

Cherished Bible Stories

Lesson 13



A Story Of Doubt & Distrust (Numbers 13-14)

Introduction

God's people have always had to face opposition that seems "overwhelming." There is no greater time for faith & trust than when having to overcome such odds. If one segment advises a course of action that is not in keeping with God's instructions...and if they gain enough followers, doubt & distrust starts spreading like a deadly plague. Consequences will be severe, and God's disapproval will be certain.

Such is the case with this story. Israel has been redeemed, and she has received her covenant. It is now time to go home to the land promised them by God. But she doubts...she doesn't trust God enough. The consequences for sin are easily seen in this familiar story with the 12 spies.

Read the story and be prepared to answer the following questions.

- 1) What happened in **Num. 10:11**? How long had Israel been at Mt. Sinai? (**cp. Ex. 19:1**) What provisions had been made for them while they were there?

- 2) What instructions are given to Israel in **13:2-20**? Actually, who proposed this idea that obviously met with Divine approval? (**Deut. 1:19-25**)

- 3) What report did the spies give Moses upon their return from their 40-day mission? (**13:27**) What "evidence" did they bring back? (**13:23-24, 26b**)

- 4) What was their "collective recommendation?" (**13:28-29**)

- 5) Who was the first to offer a dissenting opinion? (**13:30**) What did he say and on what basis? Did Caleb accuse the other spies of "overstating their case" or exaggerating? (**13:30b**)

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- 6) How did the majority of spies respond to Caleb's words? (13:31-33)

- 7) Whose opinion held sway? (14:1) What happened as a result? (14:2-4)

- 8) Who joined Caleb in trying to reassure the people? (14:6) What did these 2 men say? (14:7-9)

- 9) How successful were they? (14:10a) What was the real problem? (Deut. 1:26-27, 32)

- 10) What happened to "interrupt" these proceedings? (14:10b) What did this mean?

- 11) What did God say? (14:11-12) As he had done before, what did Moses do in response? (14:13-19; cp. Ex. 32:11-14, 31-32)

- 12) What was God's decision? (14:20-38) Thought question: what does this teach us about sin, forgiveness, and consequences?

