

SPYING OUT THE LAND

Faith is required to follow God's plan.



THE STORY: NUMBERS 13

MONDAY

Moses commissioned the spies

Moses commissioned the spies – The time came for Israel to take the land of promise.

God gave instructions to Moses to send spies into “the land I am giving to the people of Israel” (Numbers 13:2). Moses obeyed the Lord and sent twelve spies, one from each of the tribes. Their job was to go in and observe the men, the crops, and the strength of the cities. The men did this for forty days and then brought back their report.

While spying out the land, the men saw that the land was indeed flowing with milk and honey just as God had promised to them (see Exodus 3:8, 3:17, 13:5). But the spies also observed that the cities were fortified and the people were giants compared to them. Though the spies brought back the fruit of the land to show to the people, their bad reports were full of unbelief. Caleb quieted the people and said that God would give them the land (Numbers 13:30). The other men however stirred the fear of the people by talking about the giants.

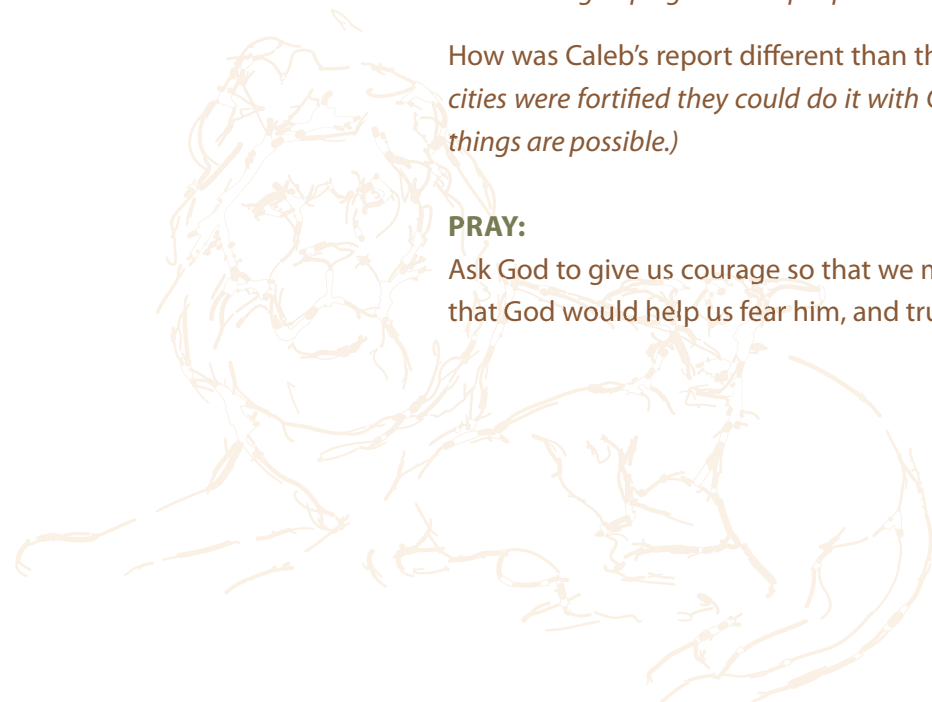
TALK ABOUT IT:

What kind of report should the spies have brought? *(The spies needed to report accurately. It was fine to report fortified cities and strong people. Where they went wrong was in allowing their unbelief to filter into their report saying things like, “We are not able to go up against the people for they are stronger than we are” [vs. 31]).*

How was Caleb's report different than the others? *(Caleb had faith. Even though the cities were fortified they could do it with God's help. Caleb had faith that with God all things are possible.)*

PRAY:

Ask God to give us courage so that we might not allow the fear of man to rule. Ask that God would help us fear him, and trust him.





The people fell further into unbelief

The people fell further into unbelief – The effect of the ten unbelieving spies swept through Israel and filled them with fear and then anger. They wept all night, grumbled against Moses, and once again wished they could return to Egypt. In the end, after Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes and made one last appeal, the crowd talked of stoning the two faithful spies (Numbers 14:10).

TALK ABOUT IT:

How did the bad report of the spies spread unbelief throughout the camp? *(What started out among a few made its way to everyone. Remember, there were over a million people leaving Egypt! Now all the people raised their voices! An unbelieving report has the ability to affect a lot of people.)*

What did the people suggest they should do in light of the fearful report? *(They went so far as talk about going back to Egypt and choosing another leader. This was worse than simply rejecting Moses. To go back to Egypt would be to abandon God as well.)*

PRAY:

Ask God to help us overcome unbelief which can spread and eventually cause us to fall away from God all together.



Where is Jesus?

When the fearful reports of ten of the twelve spies incited the people to fear, and not trust the Lord, God became angry at the people's lack of faith. He said, "I will strike them down with a plague and destroy them." Once again Israel fell into sin, and once again their mediator, Moses, stepped in for them and appealed to God.

In Numbers 14:20 God says, "I have forgiven them as you asked." Again, looking forward toward Christ, God is able to forgive His sinful people. We, today, are just like the Israelites. Though God provides wonderfully for us, we are quick to complain and quick to fear in adversity. We must trust in our redeemer just as they needed to trust in the God who revealed Himself to Moses. Moses mediated between the sinful people and God, just as Jesus would one day mediate our case before the Father.

TALK ABOUT IT:

How many mediators between God and man do we have? *(There is only one. Moses is no longer a mediator. Moses mediated in place of Christ for a time and so pointed to Christ. Moses however could not give himself up as a ransom for our sin. Only Jesus could do that.)*

What pattern do you see in the lives of the Israelites? *(They repeatedly forgot the salvation God brought to them. In a similar way we often forget the Gospel and the salvation provided us by Christ. It is important that we review the Gospel every day. Each time we sin we can come before God, turn from our sin, ask forgiveness, and purpose again to live for Christ.)*

PRAY:

Thank God for the Gospel. Take a moment to have your children confess any sins they are aware of, asking God to forgive them on the basis of the Gospel.

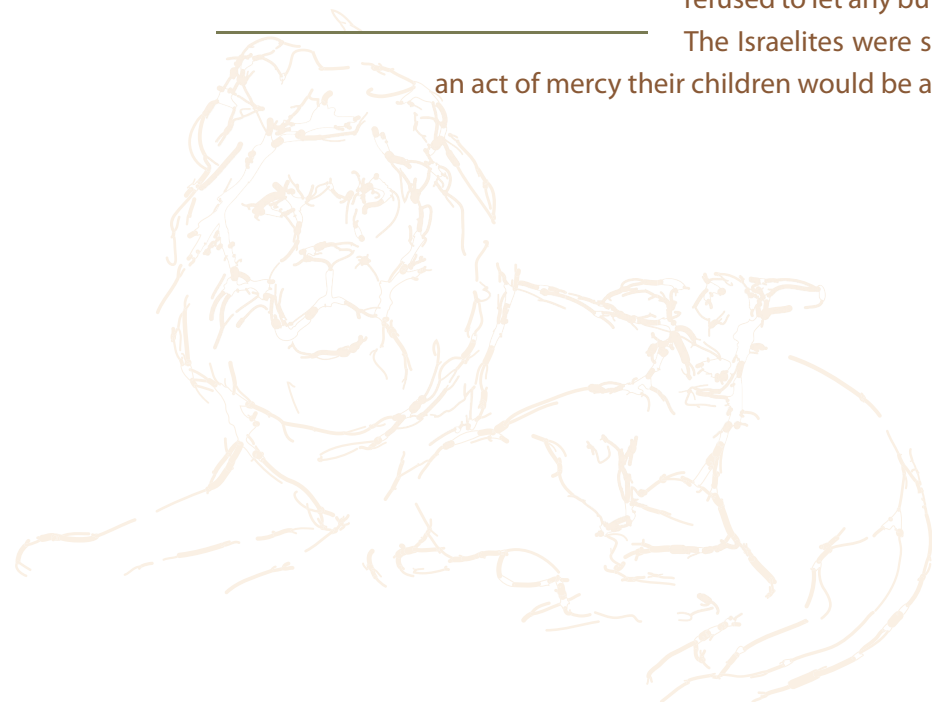


THE STORY: NUMBERS 14:10-44

THURSDAY

God responded in anger but Moses mediated on behalf of Israel

God responded in anger but Moses mediated on behalf of Israel – God would not allow the crowd to stone Joshua and Caleb. The glory of the Lord appeared at the Tent of Meeting for all of Israel to see. God again threatened to destroy all of Israel and start over with Moses alone (Numbers 14:12). Moses stood in the middle between God and the people, and reminded God of His forgiveness. Like Christ, interceding on our behalf, Moses pled for God to forgive and spare Israel. The Lord forgave but He refused to let any but Joshua and Caleb into the promised land. The Israelites were sentenced to wander in the desert. But in an act of mercy their children would be allowed to inherit the land of promise.



TALK ABOUT IT:

After receiving God's judgment what did the Israelites do in their own strength? *(They presumed that they could attack and overpower the Canaanites. Moses warned them that God would not be with them and that they would be defeated. But they do not listen and tried to conquer apart from God in their own strength.)*

What happened when they attacked anyway? *(They lost the battle and were defeated.)*

How did God use Moses to spare Israel? *(Moses was used as a mediator pleading for mercy on behalf of the people, so that God would not destroy them.)*

PRAY:

Thank God for giving us these stories that can help us better follow Him and avoid the sins of Israel.



THE STORY: ZECHARIAH 2:10-11

FRIDAY

**On the road to
Emmaus.**

In this passage, God made a promise to dwell (live) in the midst of His people. Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us. Through Jesus, God came and made His dwelling place among us (John 1:14). Many nations will be gathered in that day and they will be the people of God. This is a prophetic look at the effect the Gospel will have in drawing people of all nations (Rev. 5:9).

TALK ABOUT IT:

Compare Zechariah 2:10 with John 1:14. What are the similarities? *(In Zechariah, God made a promise to dwell with His people, and in John we see the fulfillment of that word.)*

Take a look at Revelation 21:3. How is this description of heaven, the final fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy? *(Jesus left to go and prepare a place for us. When the Lord returns He will be God with us forever!)*

PRAY:

Thank Jesus for giving up His position of glory in heaven to live among us and die on the cross for our sins and the sins of people from every tribe and nation.

