

BOOK OF NUMBERS

Lesson 6: Wilderness of Paran

Chapter 13:1 -14:10

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BASHAN

AMORITES

AMMON

CANAANITES

MOABITES

EDOMITES

MIDIANITES

EGYPT

Jordan River

Jabbok River

Arnon River

Zered River

Plains of Moab

Wilderness of Zin

Kadesh •

Wilderness of Paran

Hazeroth? •

Wilderness of Sinai

Kibroth Hatta'avah? •

Arabah Valley

Wilderness of Sinai

Wilderness of Paran

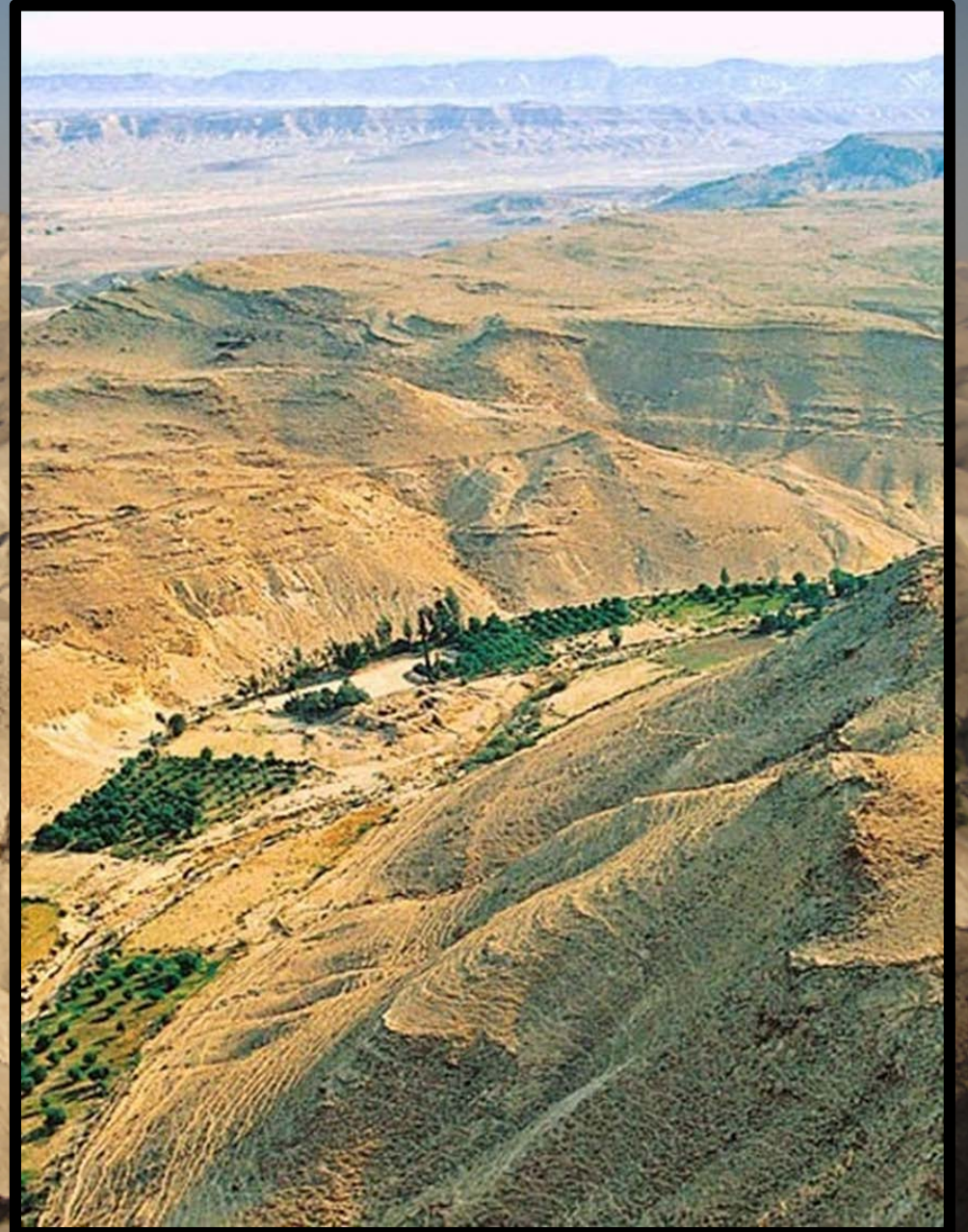
View of Israel

Wilderness of Zin

Arabah Valley & Moab

Kings Highway

Plains of Moab



Paran

Paran means a place of caverns; from the root word, **Pa'ar**, meaning to **glorify**, to **beautify** or adorn.

- Physically, there is nothing glorious about this wilderness. It is desolate.
- The glory of this place is going to be in what we **experience** in our relationship with God.
 - In spite of the desolation of this place, we are going to experience a taste of **glorious living** (rest, peace, quietness, provision from God).
 - When you come to desolate place in your life, remember that God is with you in that place.
 - Our experience of God in the midst of desolation can be glorious and beautiful.
 - God's glory can shine the brightest in our desolate places, if we let it.
- We can choose to give glory to **God** and allow Him to glorify and beautify us, or
- We can take glory for **ourselves** in this place by trying to overcome our circumstances by our own power
- Depending on who is the object of glory, this word can mean to give **God** glory or give **oneself** glory. It can describe someone who vaunts themselves in pride and arrogance and boasts in the face of God.
- Our choice will either carry us into be the glorious Promised Land with a blessing, or carry us back to the wilderness with a curse.

Kadesh



Kadash (with an “a”)

to be consecrated, sanctified; to be pure and clean, holy and separate to God. This describes a holy priesthood serving and worshipping a holy God.



Kadesh (with an “e”)

to consecrate oneself to an unholy, unclean, profane form of service and worship to an idol. This describes a male cult prostitute.

- Like one coin with two sides – each side opposite in nature, each side facing in a different direction.
- There is a Jekyll and Hyde nature about it. One side represents what is holy and clean; the other, what is unholy and unclean.
- What really makes the difference between them is who gets the glory – God or His rival.
- We have come to Kadesh with an “e.” The lesson of Kadesh is going to focus on the **decisions** we make – the flip of the coin. That choice is going to reveal which side we are really on, and which direction we are going to take in this journey.

The Spies

Read Numbers 13:1-16

What do we know about these men (v2-3)?

- There are 12, one from each tribe
- They are leaders in their tribe, but not the same ones who are leaders of the armies
- They are all called by name
It is often the case that when certain men are hand-picked for specific tasks, the names of those men have some significance.
- Representatives, not just of their tribe, but the kind of decisions we have to make and ways in which we choose to give glory to God or take glory for ourselves in this place.

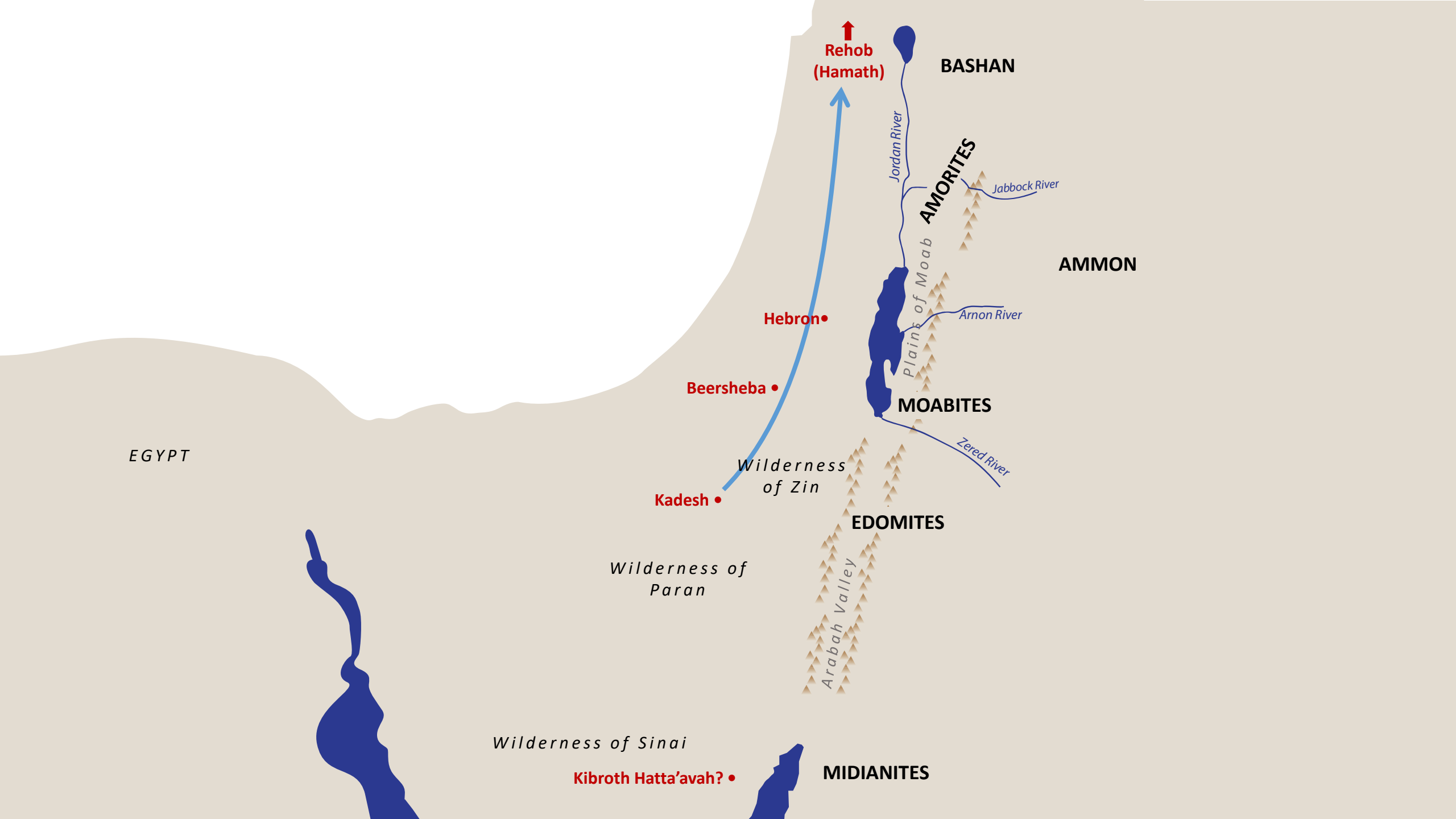
The Mission

Read Numbers 13:17-25

- Assess the Land: good or bad; rich or poor; note the terrain; bring back a sample of the fruit
- Assess the People: Strong or weak, few or many
- Assess the Cities: Camps or Fortresses
- The Time of Year: beginning of the grape harvest – 4th month of Tammuz (June/July)

We know that they will return 40 days later (v25) which is the 5th month of Av. There is a little foreboding in this, because the month of Av, historically, is a month of disaster in Israel. In the future, it will mark the day when both Temples fell and the people are sent into exile.

Our failure at this time will result in a form of exile for us in this journey as well.



↑
**Rehob
(Hamath)**

BASHAN

AMORITES

Jordan River

Jabock River

AMMON

Hebron

Arnon River

MOABITES

Zered River

Beersheba

Wilderness
of Zin

EDOMITES

Kadesh

Wilderness of
Paran

Arabah Valley

EGYPT

Wilderness of Sinai

Kibroth Hatta'avah?

MIDIANITES

Wilderness of Sinai

Wilderness of Paran

View of Israel

Wilderness of Zin

Arabah Valley & Moab

Kings Highway

Plains of Moab

Judean Desert



Wilderness of Sinai

Wilderness of Paran

View of Israel

Wilderness of Zin

Arabah Valley & Moab

Kings Highway

Plains of Moab

Hills of Hebron



Wilderness of Sinai

Wilderness of Paran

View of Israel

Wilderness of Zin

Arabah Valley & Moab

Kings Highway

Plains of Moab

Vineyards



Wilderness of Sinai

Wilderness of Paran

View of Israel

Wilderness of Zin

Arabah Valley & Moab

Kings Highway

Plains of Moab

Galilee



Wilderness of Sinai

Wilderness of Paran

View of Israel

Wilderness of Zin

Arabah Valley & Moab

Kings Highway

Plains of Moab

Golan Heights



Wilderness of Sinai

Wilderness of Paran

View of Israel

Wilderness of Zin

Arabah Valley & Moab

Kings Highway

Plains of Moab

Mediterranean
Coast (Caesarea)



Wilderness of Sinai

Wilderness of Paran

View of Israel

Wilderness of Zin

Arabah Valley & Moab

Kings Highway

Plains of Moab

Jordan River



Wilderness of Sinai

Wilderness of Paran

View of Israel

Wilderness of Zin

Arabah Valley & Moab

Kings Highway

Plains of Moab

**Tel Arad (west of
the Dead Sea)**



The Report

Read Numbers 13:26-29

- The land flows with milk and honey (v27)
- People are strong; cities are fortified and large (v28)
- The Anakim (giants) live there (v28);
- Amalekites dwell in the South (the desert); Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites dwell in the mountains; Canaanites dwell by the sea and Jordan river (v29)

Caleb's Response

Read Numbers 13:30

- The talk about the giants causes some concern, so he quiets the people
- Encourages the people to move forward with confidence
- He remembers God's promise. *Exodus 6:8*
- He knows God's power and His plan. *Exodus 23:27-30*

The Bad Report

Read Numbers 13:32-33

- "The land flows with mild and honey" (v27) *becomes* "The land devours its inhabitants" (v32)
- "The people are strong and cities large" (v28) *becomes* "all the people we saw were men of great stature" (v32)
- "We saw the descendants of Anak there" (v28) *is embellished with* "We were as mere insects in our own sight, and so we were in their sight." (v33)

Opposition of the Ten

Read Numbers 13:31

- Focus on the negative
- Focus on what they can do by their own strength
- Forget God's promise
- Forget God's power and His plan.
- Stir up the people with a bad report

One man against ten...who do you believe?

- All have seen the land, had the same experience in the land.
- All men are leaders – their judgment carries weight.
- One man has a reputation for being an aggressive hot-head ready to charge into battle. Ten are afraid.
- One man has given a good report. Ten have given a bad report.

How do we decide between the two reports?

- Do you decide based on popular opinion (by the numbers)?
- Do you decide based on facts? What are the facts?
- Do you decide based on the reaction you have to the emotionally charged rhetoric?
- Do you decide based on your assessment of the one man's character?
- Is this report the only thing you base your decision on?

The People's Response

Read Numbers 14:1-5.

We side with the ten. Consequences:

- Fear and weeping (v1)
- Complaining against Moses and Aaron (v2)
 - “If only we had died in the land of Egypt!”
 - “If only we had died in this wilderness!”
- Complaining against the Lord for bringing us to the Land to die by the sword (v3)
- Turning everyone's focus on victims – wives and children (v3)

Our decision:

Select a new leader and return to Egypt (v4)

Enemy Strategy

- The enemy tries to sway us with the **numbers**. There are a lot more of the opposition than there are of Caleb. They are loud and negative.
- The enemy gets our focus off the big picture of what God has planned and on to one little detail – one **issue** that becomes the rallying point for rebellion
- The enemy **twists** the facts and gives a skewed comparison
 - Caleb is painted as one of those “**mad-dog**” personalities ready to just go charging into unfamiliar territory on faith alone.
 - The enemy points out all the **obstacles**, all the pitfalls and all the difficulties and makes them seem gigantic and overwhelming.
 - The enemy relies on emotionally-charged rhetoric to make us **afraid**.
- The enemy tries to get us back into that victim identity
 - That our death is assured if we continue on this path
 - That our innocent wives and children will become victims
 - Capitalize on fear (the victim mentality is rooted in fear)

Enemy Strategy

- There is nothing wrong with being cautious in making decisions.
- There is nothing wrong with considering both sides of the issue.
- There is nothing wrong with acknowledging the pitfalls and difficulties.
- But the one thing we cannot fail to do in this moment is lose sight of the power and glory of God and His position on this. That should be the deciding factor.

Beware of leaders, who:

- Push their agenda by **riling** people up instead of calming them down.
- Lead you by **emotion**, and tries to sway your reasoning with emotionally-charged rhetoric.
- Try to sway you with tactics like **character** assassination and negative press.

Above all, beware of letting yourself get sucked into the fear.

The Fear

Think of where we are in this journey:

- We have come so far on this journey as to be on the doorstep to the glorious land – that glorious life of rest, peace, joy and oneness with God.
- He has provided for us.
- He has protected us.
- He has given us freedom and a sense of individual worth.
- We have tasted the fruit of the land. We have experienced tangible evidence that the Lord is real and He is with us.
- We have come so far, with so much proof, and still, there is one thing that derails us from entering the land...**Fear**

What are some fears we face in life?

Fear is like a two-sided coin

- It is one of the greatest agents the **enemy** uses to get us off the journey
- It is one of the greatest agents **God** uses to test our faith.
- Fear reveals whether or not we understand both the **power** of God and the **love** of God
- Understanding the power and love of God helps us conquer our fear of this world.

The Fear

2 Timothy 1:17 “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”

- **Fear reveals how well we understand the power of God.**
 - Fear of God – the understanding of His absolute power – is a good and godly thing
 - Fear shows we understand who He is and who we are – places us in a correct relationship with Him.
 - We give **power** to things we fear in life.
 - When we transfer our fear of God to a fear of something else, we make that thing a **rival** to God
 - Fear of the world is the ultimate form of **unfaithfulness** to God.
 - Fear becomes a form of spiritual **bondage**.
 - It robs us of the **power** of God in our lives
 - It robs us of the **glorious life** of God wants for us.
- **Fear reveals how well we understand the love of God.** *1 John 4:16-18*
 - His **power** is tempered by His **love**, so that we do not fear to stand before Him in judgment.
 - Perfect love casts out fear – if you are still living in fear and torment, you have not understood God’s love or achieved that abiding **oneness** with Him.
- Fear robs us of a sound mind. Fearful people make **bad decisions**.
- Caleb conquered fear by clinging to God’s **promise**. Caleb knew God’s **plan**.

Joshua and Caleb's Defense

Read Numbers 14:6-9.

- Defends the glory of the Land (v7), focuses on the positive
- Lifts up the Lord to a place of glory (v8-9)
 - *"If the Lord delights in us..."* It is the Lord's decision, according to His judgment
 - *"...then He will bring us into the land..."* It is the Lord's leadership and power that will accomplish this. He is our salvation, our redeemer and deliverer. He will bring our enemies to desolation and lift us up.
 - *"...and will give it to us..."* It is the Lord's gift to us. Our fortune lies in His hands.
 - *"Do not rebel against the Lord..."* Do not withdraw from Him.
 - *"...nor fear the people of the land for they are our bread..."*
We will devour them
 - *"Their protection has departed from them and the Lord is with us."*
The Lord is our protection. When He rises up in His majesty, He is greater than any opposition that comes against Him.

People's Response

Read Numbers 14:10.

Stone the opposition and go back to Egypt.

Mob Mentality

Throughout the book of Numbers we have seen an emphasis on the importance God places on individuals and not just faceless masses. Mob mentality stands in stark contrast to individual autonomy.

As an individual

Each person has individual **identity**

Each person has individual **responsibility**

Each person has individual **accountability**

Each person acts on individual **choice**

Each person is called to **self-restraint**

Each person is given the power to **think**

As a mob

Mobs creates a sense of anonymity and reduces self-awareness

Mobs diffuse individual responsibility

Mobs mask individual accountability

Mobs demand conformity to group thinking

Mobs promote a lack of inhibition and disregard of social norms

Mobs encourage you to quit thinking and act on emotion alone

Mob behavior runs against everything the Lord has been trying to instill in His children. It is the basest form of behavior, and the most destructive.

Mob mentality is typical of people who have 1) rejected God and 2) rejected authority.

Can we go back to Egypt?

- Egypt was crippled by plagues on account of the children of Israel
 - Their fresh water was polluted
 - They were overrun by vermin, and then had to deal with the clean-up when all those vermin died
 - They lost their livestock to disease – more clean-up
 - They themselves suffered from a bout of boils
 - They lost their crops to locust and hail. This last year when we have been receiving manna from God, Egypt was in famine condition. Their food supply was lost.
 - They were thrown into darkness for days
 - They lost all their firstborn – human and animals (If you are responsible for the death of someone's child, do you really think that person is going to welcome you back with open arms?)
- They sent us away with their wealth – we plundered them
- They lost all their army in the Red Sea in their effort to pursue us
- Their gods were put to shame by the glory of the God of Israel

We cost Egypt too much to let us back into the land, even as slaves

If we returned now, they would kill us out of vengeance for their loss, their dead, and their gods.

We cannot go back to Egypt.
We will die we go back to Egypt.

God cannot let us go back to Egypt for reasons which we will discuss next week.

Spies of Canaan, Numbers 14

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Reuben: | Shammua (“renown” from the root “to bring desolation or appall”) |
| Simeon: | Shaphat (“to judge, govern, vindicate, punish; to execute judgment”) |
| Judah: | Caleb (“dog” in the sense of being aggressive, attacking or forcible) |
| Issachar: | Igal (“God, my redeemer or avenger”) |
| Ephraim: | Hoshea (“my salvation”) changed to Joshua (“Jehovah is salvation”) |
| Benjamin: | Palti (“my deliverance” in the sense of escaping) |
| Zebulun: | Gaddiel (“fortune of God”) |
| Manasseh: | Gaddi (“my fortune”) |
| Dan: | Ammiel (“kinsman of God or people of God”) |
| Asher: | Sethur (“hidden” in a sense of being concealed) |
| Naphtali: | Nahbi (“hidden” in a sense of being withdrawn) |
| Gad: | Geuel (“majesty of God” in the sense of rising up and being exalted in triumph) |