

Peninsula City Church

A Kingdom Perspective

**Do You Realise that Understanding our
Mission Will Affect our Vision?**

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Do We Realise that Understanding Our Mission Will Affect Our Vision?

Q. Imagine what could happen if we understood the mission given to us as His children?

An Introduction

Going by what we have been going through the first half of this year, we may think all is lost. In other words, what we were doing in life, family, and church before this all happened is now irrelevant. How can things that mattered beforehand have any purpose now? Well, it will depend on how we look at things. We can move into the second half of this year with a negative, doubt-filled and perspective or a curious, and faith-filled one.

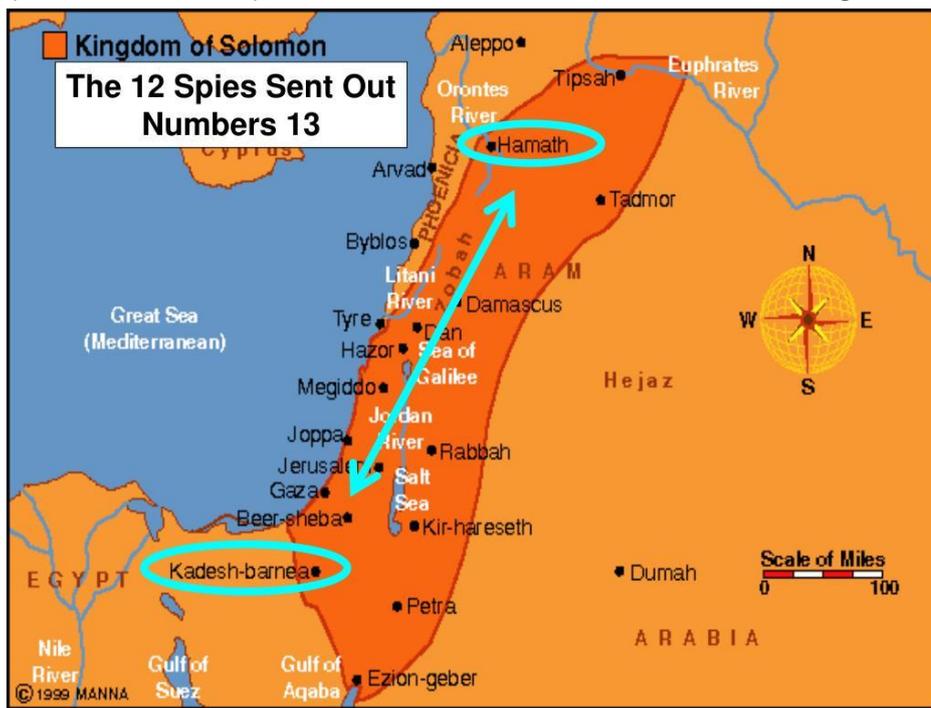
If we approach life not understanding our given mission (or if that is too hard for now, even our mission for the second half of the year), then it will affect how we see life. This will be the case even as a Christ-follower, local church, or the church of Jesus Christ. For many, all will seem hopelessness. However, if we are willing to recognise that we have been given a mission when we came into the Father's family, then it can provide us with purpose. As a result, if we know what that mission is, then we may be able to see a hopeful future.

Here, this will be evaluated by looking at an incident that happened in the Hebrew Bible (or the Old Testament). This will be considered from the perspective of how those around us can be affected by what we understand and see. Then we need to think about how this informs us who have already been deployed or sent out on mission. Then, in the end, how it can transform our vision.

1. How ten people affected the twelve family groups

Q. Where did the ten go so wrong in their understanding of their mission?

Following is the story how Israel was brought out of Egypt, received the Ten Words (Commandments), then the rest of the instructions for living the Kingdom of God life (the Law) and the Tabernacle. Later how they found themselves at a place called Kadesh Barnea and went into the Promised Land up into Syria over 600 km.¹



Following is the story how Israel was brought out of Egypt, received the Ten Words (Commandments), then the rest of the instructions for living the Kingdom of God life (the Law) and the Tabernacle. Later how they found themselves at a place called Kadesh Barnea and went into the Promised Land up into Syria over 600 km.¹

It was here at Kadesh Barnea that twelve chosen went into the land. We read in the Book of Numbers chapter 13:1-2 that,

¹ "The Lord said to Moses, ² 'Send (Lit. *Send for yourself*) some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders."

¹ "Caleb." <https://www.slideserve.com/damia/caleb> (30th June 2020).

Here in Numbers 13:1, it records that the Lord said to Moses to send them out to the land. However, when we compare this account with that given to the next generation, it reveals that the people requested that Moses send out some of their people to see the land. So, this seems to have been done because of Israel asking it to be done. That is,

²⁰ “Then I (Moses) said to you, ‘You have reached the hill country of the Amorites, which the Lord our God is giving us. ²¹ See, the Lord your God, has given you the land. Go up and take possession of it as the Lord, the God of your ancestors, told you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.’

²² Then all of you (Israel) came to me and said, ‘Let us send men ahead to spy out the land for us and bring back a report about the route we are to take and the towns we will come to.’ ²³ The idea seemed good to me (Moses); so, I selected twelve of you, one man from each tribe. ²⁴ They left and went up into the hill country and came to the Valley of Eshkol and explored it. ²⁵ Taking with them some of the fruit of the land, they brought it down to us and reported, ‘It is a good land that the Lord our God is giving us’” (Deut 1:20-25 NIV).

If we read Numbers 13:1-2 in the various Bible translations, versions, and paraphrases, we will notice that most of them use the word spies. This is how we have been taught to read these verses that, spies had been sent out by God to spy out the land. However, in the New International Version (NIV) and the New Living Translation (NLT) the word ‘explore’ (explored, exploring etc.²) is used repeatedly. These translations use this word throughout the story as the report is given regarding the Promised land. We will address this matter of the correct translation soon. But first, let us read the related Bible passages.

What we need to remember here is that Moses had not personally seen the Promise Land. From this perspective, this is possibly why he agreed to send the twelve. It was to get a firsthand eyewitness by exploring the land. In Numbers 13:17-33 (NIV) we read,

¹⁷ “When Moses sent them to explore Canaan, he said, ‘Go up through the Negev (from the root “dry, parched’ and refers to the area in southern Palestine bordering the desert”³) 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 [late summer] of the first ripe grapes.)

²¹ So they went up and explored the (whole) land from the Desert of Zin (Southern Israel) as far as Rehob, toward Lebo Hamath (in Northern Syria). 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 (Heb. meaning *cluster*), they cut off a branch bearing a single cluster of grapes. Two of them carried it on poles between them, along with some pomegranates and figs (*these are fruit from the late northern hemisphere summer, i.e. the month of Ab or Av July-Aug, or our February in the southern hemisphere*). 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.

² Brown, Francis. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 1064.

³ Bellinger Jr., W.H. *Leviticus Numbers*. Understanding the Bible Commentary Series. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2012), 233.

²⁶ 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. ²⁷ They gave Moses this account (*after their 40-day exploration*): 'We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey (usually a thick date syrup)! Here is its fruit. ²⁸ **But** the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there. ²⁹ 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.'

³⁰ Then Caleb silenced (Lit. *shouted down*) the people before Moses and said, 'We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.' ³¹ **But** the men who had gone up with him said, 'We can't attack (Lit. *go up* or *ascend*) those people; they are stronger than we are.' ³² And they spread among the Israelites a **bad report** (slander Lit. *malicious lies*) 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. ³³ We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim [a hangover from the time before the flood in Gen 6:4]). We seemed like grasshoppers (*locusts*) in our own eyes, and we looked the same (Lit. *and so we are in their eyes*) to them.'

The story and the result of the report continued here in Numbers 14:1-9,20-23,28-38 (NIV),

¹ "That night all the members of the community raised their voices and wept aloud (*they were in absolute hysteria*). ² All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, 'If only we had died in Egypt! **Or in this wilderness!** (God gave them what they asked for here cf. v23, 28-30,32) ³ Why is the Lord bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?' ⁴ And they said to each other, 'We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt.'

⁵ Then Moses and Aaron fell facedown (*on their faces to intercede for the people between God and them*) in front of the whole Israelite assembly gathered there. ⁶ Joshua, son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes (*as a display of their grief*) ⁷ and said to the entire Israelite assembly, 'The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. ⁸ If the Lord is pleased with us, He will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. ⁹ Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will devour them. Their protection is gone (Lit. *departed from them*), but the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them.'

²⁰ The Lord replied, 'I have forgiven them, as you (Moses) asked. ²¹ Nevertheless, as surely as I live (*a statement of an oath*) and as surely as the glory of the Lord fills the whole earth, ²² not one of those who saw My glory and the signs I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness but who disobeyed Me and tested Me ten times (*frequently*)— ²³ not one of them will ever see the land I promised on oath to their ancestors. No one who has treated Me with contempt will ever see it.

²⁸ So tell them, 'As surely as I live (*a statement of an oath*), declares the Lord, I will do to you the very thing I heard you say: ²⁹ In this wilderness your bodies will fall—every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted (Lit. *numbered*) in the census and who has grumbled against me. ³⁰ Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun. ³¹ As for your children that you said would be taken as plunder, I will bring them in to enjoy the land you have rejected. ³² But as for you, your bodies will fall in this wilderness. ³³ Your children will be shepherds (Lit. *will graze*) here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness (Lit. *whoredoms*), until the last of your bodies lies in the wilderness. ³⁴ For forty years—one year for each of the forty days you explored the land—you

will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have Me against you.’³⁵ I, the Lord, have spoken, and I will surely do these things to this whole wicked community, which has banded together against Me. They will meet their end in this wilderness; here they will die.’

³⁶ So the men Moses had sent to explore the land, who returned and made the whole community grumble against him by spreading a bad report about it—³⁷ these men who were responsible for spreading the bad report about the land were struck down and died of a plague before the Lord. ³⁸ Of the men who went to explore the land, only Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh survived.

An implication is often drawn from this passage of the Bible. That is, Caleb and Joshua were the only two spies who had faith and were brave enough to take possession of the Promised Land, whereas the other ten spies did not have faith or had the courage. Because of this lack of confidence and courage, these spies were downright harmful, rebellious and would not listen to the Lord or Moses. They gave a negative, faithless report of how tough it would be to take the land. However, is this the case here in this story?

The ten thought that they were doing the right thing being spies. So, did not they do their best as spies? To try to answer this question, let us come back to the matter of the right translation of the word in Num 13:2 and throughout these two chapters. Let me suggest that it was that they did not understand the story and its plot. What is meant here is they were merely fulfilling the mission of a spy. But isn't that what they were supposed to be doing spying out the land? The short answer is no; it is not.

If that is the case, then what were they supposed to be doing then if not spying out the land? Well, what is interesting here is that the word spy may not be the proper translation here in these chapters. I would go so far as to suggest that they were not to be spies or to spy out the land at all. In Hebrew, there are two words, which are used for the word spy, and this is not one of them. It has correctly been pointed out that,

“Biblical Hebrew has two verbs that mean ‘to spy’: *lachpor* and *leragel* (from which we get the modern Hebrew word *meraglim*, “spies”). *Neither of these words appear in our Parsha* (a section of Torah to be read in synagogue). That is the point. Instead, *no less than twelve times*, we encounter the rare verb, *la-tur* (meaning to tour). It was revived in modern Hebrew and means (and sounds like) ‘to tour.’

Tayar is a tourist. There is all the difference in the world between a tourist and a spy. Malbim⁴ explains the difference simply. *Latur* means to seek out the good. That is what tourists do. They go to the beautiful, the majestic, the inspiring. They do not spend their time trying to find out what is bad. *Lachpor* and *leragel* are the opposite. They are about searching out a place's weaknesses and vulnerabilities. That is what spying is about. The exclusive use of the verb *latur* in our Parsha – repeated twelve times – is there to tell us that the twelve men were not sent to spy. But only two of them understood this.”⁵

⁴ A 19th century Rabbi his name was “Meir Leibush ben Yehiel Michel Weisser (Malbim)...a Hebrew grammarian, halachic scholar, and author of one of the most insightful and comprehensive Torah commentaries since medieval times.” “Malbim.” <https://www.sefaria.org/person/Malbim> (2nd July 2020).

⁵ Rabbi Sacks, Jonathan. “What is Going on?” *Covenant & Conversation*. 6/20: 2. (Italics are his).

The words *lachpor* and *leragel* and *meraglim* are explained and used in the following ways. The word *lachpor* (לַחְפֹּר) means to dig or a mole. Thus, holding the idea of digging for ideas, clues as a spy would uncover for them. It is only used twice in the Bible in Isaiah 2:20. The Hebrew word *leragel* (*le'ragel* לִרְגֵל) mentioned above is found in Num 21:32; Deut 1:24 etc. and means to search. So, someone who is, “searching for the bad...seeks to find its weaknesses and vulnerabilities.”⁶ It has been said about someone who is a *leragel*,

“is the classic pessimist. He seeks the negative in every situation and invariably finds it.”⁷

While the Hebrew word *meraglim* also mentioned above, is the plural of the word *mergel*, which is the singular for a spy.

However, as suggested above, the word *latur* (לְתוּר), which comes from *tur* (תוּר) and has the prefix (to, i.e. ל) added to it. It is the word used in chapters 13-14,

“Rabbi Mecklenburg demonstrates that *latur* is best translated not as ‘to spy’ but as ‘to explore,’ or perhaps as ‘to wander,’ or even as ‘to tour.’”⁸

In other words, this is this very thing, which the twelve were meant to do when they went into the land. That is, they need to realise that they were to have a mindset that,

“one whose mission is *latur* seeks the positive in his explorations and discovers, to use our metaphor, that the cup is not only half-full but entirely full.”⁹

Another proposal is that it carries the idea to “go about after one’s desire.”¹⁰ In the following places in most translations, versions and paraphrases it was translated as, 13:2 “spy”, 16 “spy out”, 17 “spy out”, 25 “spy out”, 32 “spied out”; 14:7 “spy out”, 34 “spied out”, 36 “spy out”, 38 “spy out”. However, it is also used in Num 10:33 and Deut 1:33 but is translated to “search or seek out.”¹¹ As already indicated the NIV and NLT both translate it as explore.¹² In most of the 22 cases that the word *latur* is used in the Hebrew Bible, it is translated as search, seek, not to spy.¹³ So, why is it the case that it is that the word spy used in Numbers 13 in most Bibles? It has given a false understanding of the story.

This is especially, considering that it was God and Moses saying (as the NIV and NLT have somewhat captured), to explore or tour the land simply. That is, they were not sent as spies. Going one step further, it has been suggested that they were to be tour the good land because God had promised it to Israel. So, they were to go and see how “beautiful, the majestic, the inspiring”¹⁴ it was and then come back and encourage the people to participate in their promised land. It has been suggested that it be translated as scout out,

“since the mission is not strictly military or covert.”¹⁵

⁶ “Spy vs Spy.” <https://ohr.edu/7389> (1st July 2020).

⁷ “Two types of people: ‘Leragel’ and ‘latur’.” <https://www.thejewishstar.com/stories/two-types-of-people-leragel-and-latur,19307> (1st July 2020).

⁸ “Two types of people,” <https://www.thejewishstar.com/stories/two-types-of-people-leragel-and-latur,19307> (1st July 2020).

⁹ “Two types of people,” <https://www.thejewishstar.com/stories/two-types-of-people-leragel-and-latur,19307> (1st July 2020).

¹⁰ Holladay, William. *A Concise Hebrew Lexicon of the Old Testament*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 388. VanGemeren, Willem A. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. Vol. 4. (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1996), 283.

¹¹ Harris, Laird R. et al. *Theological Workbook of the Old Testament*. Vol 2. (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1981), 967

¹² Brown, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon*, 1064.

¹³ Wigram, George V. *The New Englishman’s Hebrew Concordance*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984), 1342.

¹⁴ Rabbi Sacks, “What is Going on?” 2.

¹⁵ Coogan, Michael D. (ed.). *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: With the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*. 3rd Ed. (New York, NY: Oxford, 1989), 204.

God had already promised Abram that he would make him a great nation.

“And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so, you shall be a blessing” (Gen. 12:2 NASB).

So, one would expect that land would be involved. It was this land that they were to now go and explore. Especially, since God had already promised it to Abram,

“Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you” (Gen 13:17 NASB.)

Then God said to Isaac that He would give the land to him and his children,

³ “Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants, I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father, Abraham. ⁴ And I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; ⁵ because Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws” (Gen 26:3-5 NASB).

God also promised it to Jacob (Israel) and his family,

“And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, ‘I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants’” (Gen 28:13 NASB).

This was a good land, which God was going to give Israel. It has been pointed out that,

“The land grant is good land that flows with milk and honey (Num 13:27; 14:8), metonymies¹⁶ of effects for its rich pastures that feed the flocks and for its fruitful orchards, vineyards, and date palm trees. The good inheritance includes houses that Israel did not build, wells they did not dig, and orchards they did not plant (Deut 6:10; 8:7-9). In sum, the patriarchal covenants and their examples assured Israel that behind its existence and its tenure of the land and its wealth lies the divine election.”¹⁷

It was God who said that He would give the twelve families the land (it was not Moses’ idea or the people’s) when He met Moses at the burning bush. That is, He said,

⁸ “So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite... ¹⁷ So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite” (Ex 3:8 NASB).

Moses told the people that God would bring them to this fantastic land,

“And it shall be when the LORD brings you to the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, which He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall observe this rite in this month” (Ex 13:5 NASB).

¹⁶ It is “the act of referring to something by the name of something else that is closely connected with it.” “Metonymies.” https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/american_english/metonymy#:~:text=noun,noun,the%20Oxford%20Advanced%20Learner's%20Dictionary (2nd July 2020).

¹⁷ Waltke, Bruce K. & Yu, Charles. *An Old Testament Theology: an exegetical, canonical, and thematic approach*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007). 538.

God told Moses to go to this land,

“Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, because you are an obstinate people, lest I destroy you on the way” (Ex 33:3 NASB).

However, God also said that there would be people that would be displaced from the land for them to be able to possess it. So, it was nothing new to them.

Except, the ten “completely misunderstood their mission... The ten simply did not understand what was going on.”¹⁸ They affected the negative perspective to all of Israel with their report. They saw things as spy’s rather than explorers or even as a tourist. Yes, they did notice that the land was good, but they did not get it. They missed the idea of the mission entirely. Instead of seeing how beautiful, majestic, and inspiring their inheritance was, they saw the danger, death and felt like grasshoppers (Lit. locusts), Num 13:33. So, a flawed mission caused by misunderstanding the correct vision. That is,

“Their mistake was that they were not meant to be spies. They were told *latur*, not *lachpor* or *leragel*. Their job was to tour, explore, travel, see what the land was like and report back. They were to see what was good about the land, not what was bad... The twelve were sent *latur*. to explore and report on the good things of the land so that the people would know it was worth fighting for. Their task was to tour and explore, not spy and decry.”¹⁹

The consequence of the people listening to what the ten had to say was disastrous. It cost them everything, even their lives. That is,

“The entire generation will die naturally in the desert, and only the children will enter the land.”²⁰

This was due to the ten not understanding their mission. A faulty mission led to a poor vision, and all but two families died in the desert-like they demanded. Therefore, the message here is the ten brought a narrow, negative, and faulty spy’s report instead of telling explorers or tourists’ story. They did not understand the narrative. But Joshua and Caleb did, they saw the mission in the story, and this affected their way of seeing things.

2. However, two did understand the mission

Q. What was it that Joshua and Caleb understood about the mission that affected their vision?

Joshua and Caleb saw things differently. They saw beyond what they knew; they saw the possibilities of the mission. The reason was they understood the purpose of the mission. This then affected what and how they saw things. In other words, they got the narrative and their part in it. This influenced what they told the twelve family groups, even if they did not listen to them.

“But only two of them, Joshua and Caleb, listened carefully and understood what their mission was: to be the eyes of the congregation, letting them know the beauty and goodness of what lay ahead, the land that had been their destiny since the days of their ancestor Abraham... The difference between the ten and Joshua and Caleb are not that the latter had the faith, courage, and confidence the former did not. It is that they understood the story; the ten did not.”²¹

¹⁸ Rabbi Sacks, “What is Going on?” 2.

¹⁹ Rabbi Sacks, “What is Going on?” 3.

²⁰ Rabbi Sacks, Jonathan. “Family Edition.” Covenant & Conversation. 6/20: 1.

²¹ Rabbi Sacks, “What is Going on?” 3.

The twelve family groups did not need spies. What they needed was explorers' and tourists. That is, those who had seen the beautiful, the majestic, the inspiring land of Promise. This was because God was the One who was showing them where to go. So, why would they need spies?

³² “In spite of this, you did not trust in the LORD your God, ³³ who went ahead of you on your journey, in fire by night and in a cloud by day, to search out places for you to camp and to show you the way you should go” (Deut 1:32-33 NIV).

He was the one showing them where to go, so they just need to obey and follow Him. It has been said that,

“God Himself was on mission during Israel’s journey to spy out appropriate places for encampment (Deut 1:33).”²²

The Prophet Ezekiel also pointed this out that, the Lord was the One who was exploring for them. It was not Israel, but He sent them because they asked to be sent (Deut 1:22). That is,

⁵ “and say to them (some elders of Israel), ‘Thus says the Lord God, “On the day when I chose Israel and swore (Lit. *lifted up My hand* and so on in these verses) to the descendants of the house of Jacob and made Myself known to them in the land of Egypt, when I swore to them, saying, I am the Lord your God, ⁶ on that day I swore to them, to bring them out from the land of Egypt into a land that I had selected (from the Heb. *tur* תִּיר meaning to ‘seek out the good’) for them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands” (Ez 20:5-6 NASB).

So, the twelve were just to go and see how beautiful, the majestic, the inspiring land of Promise was and come back and tell everyone about it. Sadly, the rest is past. But what can we learn from this today to help us where we find ourselves?

Some concluding thoughts

So, coming back to the opening question,

Q. Imagine what could happen if we understood the mission given to us as His Children?

So, what can we learn from this account of the twelve? Well, Caleb and Joshua understood their mission. It is that they understood the story, whereas the ten did not. Could it be that we need to understand our mission better? Especially since this can give us a better perspective of things happening around us right now. If we know our mission, perhaps we will better see why Jesus Christ has sent us into the world. We have been deployed on a mission, which has not changed regardless of the first half of this year. So, why are we on mission during these twelve months? Well, if our mission is to,

“Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need” (Matt 6:33 NLT).

This is seen and expanded in Mk 16:15-20; Matt 28:18-20; Lk 24:46-49; Acts 1:8.

Then it is essential to realise that we can either be spies or explorers. It is our choice, as it was the choice of the twelve. We have all heard negative stuff, conspiracy theories, and a lot of bad and distressing news during the first half the year. However, what have we chosen to do with it? Have we believed it or heard it but given it to the Lord in prayer and processed it through the truth of God’s Word?

²² VanGemeren, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 283.

We will all continue to hear negative stuff, conspiracy theories, unfortunate and disturbing news during the second half this year. So, what have we learnt from the first half of the year, which may need to change to align with God's mission? This will determine whether we be able to see the beautiful, the majestic, and the inspiring or not? Or will we end up merely seeing the negative, the bad and the fearful? The choice is ours but remember that, whichever way we go it reveals our real mission as a spy or an explorer. This intern may even influence the vision of those around us.

So, why not ask the Lord to continue to transform us, since we should be the hope carriers on a vital mission. A mission in the part of the world where we have been placed. Maybe we are still in isolation, have no job, the future is unknown. We may need to step back during these times and in hindsight reflect on the first half of the year to help refocus us on our mission for this next half of the year.

Do we understand the story and its plot that we are a part of right now? Are we able to identify our role in the story? We all have our story to tell of the first six months of this year. Is it like the ten or like the two Joshua and Caleb? That is, as a Christ-follower, family, local church, or the church of Jesus Christ, we had all been given the same amount of time from January 1 through to June 30. We have all been living out our story, but what has it taught us and those around us? It has been said that,

“Narrative plays a major role in making good decisions in an uncertain world.”²³

Now how we understand that we are on a mission and that we have already deployed? How will we live for the next six months, i.e. July 1 through December 31? We will all be given the same number of months, weeks, days and hours, but what will we do with them? Since, whether we are like the ten with a spy's understanding or the two as explorers, it will influence the way we see things. That is, on our vision. So, will we use what we have seen today to choose to live from a Kingdom perspective or not? Let me repeat it, will we see the beautiful, the majestic, and the inspiring? Or Else will we see the negative, the bad and the fearful? The choice is ours.

We need to think and live from a Kingdom of God perspective. In closing, I believe that the following can help us to understand the importance of understanding the story and the plot, which guided by the mission and then effects perspective. That is,

“I believe that the story we tell affects the decisions we make. Get the story wrong, and we can rob an entire generation of their future. Get it right, as did Joshua and Caleb, and we can achieve greatness.”²⁴

²³ Rabbi Sacks, “What is Going on?” 2.

²⁴ Rabbi Sacks, “What is Going on?” 4.