't taste like a Krispy Kreme. "*Pastry*" means "*a hearth-baked cake.*"

It seems the manna came a little bland so they tried to prepare it in a variety of ways to jazz it up... *ground manna, mashed manna, fried manna, baked manna.*

In Deuteronomy 8:3 Moses spoke to Israel, "*(God) humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.*" God didn't want the manna to have the sweet taste of a Krispy Kreme, rather He designed the manna to be tasteless.

God wanted His people to know that real joy and satisfaction is found not in *physical*

food, but in *spiritual blessings*. God fed their bellies with basics, but delighted their spirit with delicacies. God provides our physical needs, but He dazzles our spiritual taste buds. The Hebrews saw God's glory in the fire and cloud!

Verse 9, "And when the dew fell on the camp in the night, the manna fell on it." Every morning the Hebrews walked outside and gathered that day's portion of manna. Rather than go to the market; the market came to them! It was divine *Door dash!* Every day the Lord provided Israel a food especially fortified for desert life.

And yet their complaining continued. Like a spoiled child the Hebrews cried and whined to Moses. He says in verse 13, "Where am I to get meat to give to all these people? For they weep all over me, saying, 'Give us meat, that we may eat.'" The Hebrews grew tired of the manna, while Moses grew tired of the Hebrews.

So before God deals with *grumbling people*; He first deals with a *grumbling Moses*. Israel complained about the menu, but Moses whined about his own ministry, "I am not able to bear all these people alone, because the burden is too heavy for me. If You treat me like this, please kill me here and now - if I have found favor in Your sight - and do not let me see my wretchedness!"

To Moses' credit he realized the only thing worse than a *disgruntled people* was a *disgruntled pastor*. And he'd rather die than fail God in his ministry. The answer though wasn't *death*, but *delegation*. It was death to the bad attitude, "*I'll do it myself! I'm the only person here who can get this right.*" In management they say if someone else can do a task 80% as well as you can; then let him. Often we get overwhelmed because we don't delegate tasks to capable people.

"So the LORD said to Moses: "Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom **you know** to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tabernacle of meeting, that they may stand there with you." Moses is to choose seventy men who **he knows** are "*elders and officers*" - or in essence, natural leaders. But that's just the beginning. God will pour out His Spirit on natural leaders and make them spiritual.

God says, "Then I will come down and talk with you there. I will take of the Spirit that is upon you and will put the same upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone." Moses needed to delegate, but to not just anyone. More was needed than a warm body. As a leader it's sometimes hard to find people with the same heart, and similar sense of responsibility as you have.

Moses needed more than *glorified gophers*. He needed men who would *think as he thinks, and care as he cares, and make the same sacrifices he was willing to make.*

Moses needed men who would catch his God-given vision... And that requires a work of God's Spirit... So *Moses is to gather seventy elders to the Tabernacle, God is about to fill them with His Spirit.*

But first God deals with His grumbling people. In verse 18 He tells Moses, "Then you shall say to the people, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat; for you have wept in the hearing of the LORD, saying, "Who will give us meat to eat? For it was well with us in Egypt." Therefore the LORD will give you meat, and you shall eat. You shall eat, not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days, but for a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you, because you have despised the LORD who is among you, and have wept before Him, saying, "Why did we ever come up out of Egypt?"' Wow, God has a sense of humor! If Israel wants meat; then God will send them so much meat it'll eventually come *out* their *snout*. After a month of nothing but meat they'll be sick of its taste.

It reminds me of Morgan Spurlock, the guy who ate nothing but MacDonald's fast food for thirty days. Spurlock gained 25 pounds, and at the end of his ordeal his liver looked like that of an alcoholic. His documentary was entitled, "Super Size Me." Spurlock commented, "I rarely go to MacDonalds anymore. Not only because of the health precautions but because I actually don't enjoy the taste anymore." After thirty days of only Big Macs, Spurlock was no longer "lovin' it!" Neither were the Hebrews. They loathed the quail.

We all need to learn fulfillment comes not from *getting more*, but from *wanting less*. Satan breeds discontent. All is fine with God's manna until the enemy suggests, "If only you were driving that car... or if you had married her... or if you could find another job..."

The Hebrews got what they wanted; then realized that wasn't what they really wanted. Friends, the key to happiness is trusting God's supply. God knows what we need better than we do! When we *grumble about the provision* we're *grumbling about the Provider*. Recall what Moses told Israel in Exodus 16:8, "Your complaints are not against us but against the LORD."

Verse 21, "And Moses said, "The people whom I am among are 600,000 men on foot; yet You have said, 'I will give them meat, that they may eat for a whole month.' "Shall flocks and herds be slaughtered for them, to provide enough for them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to provide enough for them?" Moses informs God that meat enough for millions a month will require quite a miracle!

"And the LORD said to Moses, "Has the LORD's arm been shortened?" "Like a Braves' pitcher did God tear a ligament in his arm? Damage His rotator cuff?" Never

underestimate *the long arm of the Lord!* “Now you shall see whether what I say will happen to you or not.”

Verse 24, “So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD, and he gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tabernacle. Then the LORD came down in the cloud, and spoke to him, and took of the Spirit that was upon him, and placed the same upon the seventy elders; and it happened, when the Spirit rested upon them, that they prophesied, although they never did so again.” In a once-in-a-lifetime experience these elders spoke words from God in ecstatic, unscripted outbursts

“Two men had remained in the camp: the name of one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad.” Which is what my kids use to call yours truly, “*Me dad*”

“And the Spirit rested upon them. Now they were among those listed, but who had not gone out to the tabernacle; yet they prophesied in the camp. And a young man ran and told Moses, and said, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.” So Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, one of his choice men, answered and said, “Moses my lord, forbid them!” What an interesting reaction... Joshua was appalled that Eldad and Medad were filled with the Holy Spirit while still in the camp - *among the common people*. His concern was, “*What if everyone thinks that he or she can receive supernatural power and spiritual gifts?*”

And I love Moses response, “Are you zealous for my sake?” In short, “*Do you think I'm trying to monopolize God's gifts?*” To the contrary, “Oh, that **all** the LORD'S people were prophets and that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!” Rather than view the power of the Holy Spirit as the exclusive property of an elite few, Moses longed for the day when all God's people, both leaders and followers alike, would be empowered by His wonderful Spirit and exercise supernatural gifts...

Moses was way ahead of his time. In the OT the Holy Spirit did empowered *select people at select times*. But today all of us can be filled with God's Spirit!

I love verse 30, “And Moses returned to the camp, both he and the elders of Israel.” Now Moses has the Spirit-filled help he's needed to oversee the nation.

Verse 31, “Now a wind went out from the LORD, and it brought quail from the sea and left them fluttering near the camp, about a day's journey on this side and about a day's journey on the other side, all around the camp, and about two cubits (close to a yard) above the surface of the ground.” *Quail* was actually an Egyptian delicacy, which means God will see to it the Hebrews eat better in the desert than the Egyptians did in Egypt.

And evidently, the quail flew in low so the Hebrews could swat them out of the air with a bat. God teed-up the quail for batting practice. The quail got clubbed.

Verse 32, “And the people stayed up all that day, all night, and all the next day, and gathered the quail (he who gathered least gathered ten homers); and they spread them out for themselves all around the camp.”

And we know now they used *baseball bats* since they gathered, “*ten homers...*” A homer was a dry measurement, about a bushel. The idea of spreading out the quail indicates they were drying out the meat in the sunshine. They were apparently making quail jerky.

Verse 33, “But while the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was aroused against the people, and the LORD struck the people with a very great plague.” Israel had grown greedy. *They were making jerky and acting like jerks.*

Rather than just enjoy the meat that God provided, they spent 36 hours straight gathering quail. Evidently they didn’t trust God to provide the meat again. And because of unbelief God sent “*a very great plague.*”

“So he called the name of that place Kibroth Hattaavah (which means “*graves of craving*”), because there they buried the people who had yielded to craving.” And sadly, this is not the last time someone dies for failing to resist a craving. Pursue a craving with no restraint and ***what you crave will be your grave.***

Verse 35, “From Kibroth Hattaavah the people moved to Hazeroth, and camped at Hazeroth.” They’re continuing to march northward toward Canaan.

Chapter 12, “Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married...” Exodus 2 tells us Moses’ wife, “*Zipporah*” was a Midianite. Here he marries an Ethiopian. It could be Zipporah had died, and Moses remarried an African.

The exact nature of the complaint is uncertain... but it had something to do with an Ethiopian wife. And since Ethiopians are black-skinned it’s possible Moses’ siblings, Miriam and Aaron, were guilty of racism. They were asking, *Why is a Jew marrying a black woman?*

Imagine, racial prejudice all the way back to the days of Moses? Hey, racism didn’t start in the Civil War South, it can be traced back to the beginning of history. As soon as someone noticed humans come in different hues it was pridefully suggested that one color was better than another color. Always remember, racial prejudice is not a skin problem it is a sin problem.

Verse 2, “**So they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?" And the LORD heard it.**” Israel grumbled about **the menu**. In Chapter 13 they’ll grumble about **the mission**. Here they grumble about **the messenger**. *What right does Moses have to lead?*

And it was Moses’ own family that questioned their brother’s God-given authority. It’s sad, but church members today tend to complain about the same three issues: *the manna, the marching orders, and the Moses - the menu, the mission, and the messenger...*

Oh, seldom do folks complain openly, but it goes on in huddles - in private and online. You go to lunch with a friend and have *roast pastor*. You question his decisions and motive - *even when you lack the facts*. It’s easy to be a Sunday-after-church quarterback.

But listen carefully to the last phrase of verse 2. It should scare the stuffing out of us all... “**And the LORD heard it.**” I might not hear it, your husband might not hear it, the elders might not hear it, **but God hears it!**

Verse 3, “**(Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.)** *What a statement!* This verse was probably added later by Joshua. It’d be odd for Moses to boast of himself.

But humility was the reason Moses was trusted by God with such vast authority. No one had more clout with God or authority with man than Moses, yet Moses never forgot where he came from. Without God he was a failed deliverer - a simple shepherd. *He never forgot what he was without the LORD*. And since Moses’ sole desire was to glorify God, God comes to his defense!

“**Suddenly the LORD said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, "Come out, you three, to the tabernacle of meeting! So the three came out.**” Murmur secretly about God’s man, and you may get called out publicly.

“**Then the LORD came down in the pillar of cloud and stood in the door of the tabernacle...**” And I’m not sure what that means, *but it’s heavy*. God came down. He invaded the space. His presence was palpable...

“**And (He) called Aaron and Miriam. And they both went forward. Then He said, "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. God spoke to prophets in visions and dreams, but it was different with Moses. "Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house. I speak with him face to face, even plainly, and not in dark sayings; and he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?"** Wow, God communed with Moses face to face. God gave

Moses access into His presence that no one else received.

Verse 9, “So the anger of the LORD was aroused against them, and He departed. And when the cloud departed from above the tabernacle, suddenly Miriam became leprous, as white as snow.” Moses’ sister was struck with highly contagious leprosy. And realize murmuring, negativism, a critical spirit is also highly contagious. A complaining spirit in church spreads like pink eye in the nursery. Miriam must’ve led the revolt, she gets punished. Yet it shakes up Aaron too, “Aaron turned toward Miriam, and there she was, a leper.”

“So Aaron said to Moses, “Oh, my lord! Please do not lay this sin on us, in which we have done foolishly and in which we have sinned. Please do not let her be as one dead, whose flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb!” So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, “Please heal her, O God, I pray!”

God honors Moses’ request and heals his sister, *but not without making His point*. Racial prejudice is a leprous spot on the body of Christ - as is all forms of prejudice and pettiness... If a leader is *unbiblical* in his teaching, *immoral* in his living, or *unethical* in how he treats people and money he should be criticized. But when the *issues are personal they shouldn’t be issues*.

Support your pastor, don’t criticize him. If your bias is a personal prejudice, get over it. We need to rally behind our leaders, and be the church God desires.

Verse 14, “Then the LORD said to Moses, “If her father had but spit in her face, would she not be shamed seven days?” In Moses’ day a parent could discipline a child by spitting in their face. This brought shame on a child for seven days. Here, God is saying, “Yes, I’ll heal Miriam, but only after I’ve disciplined her.”

So, “Let her be shut out of the camp seven days, and after that she may be received again.” So Miriam was shut out of the camp seven days, and the people did not journey on till Miriam was brought in again.

And afterward the people moved from Hazeroth and camped in the Wilderness of Paran.”

In Chapter 13 Israel arrives on the outskirts of the Promise Land, at a border town called “Kadesh.” “And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel; from each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a leader among them.”

The twelve spies are listed in verses 3-15, but only two names are ever mentioned again. *Hoshea* from Judah, and *Caleb* from Ephraim were men of faith. The others refused to trust God and drifted into obscurity.

Verse 16, “These are the names of the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun, Joshua.” The name “Hoshea” means “*salvation*,” but “Joshua” means “*Yahweh is salvation*.” And Moses changed *Hoshea* to *Joshua*.

“Then Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan...” *Is it mountainous, or desert, or forest, or farms?* The people - are they strong or weak, few or many? The cities - are they strongholds or just camps? Verse 20, “And bring some of the fruit of the land.”

“So they went up and spied out the land from the Wilderness of Zin as far as Rehob, near the entrance of Hamath.” Rehob was west of the Sea of Galilee near the Mediterranean Sea. “And they went up through the South and came to Hebron; Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the descendants of Anak, were there. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)” They went throughout Canaan, northwest to southeast.

“Then they came to the Valley of Eshcol (near what would later be Philistine territory - “*Eshcol*” means “*cluster*”), and there cut down a branch with one cluster of grapes; they carried it between two of them on a pole.” It was heavy. Today, the logo for Israel’s Ministry Of Tourism is the grape cluster the spies carried. They also brought pomegranates and figs, testifying to the land’s fertility. All this reconnaissance took forty days.

Verse 26, “Now they departed and came back to Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the children 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.” They reported, *we’ve got good news and bad news...*

First *the good news*, “We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.” *Here’re the grapes! Canaan is a land of plenty!*

But now *the bad news...* “Nevertheless the people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the South; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan.”

In other words, there’s *no vacancy*. The land teems with *ites*: *Amalekites, Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites, Canaanites* – and the residents won’t like it if *Israelites* move in and try to take over the neighborhoods.

But verse 28 is the deal breaker, “Nevertheless the people who dwell in the land are

strong; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there.” And in verse 33 the offspring of Anak are called “giants.” The Hebrew term is “nephilim,” the word used in Genesis 6:4 describing the offspring of “the sons of God” - or fallen angels - that in the days of Noah had sexual relations with the “daughters of men.” I believe these nephilim were humans sired by demons, or fallen angels. They were a race of superhuman freaks, mutant humanoids.

This is why God flooded the earth and its population. He saved humanity from genetic contamination. Noah’s deluge ended this threat to humanity as a whole, but on occasion this evil occurred locally among people steeped in the occult - *case in point, the Canaanites*. This is why when Joshua leads the people into the Promised Land, he’ll be told to kill all its inhabitants. The goal again was to stop this perversion.

Later, after Israel’s conquest, Joshua 11:22 tells us the giants who survived the purge settled in three Philistine cities - *Gaza, Gath, Ashdod*. And guess who was from Gath? An infamous giant named “Goliath.”

Now upon hearing of these giants it frightened the Hebrews. Fear spread through their ranks. That’s when one of the spies, Caleb, spoke up, verse 30, “Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, “Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it.” Caleb’s eyes were on the grapes not the giants. He was speaking from *faith*, not *fear*.

Yet the unbelieving spies end the chapter, “they are stronger than we... we were like grasshoppers...”

Caleb was assured of victory. The ten bred despair. And who was right in their assessment - *the ten or the two*? Obviously, God agreed with the *minority* not the *majority* - **the two not the ten**. *Be careful when you follow the pack... the pack may not be following God.*

Chapter 14, “So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel complained 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 died in this wilderness!” They cry and whine in verse 3, “Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims?” God wanted them to be *victors*, not *victims*.

“Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?” It’s always easier to *look back* than it is to *press forward*. Remember what Jesus said to one prospective disciple in Luke 9:62, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

“So they said to one another, “Let us select a leader and return to Egypt.” They’re

planning a coup de that. They want to fire Moses and install a new leader.

“Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.” And here’s the sad plight of many a Christian. They get to the brink of God’s promise. They’re asked to believe God enough to take that step and possess His blessings. Yet fear of the giants take hold - *giants like conformity, persecution, temptation, convenience.*

God’s joy, and peace, and bounty are just over the border, *but the Promised Land is full of unknowns.* Egypt has its frustrations and emptiness, *but at least it’s familiar.* And many believers, even after being saved from their sin and despair, choose to return to the familiar, rather than enter a new life with Christ. Don’t you succumb to fear, have faith and follow Jesus.

In verse 7 Joshua and Caleb tear their clothes in disgust and plead with their peers, “The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. If the LORD delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, ‘a land which flows with milk and honey.’” “Only do not rebel against the LORD, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the LORD is with us. Do not fear them.” *What faith!* The enemy is “*our bread.*” And “*their protection has departed.*” God can do that! He can strip the enemy of its protection.

But the people react, verse 10, “All the congregation said to stone them with stones.” Rather than join Caleb and Joshua they try to silence them. God has to launch a rescue! “Now the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of meeting before all the children of Israel.”

And in the next verses God tells Moses He wants to strike the rebellious Hebrews and start over with him.

But in verse 13 Moses reminds God if He does that the Egyptians will say He failed to replant His people in their land. Moses cares about God’s reputation. Verse 17, “And now, I pray, let the power of my LORD be great, just as You have spoken, saying, ‘The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.’” “Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray, according to the greatness of Your mercy, just as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.” This was God’s revelation of Himself to Moses on Mt. Sinai. Now in a crisis Moses returns to it - *which is what we should do in troublesome times.* In the face of the inexplicable and contradictory, don’t focus on the situation, focus on God’s nature. God is full of mercy and forgiveness!

"Then the LORD said: "I have pardoned, according to your word; but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD - because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice, they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it." It took God ten plagues to deliver Israel from Egypt, now its taken Israel ten acts of unbelief to forfeit their blessing. Call it the ten *wonders of God*, and *ten blunders of Israel*. It was possible to be saved from Egypt, but never enter the promised land, and likewise we can be saved from sin, to never experience our victory in Christ. Many Christians live and die in the desert, between bondage and blessing.

Verse 24, "But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully," And I hope you want a different spirit. While the world settles for *bondage* - and many Christians are *barren* - don't you want God's *blessing*... Like Caleb, to "*fully*" follow.

God says, "I will bring (Caleb) into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it." The faith-filled spies, Caleb and Joshua, the only two of a generation to believe, will enter the Promised Land.

And in the rest of Chapter 14 God sentences the generation that exited Egypt... Those that grumbled rather than believed **will die in the wilderness**.

Verse 31, "But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness." Back in verse 3 the Hebrews had accused God of leading their children to the slaughter. *But God is a master of irony*. The kids won't die - the parents who accused God of not caring for their kids - will die in the wilderness. The second generation will see and walk the land God promised.

But the generation that spent forty days scouting out the land, only to succumb to fear; will spend a year for every day, *forty years*, dying under the hot desert sun.

Verse 39, "Then Moses told these words to all the children of Israel, and the people mourned greatly. And they rose early in the morning and went up to the top of the mountain, saying, "Here we are, and we will go up to the place which the LORD has promised, for we have sinned!" They realize they blew their opportunity, and now they decide to obey, but **now** it's too late.

"Then Moses said, "Now why do you transgress the command of the LORD? For this will not succeed." The day before God was with them to take the land, but a day later they're on their own. Moses warns, verse 42, "Do not go up, lest you be defeated by your enemies, for the LORD is not among you." They're now headed into battle

without God. And the outcome is obvious, verse 45, “Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who dwelt in that mountain came down and attacked them, and drove them back as far as Hormah.”

And this is the difference between *faith and flesh*... **Faith** takes God at His Word and responds to the promptings of His Spirit. Whereas, **flesh** presumes my will is God's will, and tries to accomplish my desires in God's name. Walk in the flesh and you're destined to fail. Walk by faith, and God will bring you into victory.

In the end the Hebrews *feared the obstacles* more than they *feared the Lord!* They focused on the *giants*, not the *grapes*. It's been said: "Our problem is not the greatness of our troubles, but the littleness of our faith." And this is how you turn a two week walk into a forty year death march! The longest detour it to take the fork of unbelief. It's always faith that receives the reward!