
Lesson 7: Twelve Spies

Pages 28-32

Numbers 13:1—14:45

Objectives

Students should be able

1. *To identify the oasis where Israel camped near Canaan*
2. *To describe the spies' report of the land and people of Canaan*
3. *To name the two faithful spies who trusted God*
4. *To tell two ways Israel rejected God's plans for them*
5. *To state God's punishments for Israel's sins*

Review Questions

Whom did Moses invite to go with Israel to Canaan?

– *his father-in-law Jethro*

What did the Israelites do because they were not thankful for the blessings God gave them?

– *complained*

How did God punish the complaining Israelites at their first camp after leaving Sinai?

– *He sent fire that burned among the people around the edge of the camp.*

What happened to the Israelites who did not thank God for the quail He sent?

– *They died before they even swallowed the bite of meat they had taken.*

What was the camp where this took place called? Why?

– *“graves of lust”; many people who complained were buried there*

What took place at Hazeroth?

– *Aaron and Miriam challenged Moses' authority.*

What was Moses' response when Aaron and Miriam challenged his authority?

– *He did not argue but forgave them.*

How was Miriam punished for her sin?

– *She had leprosy and needed to live alone outside the camp for seven days.*

Lesson Story

The Israelites followed the pillar of cloud from Hazeroth northward through the Wilderness of Paran, which covers a large part of the area above the eastern Sinai Peninsula. At last they came to an oasis called Kadesh-barnea (kā' dish bār' nē ə), near the southern border of Canaan. The people camped at Kadesh-barnea, for there were many springs of water and much grass for their flocks and herds.

The Israelites were very near Canaan. The time had come for them to enter their new land. But they knew nothing about this new land. Was the soil good? What kind of crops grew there? Were there forests? Were the people who lived there strong or weak? Were there many or just a few? Did

they live in walled cities protecting them from enemies, or in small villages?

God told Moses, "Choose twelve men—one from each tribe—to go into the land of Canaan. Let them search the whole land and then return to report what they have seen."

Moses chose men who were leaders of their tribes. One of these spies was Joshua, Moses' assistant. Another was Caleb, from the tribe of Judah.

The twelve men set out for Canaan. They walked north through the Negev. Once in Canaan, they crossed hills, forded streams, and passed fields and vineyards. They skirted large walled cities and examined the land from south to north and back again. It was a beautiful land! Along the way, the men gathered pomegranates and figs. They cut a large cluster of grapes and hung it upon a pole, which two men carried between them. The people of Israel would enjoy plenty of delicious foods in such a rich land!

After forty days, the spies returned to Kadesh-barnea. They went to Moses and Aaron and described Canaan. Everyone gathered to hear the spies' report. "It is a country of plenty," they said, "a land flowing with milk and honey. Here is some of its fruit." Never before had the Israelites seen such fruit!

"But the people who live there are strong," the spies continued. "They live in cities surrounded by great walls."

All but two of the spies were dismayed at seeing these huge walled cities. "We will never be able to conquer those people; they are too strong. The people are giants. They are so tall, we felt like grasshoppers beside them."

Caleb, a brave spy, spoke up, "The land is a good land, well worth fighting for. We do not need to be afraid, for God is on our side. He will help us defeat those people."

"There is no use trying to enter the country," the fearful spies said. "We can never defeat those people."

The faithless spies' discouraging report frightened the Israelites. They did not dare to enter Canaan. They forgot God had defeated Pharaoh for them. They forgot He had defeated the Amalekites, and provided Israel with water and food. They forgot that He dwelt among them in the tabernacle. They forgot again to trust Him.

The people were so fearful they could not sleep. All night they cried and complained. The next morning, they began to blame Moses and Aaron for bringing them out of Egypt to this place. "Let's go back to Egypt!" they cried. "We will choose another leader to replace Moses!"

Moses and Aaron were very sad. They bowed with their faces to the ground in front of Israel. Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes as a sign of their great sorrow.

"Canaan is a wonderful land. Why should we be afraid when the LORD is with us?" Joshua and Caleb pleaded with the people. "Please, don't rebel against the LORD. The people who live in that land will be defenseless; we can easily conquer them if the LORD is with us."

The angry people threatened to stone Joshua and Caleb. Suddenly the glory of the LORD shone from the tabernacle. Everyone's attention turned to the bright light.

"How long will these people scorn Me?" the LORD said to Moses. "Look at the miracles I have shown them. Why do they not trust Me? They will no longer be My people. I am going to destroy them. I will make your descendants a great nation and give them the land."

But Moses pleaded with the LORD to have mercy on the Israelites and to forgive them. And the

LORD listened to Moses' prayer. He forgave the children of Israel. However, the LORD knew that the people did not trust Him. He knew they could not take the land from the Canaanites until they trusted Him.

So He told Moses, "None of the Israelites who have murmured against Me will enter the land that I promised them. Only Joshua and Caleb, who have been faithful to Me, will enter the promised land. All the people twenty years old and above will die in the desert. Their children, when they are grown, will enter Canaan and possess it. Tomorrow you must turn back to live in the wilderness. There you will wander for forty years—one year for each day the spies spent in Canaan."

When the people heard God's words, they were very sorry. They changed their minds. "We have sinned," they said. "We will go into the land which God has promised us." They began to talk about marching into Canaan.

"Don't go," Moses warned. "Because you have not obeyed God, He will not be with you. You must do as He has commanded."

The people did not heed Moses' warning. A mob of men rushed forward to take the land. They were confused, without a leader, and without instructions. Most importantly, they were without God's presence. The Amalekites and Canaanites were lying in wait and attacked the Israelites. The battle did not last long, for the Israelites were quickly driven back; some were killed. They had not obeyed God, and He did not help them.

Discouraged and defeated, the Israelites at last moved back to the Wilderness of Paran.

Questions for Discussion

How long were the spies in Canaan?

– *forty days*

How did the spies describe the land of Canaan?

– *a country of plenty, a land flowing with milk and honey*

What did the people of Israel think about the land of Canaan?

– *They would enjoy living in a rich land that produced delicious foods.*

What did the spies use to compare their size to the people of Canaan?

– *grasshoppers to giants*

Of the twelve spies, how many were fearful?

– *ten*

Who were the two faithful spies?

– *Joshua and Caleb*

What did the Israelites want to do about their leader?

– *They wanted to choose another leader.*

When the people complained against Moses, whom were they actually complaining against? Explain.

– *against God because He had chosen Moses to be their leader*

What did Joshua and Caleb say to the people to try to convince them that they could conquer the people of Canaan?

– *If the LORD was with them, they could easily defeat the people of Canaan.*

What did the Israelites do to Joshua and Caleb in response?

– *threatened to stone them*

The Israelites stirred God’s anger against them. What did Moses plead with the LORD to do?

– *to have mercy on the Israelites and to forgive them*

Why would God not allow the Israelites to take the land after this?

– *They did not trust Him.*

Who would . . . die in the wilderness and not enter Canaan?

– *all the people twenty years and older, except Joshua and Caleb*

. . . enter and possess Canaan?

– *the children when they were grown, and Joshua and Caleb*

When the people heard God’s words, they were sorry, changed their minds, and said they had sinned. Were the people truly sorry for their sins? Explain.

– *No; they made plans to march into Canaan even though God had said they would not be allowed to.*

What did Moses warn those who chose to go into Canaan on their own?

– *God would not be with them because they had disobeyed Him.*

Who was lying in wait and attacked the Israelites?

– *the Amalekites and Canaanites*

Why were God’s people unable to defeat their enemies?

– *They were without God’s presence because they had not obeyed God and He did not help them. Also, they were confused and without a leader.*

History, Culture, Geography, and Archaeology

- Kadesh-barnea is probably the modern oasis of Ain el-Qudeirat, about 50 miles (80 km) south of Beersheba and about 70 miles (112 km) from Hebron.
- The spies most likely journeyed into Canaan in September or October, since that is the time of grape harvest. According to *Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, large grape clusters weighing as much as 12 pounds (5 kg) each have been reported in Palestine.

Lesson 7

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THOSE CURIOUS CUSTOMS

④ In Moses’ day, massive walls surrounded the large cities of Canaan. The picture shows the thickness of a small wall. Two thick walls ringed some cities.

1. What caused the men of Israel to be afraid to enter Canaan? The city walls were high and the people were like giants and very strong.
2. How did Joshua and Caleb show their sorrow over the fearful Israelites’ actions? They tore their clothes.

Extra Activity

- Bring pomegranates and fresh or dried figs for students to taste.
- If students are unfamiliar with either figs or pomegranates, have them research the plant and fruit, where grown, when harvested, use, and nutritional value.

Where to Find Answers

| Activity | Location |
|-----------------------|---|
| Those Curious Customs | |
| 1 | page 29, paragraphs 2 and 3 |
| 2 | page 29, second column, first paragraph |

The Lay of the Land

| | |
|-----|--------------------------|
| 3-7 | page 28, map |
| 8 | page 28, first paragraph |

Know Your Bible

| | |
|----|--|
| 9 | page 28, paragraphs 2 and 3 |
| 10 | page 28, third paragraph |
| 11 | page 28, last paragraph (continues to next page) |
| 12 | page 29, fourth paragraph |

Take It to Heart

| | |
|----|---------------------------------|
| 13 | page 30, fourth paragraph |
| 14 | page 30, next-to-last paragraph |

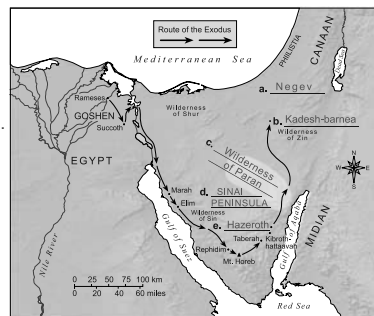
Looking Back

| | |
|-------|---|
| 15 | page 23, next-to-last paragraph |
| 16-20 | page 22, first paragraph (continues to next page) |
| 21 | page 22, introduction to Section 2 |
| 22 | page 24, first paragraph |
| 23 | page 24, second paragraph |
| 24-26 | page 22, vocabulary words |

THE LAY OF THE LAND

Label the locations.

- ③ 3. Negev a.
4. Sinai Peninsula d.
5. Hazeroth e.
6. a. the wilderness that covers the area north of the eastern Sinai Peninsula c.
b. Write its name:



Wilderness of Paran

7. Kadesh-barnea b. _____
8. Why did the Israelites camp at Kadesh-barnea? There was plenty of water and grass there for their animals.

KNOW YOUR BIBLE

9. Why did Moses send spies into Canaan?
a. They were to find the best route for conquering the land.
b. The Israelites knew nothing about the land.
c. Moses wanted the spies to bring food from the land.
d. The people wanted to know how tall the Canaanites were.
10. Why was the number of spies twelve? There was one spy from each of the tribes of Israel.
11. What did the spies bring back that showed how rich the land of Canaan was? They brought back a large cluster of grapes and other fruit.
12. Why did Caleb think the Israelites did not need to be afraid of the people in Canaan? God was on their side.

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Lesson 7

TAKE IT TO HEART

13. Why did the Israelites have to turn back and live in the wilderness? They murmured against God.
14. What happened to the Israelites who tried to take the land of Canaan? They were attacked and some of them were killed.

LOOKING BACK

15. What did a wind from the sea bring to Israel at the graves of lust? quail
16. Which Bible book is named after the counting of the people of Israel? Numbers
17. What does the Book of Leviticus describe? the duties of the priests
18. What story does the Bible book called Exodus tell? the story of Israel's exodus from Egypt
19. What journey does the Bible book called Numbers describe? Israel's journey through the wilderness after leaving Sinai
20. Which Bible book is called "In the Wilderness" in Hebrew? Numbers
21. What three things did God want to accomplish by disciplining Israel?
a. Example: make them into a special nation to honor Him and keep His covenant
b. Example: prepare them to take a land filled with sinful people who worshiped idols
c. Example: teach Israel to trust Him and the leaders He had chosen for them
22. What did Miriam and Aaron do because they envied Moses? They challenged his leadership.
23. Who was the meekest man in Israel? Moses
24. For whom does a prophet speak? God
25. To whom does a prophet speak? people
26. What is lust? a strong, wrong desire

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Lesson 8: Forty Desert Years

Numbers 20:1-29

Objectives

Students should be able

1. To identify places on Israel's journey in the Sinai Peninsula
2. To tell how God cared for the Israelites during their wandering
3. To tell why Moses and Aaron were not allowed to enter the promised land
4. To tell how the position of high priest was passed on
5. To name five nations that Israel would encounter east of the Jordan River
6. To state four characteristics of God that He wants us to have

Vocabulary Words

*Zered (zir' əd)

*Eleazar (el' ē ē zər')

*Ammon (am' ən)

*Amorite (am' ə rīt)

Review Questions

Why did Moses send spies into Canaan?

– *The Israelites did not know anything about the land.*

How many spies . . .

. . . went into Canaan?

– *twelve*

. . . were afraid of the high-walled cities and the strong people?

– *ten*

. . . trusted God to defeat their enemies?

– *two*

Who were the spies who trusted God and were not afraid?

– *Joshua and Caleb*

What did Moses ask God to do to the Israelites rather than destroy them?

– *to show mercy and to forgive them*

What was the punishment God declared upon the Israelites?

– *They would wander in the wilderness for forty years; except for Joshua and Caleb, those twenty years and older would die in the desert.*

How did some of the Israelites show they were not truly sorry for their sins?

– *They chose to go their own way and made plans to march into Canaan even though God had said they should not.*

What was Moses' warning to those who chose to fight for Canaan on their own?

– *God would not be with them because they had not obeyed Him.*

Lesson Story

The Israelites had been close to entering the promised land. But because they did not trust God, He sent them back into the Wilderness of Paran. There they wandered from place to place for forty years. The Bible does not tell us much about what happened to the Israelites during the years they wandered in the desert. We know that God took care of His people and continued to provide manna for them as they waited for Him to lead them to Canaan. We also know that through forty long years of tramping through rocky deserts, the Israelites' shoes and clothes did not wear out!

One by one the people who had complained died. Their children grew up.

At the beginning of the final year of wandering, the Israelites returned to Kadesh-barnea on the border of the Wilderness of Zin, the desert region south of Canaan and west of Edom. The Wilderness of Zin was a northern arm of the Wilderness of Paran.

While Israel was camped at Kadesh-barnea, Moses' sister Miriam died and was buried. Also at Kadesh-barnea, the people complained—again. When the Israelites last camped at Kadesh-barnea, they had found plenty of water. But this time they found none. Perhaps the oases from which they had drawn water before were now dried up. Instead of asking Moses and Aaron to ask God for water, the people complained against Moses. This group was as bad as their parents had been. “Why did you bring us into this desert to die? Why didn't you let us stay in Egypt?” the people grumbled. “There is nothing here, no water or grain or fruit.”

Moses and Aaron went to the door of the tabernacle, where they bowed down to the LORD. The glory of the LORD came to them. The LORD said to Moses, “Take your rod. With Aaron, lead the people out to the rock that I will show to you. While all the people watch, I want you to speak to the rock. I will provide water—enough water for all the people and their animals.”

Moses and Aaron took the people out to the rock. Moses stood by the rock, the rod in his hand. But Moses did not do what the LORD had told him to do. Maybe the people were still complaining, but Moses acted in anger. “Hear now, you rebels,” Moses said, “must we get water out of this rock for you?”

Raising his rod, Moses hit the rock with it. Then again, he struck the rock. At the second blow, water gushed out of the rock, just as several years earlier water had rushed out of a rock near Mount Sinai. Once again, the LORD had provided plenty of water for His people and their livestock.

But the LORD was angry with Moses and Aaron, for they had not obeyed the LORD's command. He said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not believe Me and obey Me, neither of you will enter the promised land.”

Their disobedience had cost Moses and Aaron the privilege of entering the land of promise. Afterward, this place was called *Meribah* (mer' i bö), which means “strife.”

East of Kadesh-barnea lay Edom, the rugged, mountainous land south of the Dead Sea. Edom stretched from the Zered Brook south toward the land of Midian. A range of mountains within Edom was called Mount Seir (sē ər).

Edom was the homeland of the Edomites, the descendants of Esau, Isaac's son. The Edomites were relatives of the Israelites, Isaac's descendants through Jacob.

Moses wanted to lead the Israelites through Edom on their way to Canaan because it was the most direct route. He sent a message to the king of Edom, reminding him of their kinship and asking permission to pass through his country.

The king of Edom refused. "You may not pass through my country," he replied. "If you do, my army will come out to fight you."

The Israelites would have to travel around Edom. After leaving Kadesh-barnea, the Israelites came to Mount Hor, near the border of Edom. While they camped there, the LORD told Moses and Aaron that the time had come for Aaron to die.

"Take Aaron and Eleazar, Aaron's son, up on the mountain," the LORD said. "Take off Aaron's priestly clothes and put them on Eleazar." Eleazar would take his father's place as high priest, just as the LORD had ordered in His Law.

The three men climbed Mount Hor. When they reached the top, Moses removed the high priest's robes from Aaron. Moses placed them on Eleazar. And there, on top of the mountain, Aaron died at the age of one hundred twenty-three years. Moses and Eleazar buried Aaron's body, and then they returned to the camp.

When the people saw that only Moses and Eleazar had come back, they realized that Aaron had died. They saw Eleazar wearing the high priest's robes and understood that God had chosen Eleazar to take Aaron's place as high priest. For thirty days, the whole nation of Israel mourned Aaron's death at Mount Hor.

Questions for Discussion

How was Kadesh-barnea different this time from the first time the Israelites had camped there?

– *There was no water this time; before there had been plenty.*

What did the people do instead of asking Moses and Aaron to ask God for water?

– *They grumbled and complained against Moses.*

What did the LORD tell Moses to do to get water?

– *Speak to the rock*

What did Moses do instead?

– *Struck the rock*

What was the punishment God declared for Moses and Aaron?

– *Neither man would enter the promised land.*

How were the Israelites and Edomites related?

– *Both were descendants of Isaac*

What did the king of Edom threaten if Israel tried to go through his country?

– *His army would fight them*

Who became the second high priest of Israel?

– *Aaron's son Eleazar*

What kind of person is the opposite of a complaining person?

– *A thankful person*

Name the five nations that were east of the Jordan River.

– *Edom, Midian, Moab, Ammon, and the Amorites*

Which of these nations were descendants of Abraham?

– *Edom; Midian*

Which were descendants of Abraham's nephew Lot?

– *Moab; Ammon*

Which were not directly related to the Israelites?

– *Amorites*

How could the people of all these nations communicate with one another?

– *They all spoke languages similar to Hebrew.*

History, Culture, Geography, and Archaeology

- The land of Edom at this time would have covered part of modern Israel and Jordan. Edom was also called the land of Seir, from the mountain range within Edom.
- The actual location of Mt. Hor is uncertain. Two mountain peaks are thought to be possibilities. The one, Jebel Harun, is not close to Kadesh. The other peak, Jebel Madurah, is located northeast of Kadesh on the northwest border of Edom. This better fits the description of the events of Numbers 20.

Extra Activity

- Have students make a list, collage, or poster of blessings God has given them.

Deeper Discussion

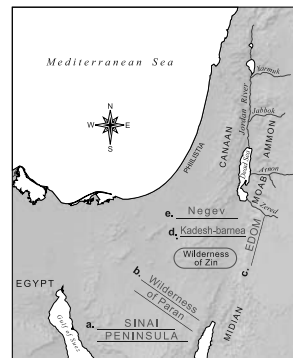
Think and Discuss

- Moses had led an unthankful people and more than once pled with God to spare them. He had witnessed God's mercy and love and God's wrath and punishment for sin. Moses had talked with God face to face and had seen God's glory; he had faithfully served the LORD all these years. But now, for one act of disobedience, he would not experience the promise of possession of Canaan. How would Moses likely have felt at God's punishment that he would not enter the promised land? Did he plead with God, as he had when the Israelites sinned? How might Moses' meekness have affected how he accepted punishment for his sin?

Lesson 8

Do these exercises.

1. Name a later event in Israel's history that showed that the Edomites continued to carry Esau's grudge against Jacob. When the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem, the Edomites helped the Babylonians and then took some of Israel's land.
2. Label Kadesh-barnea. d.
3. Label the Sinai Peninsula. a.
4. Label the Negev. e.
5. a. Which wilderness covers the area north of the eastern Sinai Peninsula?
Wilderness of Paran
b. Label this wilderness on the map. d.
6. Write *Edom* over the area that was Edom. c.
7. Circle the Wilderness of Zin.
8. Edom was home to which people?
Edomites
9. From whom were these people descended? Esau



KNOW YOUR BIBLE

10. Name two ways God miraculously provided for the children of Israel during their forty years in the wilderness.
 - a. God provided manna for them.
 - b. The Israelites' shoes and clothes did not wear out.
either order

Where to Find Answers

| Activity | Location |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| The Lay of the Land | |
| 1 | page 35, ① third paragraph |
| 2-7 | page 35, map |
| 8, 9 | page 35, ① second paragraph |
| Know Your Bible | |
| 10 | page 33, first paragraph |
| 11 | page 34, second column, second paragraph |
| 12 | page 34, last paragraph (continues to next page) |
| Know God and Take it to Heart | |
| 13 | page 37, ① first paragraph |
| 14 | page 37, ① second paragraph |
| Looking Back | |
| 15 | page 29, third paragraph |
| 16 | page 29, second column, first paragraph |
| 17 | page 28, first paragraph |
| 18 | page 28, last paragraph (continues to next page) |
| 19 | page 29, fourth paragraph |
| 20 | page 30, next-to-last paragraph |

- Why did Moses want to march Israel through Edom?
 - There was plenty of water and food in Edom.
 - The Edomites were friendlier than the other nations in the area.
 - The weather in Edom is cool and the land is flat.
 - The shortest route to Canaan ran through Edom.
- Why did Moses put Aaron's clothes on Eleazar? to show that Eleazar was the new high priest

KNOW GOD AND TAKE IT TO HEART

- ① The people of Israel continued to complain because they still lacked gratitude. The LORD had fed them and given them water. He dwelt among them and defeated their enemies. The goodness of God surrounded His people, but they thought only about the hardships they faced. The result? They could never be satisfied. They accused God of neglecting them.
- The books that describe Israel's years in the wilderness teach us many things about God: that He is good, forgiving, perfectly patient, and kind. But we also learn that God desires His people to show these same qualities. Even during difficult times God expects us to trust Him and to be good, forgiving, patient, and kind. Bitterness and impatience do not please God. This is one of the messages of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.
- Why were the people of Israel dissatisfied, even though God had done many good things for them? They thought only about their hardships.
 - According to the message found in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy; what does God expect us to do? Example: God desires us to trust Him and show goodness, forgiveness, patience, and kindness.

LOOKING BACK

- How did ten spies respond to seeing the strong, giant people and the city walls of Canaan?
 - They looked forward to the challenge of conquering such strong people.
 - They hoped God would help them conquer Canaan.
 - They were afraid and believed they could never defeat the Canaanites.
 - They thought the land was worth fighting for.

- Why did Joshua and Caleb tear their clothes after they returned from spying out the land of Canaan?
 - They were dismayed at the strength of the Canaanites and their cities.
 - They wanted to show their sorrow over the Israelites' actions.
 - Tearing their clothes was a sign of the way the Israelites would destroy Canaan.
 - Tearing their clothes was a sign that the Canaanites would defeat the Israelites.
- Where did the Israelites camp because there was an abundance of water and grass?
 - Kadesh-barnea
 - Horeb
 - Taberah
 - Hazaroth
- What did the fruit from Canaan show the Israelites about the land?
 - The fruit was large and good; a sign that the land was fertile.
 - Canaan could grow only one kind of fruit.
 - Fruit did not grow well; the soil was poor.
 - The Israelites would have to work very hard to grow enough food for everyone.
- How did Caleb respond to the strong walled cities of Canaan?
 - He wondered how Israel could ever conquer them.
 - He invented a method of overcoming walled cities.
 - He did not fear, because he was trusting God to fight for Israel.
 - He dreaded the Canaanites because of the strength of their cities.
- Why were the Israelites easily driven back by the Amalekites and Canaanites who were lying in wait for them?
 - The Amalekites and Canaanites were giants compared to the Israelites.
 - The Israelites could not break through the thick walls.
 - The Israelites did not wait for Moses to lead them in their attack.
 - The Israelites had rushed ahead against God's command and without His help.