

Numbers 12-14

Good evening, church.

It is wonderful to be here with you all as we continue our study of the Book of Numbers.

We will be in chapter 12-14 tonight.

Now remember, the nation of Israel has finally set out from Sinai.

The momentum has built, as all the preparations were made, the tabernacle was complete, worship was established, and the army made ready.

They set out, and the first place God brings this army of slaves is an unforgiving desert and desolate waste place.

Immediately God begins to test their faith, and this first test proves to be all too much for the people.

As complaints from the mixed multitude began to spread throughout the camp.

They are sick of this miraculous manna, this heavenly food, that God so graciously gives them 6 mornings out of the week.

They want the garnishes of Egypt, the garlics and onion, their fleshly appetites are driving them into a craze.

They demand meat, and overwhelm their leader Moses with their demands.

Remember this leads Moses to hand in his resignation one more time, as he has tried to do so since God called him from the burning bush.

Moses even wanted to die he was so miserable at this point.

At this point God raised up seventy leaders and filled them with His Spirit to assist Moses with the people.

God then answers their demands for meat, and sends them quail by the millions.

And those who lost self-control, and allowed their flesh to consume their hearts and minds, it says of them in

Num. 11:33-34

But while the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was aroused against the people, and the Lord struck the people with a very great plague. 34 So he called the name of that place Kibroth Hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had yielded to craving.

And from this graveyard the people move on to Hazeroth, where Moses will find no rest from his misery.

Some claim that in ministry when problems come, they come in threes, and that will be true for Moses.

After the mutiny we saw last time, we will see almost immediately another, but this one will be even more severe, as it comes from within Moses own family, and the leadership team guiding the army of God.

After this, the people will once more rise up in a final devastating way that will change the whole course and destiny of this people group.

And through it all we will see this man Moses too will be tested from God as the leader chosen of God.

So let us get into the text this morning...

Dissension of Aaron and Miriam

12:1 Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman. 2 So they said, "Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?" And the Lord heard it. 3 (Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.)

Now Moses, Aaron and Miriam were a mighty ministry team for the Lord.

They all held such important offices within this nation led by God.

Aaron was the highest religious authority in the land, and was acting as the mediator between the people and God.

He was the older brother of Moses and was appointed by God to assist his younger brother.

Miriam must have had the highest honor of any woman in this nation.

She was the older sister to Moses, and used by God to save his life as an infant.

We saw in Exodus 15:20 she was a prophetess who led the women in worship.

They all had high places of honor.

Yet we see jealousy crept into their hearts.

And there is many reasons to believe Miriam was the leader in this rebellion.

In verse 1 the verb 'spoke' is in the feminine.

And we will see Miriam will be alone disciplined.

Miriam entered into the temptation that has plagued women since their plight here on earth was announced to them in the garden.

Gen 3:16 To the woman He said:

"I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you."

Man was chosen to lead, and it had to be commanded, because it goes against the very nature of woman.

And why not? Aaron here has no problem following his sisters lead.

We have already seen he was weak and persuadable leader.

Remember during Moses' absence atop of Mt. Sinai, the people talked the cowardly man Aaron into making an idol to worship.

We see Miriam the stronger of the two, convinces Aaron to follow her in this tragic and costly rebellion.

She must have had a strong presence, and even a little more clever than her brothers.

We see here she even silences Moses, who gives her no response.

You know it is so hard already for family to see anything special in their family members.

“Moses, who are you, I changed your diapers,” Kind of thing.

“If I had not watched over him as a baby, he would be a no body today.”

And we see her approach however is as crafty as a serpent.

She first complains about Moses’ marriage to an Ethiopian women.

Which we don’t know if Moses’ first wife Zipporah is dead, and this is his second wife, the scripture is silent on that.

But there was no law against Moses marrying an Ethiopian or better translated a Cushite woman.

It was commanded that the Israelites not intermarry with the corrupt tribes of Canaan in Ex. 34.10-15.

I have found that when people began to pick apart spiritual leaders, they will have a list of frivolous complaints to chide the leader with.

But they are usually a mask for what the real problem is, jealousy, they envy the fact that God has called that person to a special position, and they want that position.

Miriam quickly leaves the first complaint to get to the real complaint

"Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?" And the Lord heard it.

They were jealous of the position of Moses. This is the heart of the matter here, we never hear of this issue with his marriage again, it was no business to anyone who he married.

And we see how Moses responds here, and it is the best example when someone comes against you, if you are called to any spiritual position.

Be silent, once you start defending yourself, the strength of your leadership diminishes, and almost brings guilt upon you.

Listen I have seen pastors attacked on Facebook, who began to defend themselves and their integrity, and it really seems to have a negative effect.

I have been attacked on Facebook, and even verbally, and I have found, although it is very difficult, a silent response is the best response.

My flesh is like just write this out, tell them what's up. But my spirit usually keeps me silent.

And you know what I have never regretted what I did not say.

I only lay-up at night when I respond, and wish I hadn't.

Let the Lord defend you Christian.

Because the truth is, even here with Moses, perhaps Miriam could have done a better job, perhaps she would have been more cunning and made less mistakes.

But none of that matters, because Moses is the person God has called here, not her.

There is no justification to come against the man God has chosen.

And as far as I am concerned, when people come against me, perhaps I am not the best qualified, and there are many people who can do it better, but I know without a doubt God called me to this position, and it really is a humbling thing.

To know you are not the best person for the job, but God has given it to you to do.

You see it is the God who calls the person that brings success or failure... Moses was a man just like you and I, but His God was mighty.

Moses we see here it is written, he is humble and meek.

He knows his limits, he has voiced them to God since he was called at the burning bush.

And a leader chosen of God usually is weak and debased, so the leader is not puffed up and God then gets the glory.

1 Cor. 1:26-31 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence. 30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God — and righteousness and sanctification and redemption — 31 that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord."

Moses is silent, but God intervenes...

4 Suddenly the Lord said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, "Come out, you three, to the tabernacle of meeting!" So the three came out. 5 Then the Lord came down in

the pillar of cloud and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam. And they both went forward. 6 Then He said,

"Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. 7 Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house. 8 I speak with him face to face, Even plainly, and not in dark sayings; And he sees the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant Moses?"

God calls these three to Himself.

He explains that He chooses the prophets, it is not because the man or woman is anything special, but because God makes Himself known to that person.

He explains Moses is different from any other prophet.

God speaks in a form to Moses face to face.

It is not clear what form God shows Himself to Moses in, but Moses has a unique in his calling here.

And Moses was is set apart in the scriptures as a unique prophet.

Where as many received visions and dreams, Moses was able to converse with God.

Later on in **Deut. 18:18** God explains to Moses...

18 I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.

That Prophet that would be like Moses is the Jesus of Nazareth.

Moses, in his humility and meekness lets the Lord defend him.

Meekness is not weakness, it is power under control.

Ps 147:6 The Lord lifts up the humble;

He casts the wicked down to the ground.

God had to move swiftly here, the consequences of having leadership in rebellion would be wide and sweeping.

This nation was looking for any chance to rebel against God and His chosen leader, so God has no time to allow this to work itself out.

Understand division and sin in leadership has far deeper consequences.

If you fall, and you have no ministry, it affects you alone.

If you are a children's ministry worker and you fall, you take many souls with you.

If you are a leader the impact is devastating, and that is why severe measures are taken here.

God's will, will be done.

9 So the anger of the Lord was aroused against them, and He departed. 10 And when the cloud departed from above the tabernacle, suddenly Miriam became leprous, as white as snow. Then Aaron turned toward Miriam, and there she was, a leper. 11 So Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord! Please do not lay this sin on us, in which we have done foolishly and in which we have sinned. 12 Please do not let her be as one dead, whose

flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb!"

We see here God deals with Miriam; He saw the evil motives in her heart, heard her rebellious words and acted swiftly.

She became leprous immediately.

Aaron new the cost of this condition, for he was the one designated to judge the cleanliness of the camp.

He knows her high position will mean nothing up against God's Holy Law.

She will be cast out as unclean, and will be nothing more than dead to the family and nation.

In addition, notice Aaron is not struck, many people in our offended culture say this is because God is a misogynist, and He hates woman.

But it is clear Miriam led this campaign, and she is getting the penalty due to her.

The sins of jealousy were cultivated in her heart, and God rightly judged her.

Also, had Aaron been struck, there would be no mediator between the people of Israel and God, and His Holy wrath would have swept through the nation. They are at a delicate place right now.

Notice here, Aaron is the intercessor for the Nation of Israel, yet he too needs intercession.

He pleads with Moses, and confesses his and Miriam's sins, and pleads for mercy.

Moses the Meek, turns in a vengeful attitude toward his ungrateful brother and sister, and mocks and scorns them.

After all they deserve what they are getting.

No that is not at all what happens, Moses has no hint of wanting justice, he appeals for God's Mercy.

Understand this is a test for Moses here too, the testing's of God prove what kind of person we are...

And Moses is a godly man here...

13 So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, "Please heal her, O God, I pray!"

14 Then the Lord said to Moses, "If her father had but spit in her face, would she not be shamed seven days?"

Her offense toward Moses is as disgusting as her father spitting on her, and she needs to be dealt with...

Let her be shut out of the camp seven days, and afterward she may be received again." 15 So Miriam was shut out of the camp seven days, and the people did not journey till Miriam was brought in again. 16 And afterward the people moved from Hazeroth and camped in the Wilderness of Paran.

And God rich in mercy, heeds to Moses' prayer and removes her uncleanness.

But, the Law is the Law, and she still needs to wait the seven day period outside the camp.

And this is a humiliating punishment.

Because of her high position, and the enormity of her calling, she holds up the whole camp.

As sinners usually do hold up the progress of a people of God.

Everyone is aware of her sin, because it effects the movement of the army.

Understand the higher you desire to go in ministry the more will be demanded of you, and the more exposure your life will have.

1 Tim 5:19-20 Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. 20 Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.

You see an elder is the highest office we have in the church today, we have no apostles, which would be the highest office.

When an elder is found in sin, they are to be handled publically, especially if they are unrepentant.

And Miriam here, although it is humiliating that she is holding up the people of God, it also speaks to the honor she had among the nation.

They do not move without her.

And what an enormous warning for the people of Israel, to remain faithful to God, to trust the leader He appointed.

As the writer of Hebrews exhorts...

Heb. 13:17 Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

Understand the calling of the leader is by the Lord, and I have watched many times people come against the Lord's anointed, and many times their souls were troubled by many trials and hardships.

Understand it is not the man so much that God calls; it is about respecting the God who called the man.

We church leaders are nothing special, we are just like you, we have all the same struggles as you, we have all the same fears as you, we are no different, only the position and the place in the body of Christ is different.

We all have our place, and when we are content with that place, God does great things through His people.

I can say I have never, not once seen ambition in the church work out for good.

When someone gets that drive for notoriety in the body of Christ, it is the quickest way down.

1 Peter 5:6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,

Just remain faithful and God will take you much further than your ambitions ever will.

So next, hopefully the nation of Israel has learned their lessons, and now they can just move into the promise land with this hard trial behind them.

Hopefully they have learned from their mistakes. Let us see....

Spies Sent into Canaan(Deut. 1:19-33)

13:1 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel; from each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a leader among them."

Now, we have to look at Deuteronomy to get the full story here.

God had already told them to take the Land, He was there eyes, and He did not need these spies sent out.

Deut. 1:19-22

Then we came to Kadesh Barnea. 20 And I said to you, 'You have come to the mountains of the Amorites, which the Lord our God is giving us. 21 Look, the Lord your God has set the land before you; go up and possess it, as the Lord God of your fathers has spoken to you; do not fear or be discouraged.'

22 "And every one of you came near to me and said, 'Let us send men before us, and let them search out the land for us, and bring back word to us of the way by which we should go up, and of the cities into which we shall come.'

God allowed this in response to their lack of faith.

These stiff-necked Hebrews still do not trust God...

God knew every inch of the land, He did not need spies to go and prove that He could take the land.

God raised this nation of slaves up for this very purpose to be His tool of judgment on the nations in Canaan.

This shows us the people still do not believe God, even after all the mighty displays of power He has demonstrated.

So Moses sends the 12 leaders out to spy, because the people demanded it....

3 So Moses sent them from the Wilderness of Paran according to the command of the Lord, all of them men who were heads of the children of Israel. 4 Now these were their names: from the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur; 5 from the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori; 6 from the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh; 7 from the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph; 8 from the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Nun; 9 from the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu; 10 from the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi; 11 from the tribe of Joseph, that is, from the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of Susi; 12 from the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son

of Gemalli; 13 from the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael; 14 from the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi; 15 from the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi.

16 These are the names of the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun, Joshua.

And another man of faith has his named changed, as God often does with His chosen servants.

Joshua, will be Hoshea's (Salvation) knew name, and we will know him by this name from now on.

It is the name that translates in Greek to Jesus.

It means Jehovah is Salvation.

It will be a fitting name for him as he is used to take the people into the promise land much later.

A name that would remind the nation that God was fighting for them.

Next, we read...

17 Then Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said to them, "Go up this way into the South, and go up to the mountains, 18 and see what the land is like: whether the people who dwell in it are strong or weak, few or many; 19 whether the land they dwell in is good or bad; whether the cities they inhabit are like camps or strongholds; 20 whether the land is rich or poor; and whether there are forests there or not. Be of good courage. And bring some of the fruit of the land." Now the time was the season of the first ripe grapes.

21 So they went up and spied out the land from the Wilderness of Zin as far as Rehob, near the entrance of Hamath. 22 And they went up through the South and came to Hebron; Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi, the descendants of Anak, were there. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) 23 Then they came to the Valley of Eshcol, and there cut down a branch with one cluster of grapes; they carried it between two of them on a pole. They also brought some of the pomegranates and figs. 24 The place was

called the Valley of Eshcol, because of the cluster which the men of Israel cut down there. 25 And they returned from spying out the land after forty days.

The 12 spies travel about 500 miles during their 40 day spy mission.

Everything they saw, God had already told them would be there.

They knew the tribes and nations, who lived in the Land.

They knew it was a rich land flowing with milk and honey.

The spies grab enormous fruit that takes two men to carry.

They passed through Hebron, which should have bolstered these spies faith.

They would have seen the city where God promised Abraham he would inherit the land.

It was from this place that Abraham set out to fight and defeat the coalition of kings.

This place was also the burial place for the holy patriarchs, and Abraham's wife.

This should have really been a holy moment for these men, who were going to be the fulfilment of all those covenants of old.

Their faith should have been peaked out right here as they returned from seeing what no Hebrew has seen in over 400 years.

Yet, the spying out of the land will prove to be a spiritual blunder for this nation.

Had they just moved forward in faith, the outcome may have been different.

The report brought back by these cowardly spies, will wreck the faith of this people more than all the opposition they have already face.

26 Now they departed and came back to Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; they brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. 27 Then they told

him, and said: "We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.

So far it seems like an o.k. report, but if you look close, they refer to the land, as "the land you sent us."

It has been previously referred to as the Land God has given to them.

But at the sight of what they saw, they detach themselves from that promise.

28 Nevertheless the people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there. 29 The Amalekites dwell in the land of the South; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan."

30 Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it."

Notice Joshua's silence at first here... perhaps his closeness to Moses would have made his testimony suspicious, so he gives room for Caleb to testify.

31 But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we." 32 And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. 33 There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."

God had already told the nation of Israel all what was in the land.

Yet at the feeble word of these 10 men, the nation acts as though they are surprised and they tremble at the news.

Because they lacked faith, all of these men except Joshua and Caleb were discouraged.

They saw fortified cities, they saw giants, and they saw the many nations and tribes, with their armies.

They saw the strength of those who dwelt in the land.

They saw a harsh land that 'devours its inhabitants.'

They again repeat, as if they did not hear the first time, there are giants in the land, these decedents of Anak.

They assessed that they were like grasshoppers in comparison to these giant mutants.

Now there has been evidence of these giants being upward the 20 feet tall even taller.

Native Americans have legends of giants running full stride picking up Buffalo, and ripping a leg off and eating it without losing pace.

These were massive giants, and they would insight terror into anyone.

It is interesting, if you study the Nephilim and sons of Anak, the ones found in North and South America are dated about the time of the conquest of Canaan.

They left in fear before the people of Yahweh invaded their land.

You see these spies see all of this opposition, but they failed to see their God.

If you take your eyes off your God, the trials become overwhelming.

You see God, will put fear into the nations dwelling in Canaan, it was not the army of Israel that insights this fear.

It is their God, the God that destroyed the Egyptian army that they are afraid of.

The enemies of God see who He is and what He is capable of, yet the army of God is here found without faith.

And it will cost them big time.

Let's read what happens at hearing this report, surely their faith in what they have seen God do already will supersede the report from these 10 men...

Israel Refuses to Enter Canaan

14:1 So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. 2 And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! 3 Why has the Lord brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" 4 So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt."

We read here it does not take long for the report to spread and infect all of the congregation.

This is the devastating effects of unbelief.

And the whole congregation begins to criticize Moses and his leadership.

They forget immediately all of the victories this man led them through by the power of God, and they have determined him incompetent.

They want another leader, one that will undo everything God has done through Moses.

They want to go back to Egypt, their selective memories forget the torment of their bondage, and they would rather live as slaves, then face any opposition.

And I imagine, if Moses wanted to die before, then that feeling must be amplified now.

Who can stand to 2 million people complaining?

For me, one person complaining is enough to send me into crisis mode.

And we see Aaron here, learned his lesson, and he stands with Moses, and we see them next...

5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.

Moses and Aaron know what is coming if these people keep on defying God.

They fall on their faces...

6 But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out

the land, tore their clothes; 7 and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying: "The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. 8 If the Lord delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, 'a land which flows with milk and honey.' 9 Only do not rebel against the Lord, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Do not fear them."

10 And all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Now the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle of meeting before all the children of Israel.

And Joshua here finally speaks up with Caleb, they understands the best and safest place they can be as a nation is in the will of God.

Obedience to what God is asking is great security.

Perhaps there is giants in the land, but Joshua understands that is nothing to the God who created the heavens and the earth.

Joshua explains they are their bread; the nations will give them their provision.

Joshua sees God, not the opposition and trials.

The majority however overwhelm the minority, and they want to silence the two bold witnesses.

The majority are thinking in terms of the physical and totally disregard anything spiritual.

I was recently asked to attend a meeting for a Christian organization that was in financial turmoil.

I sat through the whole meeting just listening, to all the ideas being thrown out there on how to raise more money.

The meeting focused on the giants and impossibilities and trying to come up with ideas how to face them.

And the dry erase board filled up with wonderful ideas.

At the very last, I raised my hand, I said “You know this seems impossible,” for which many agreed.

But I said in so many words “we worship a God who eats impossible for lunch.”

I suggested we call for a fast, and pray, and petition our mighty God for the provision to see the organization through.

I told them of the what seemed at the time, mighty giants here in Calvary Chapel Victorville when we arrived.

There many impossibilities.

I explained it was not by the craftiness of man, or the ideas of our board of elders that slew the giants of impossibility here in this ministry.

It was because of a mighty God, who took us from uncertainty, and saved this ministry from having to close its doors.

Well the idea of praying and fasting did not get put on the board.

But much of the church today functions on committees and human ideas, instead of seeking God and what He wants, the majority becomes the voice of God, it is dangerous to let the majority lead the church.

That is how you get church splits over carpet color and wall decorations.

The direction needs to come from God.

Oh how hopeless this world is when we focus on the trials and uncertainty.

But the endless hope we can have when we focus on the mighty God we serve.

Caleb and Joshua although the minority here, and almost losing their lives, they will be rewarded for their mighty faith.

So next the Lord intercedes one more time, but this time the peoples complaining and disobedience will come with great and costly consequences.

Next, I see in the midst of this crisis, God tests Moses once more...

Moses Intercedes for the People

11 Then the Lord said to Moses: "How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among

them? 12 I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they."

God tests Moses' ego, and his longsuffering here.

What man would not want a mighty nation to descend from him and carry his name and legacy through history?

This is a fantastic opportunity for Moses to move up in life, to leave these complaining people in the dust.

Moses can just focus on his walk with the Lord, the people are just so demanding.

Moses will be the next Abraham, the Israelites will be no more, they will now be the Mosesites!

It will be glorious, and God brings this test before this man Moses...

But Moses realizes the cost of acting upon his own frustrations and finds the better way, forgiveness, mercy, and patience...

13 And Moses said to the Lord: "Then the Egyptians will hear it, for by Your might You brought these people up from among them, 14 and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that You, Lord, are among these people; that You, Lord, are seen face to face and Your cloud stands above them, and You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. 15 Now if You kill these people as one man, then the nations which have heard of Your fame will speak, saying, 16 'Because the Lord was not able to bring this people to the land which He swore to give them, therefore He killed them in the wilderness.' 17 And now, I pray, let the power of my Lord be great, just as You have spoken, saying, 18 'The Lord is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.' 19 Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray, according to the greatness of Your mercy, just as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now."

The man Moses instead of acting in frustration, shows great restraint, he puts selfishness aside, and appeals to God's mercy and longsuffering.

He speaks of the testimony and respect that will be lost if God moves ahead in giving these people what they deserve.

And Moses, is through every trial coming out more and more like the God who called him.

God will be known for His Grace and Mercy.

20 Then the Lord said: "I have pardoned, according to your word; 21 but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord — 22 because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice, 23 they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it. 24 But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his

descendants shall inherit it. 25 Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwell in the valley; tomorrow turn and move out into the wilderness by the Way of the Red Sea."

We see here God will indeed pardon their sin, however only Caleb and later we will see Joshua out of all that generation will inherit the land.

Because they had a different spirit within them, an obedient spirit.

We see here in verse 25 the inhabitants of the land are aware of the presence of the army of Israel, and they are coming to battle.

God instructs the faithless people to flee into the wilderness because their opportunity is now behind them.

The nation of Israel had no excuse; they were eyewitnesses to the power and might of the God that delivered them out of Egypt.

The pardon does not mean consequences will not follow, God will now deal with the rebels....

Death Sentence on the Rebels

26 And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 27 "How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who complain against Me? I have heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against Me. 28 Say to them, 'As I live,' says the Lord, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: 29 The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. 30 Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. 31 But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. 32 But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. 33 And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness. 34 According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day

you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection. 35 I the Lord have spoken this. I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die."

The final verdict is, for the next forty years the nation will leave a trail of tombstones in the wilderness.

Warren Wiersbe says... "Moses led the world's longest funeral march, and Caleb and Joshua watched their generation die."

They are here at the cusp of taking all the promises of God, and because of faithlessness they will now wonder in the wilderness.

And the children they were claiming to protect will now be the inheritors of the promises.

The sad reality is now, the disobedience of the people, means their children will now suffer through the torturous deserts during the wonderings of Israel.

The little ones will never forget what disobedience cost their family, and they will endure through these inflictions brought upon them by their parents, and come out of it clinging to God.

They will be the ones who obey and take the land as they watch each and every one of their parents die in the desert.

This second generation will be a generation of conquerors who take the land in obedience, with a furious faith.

Next we see the leaders of this rebellion will be dealt with severely.

36 Now the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned and made all the congregation complain against him by bringing a bad report of the land, 37 those very men who brought the evil report about the land, died by the plague before the Lord. 38 But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive, of the men who went to spy out the land.

And at this you might think the people would have no problem obeying the Word of God, yet we see....

A Futile Invasion Attempt(Deut. 1:41-45)

39 Then Moses told these words to all the children of Israel, and the people mourned greatly. 40 And they rose early in the morning and went up to the top of the mountain, saying, "Here we are, and we will go up to the place which the Lord has promised, for we have sinned!"

41 And Moses said, "Now why do you transgress the command of the Lord? For this will not succeed. 42 Do not go up, lest you be defeated by your enemies, for the Lord is not among you. 43 For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and you shall fall by the sword; because you have turned away from the Lord, the Lord will not be with you."

44 But they presumed to go up to the mountaintop. Nevertheless, neither the ark of the covenant of the Lord nor Moses departed from the camp. 45 Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who dwelt in that

mountain came down and attacked them, and drove them back as far as Hormah.

The very next day the people wake up, and instead of heading toward the wilderness, they once more disobey God.

Moses is explaining God is not with them.

But the thought of all of that is just unbearable to the people.

And the feeble army went out anyway to battle.

The Lord's protection was not with them, He does not bless disobedience, and they are defeated and humiliated before their enemies.

They had lost their opportunity for victory, and we now enter into the wonderings time period of the nation.

Listen church, tonight perhaps God has brought you to a place where you need to trust and obey Him.

He has brought you to a crisis point.

Warren Wiersbe, who quotes John Gardner, “We are continually faced with a series of great opportunities brilliantly disguised as insoluble problems.” Warren Wiersbe goes on to say, “A faith that can’t be tested can’t be trusted, and God tests our faith to make sure it is genuine and to help make it grow... Unbelief is serious because it challenges the character of God and rebels against the will of God. But without faith it is impossible to please God. Heb. 11:6... They (the nation of Israel) were sure that the best thing to do was return to Egypt and go back into bondage.”

You see the saw the problem, and lost sight of their God, and what He is capable of...

Maybe tonight, you are at the cusp of the promise land, and you are looking over and just wondering of God can see you through.

What crisis are you in tonight?

Maybe it is addiction, God has reminded you He will be your strength and the cause of your victory.

But all you see is the impossibility of it all, your focused on the giants, and the uncertainty.

Perhaps you are ensnared in some kind of hidden sin, and God is inviting you to be free of it.

He will give you victory, He will free you of that bondage, but you have to take it by faith.

Believe He will take you into the promise land.

Now understand the promise land does not necessarily mean life will be without struggle, or trial.

Some of our old hymns explain the Promise Land is a picture of heaven.

But that is not accurate, there are battles for Israel there too, you will have to face the giants, you will have to battle fiercely against the enemy, but there you will learn how to trust the Lord through it all.

I remember when I finally trusted God to free me of my addictions, my meth addiction was so severe, I use to pray, "God help me to learn how to be a normal citizen with this addiction, because I will never be free of it."

But one day, something happened, God allowed me to see myself for what I was, prior to that I thought pretty highly and confidently of myself.

That day, as I went to score some dope from a friend at his mother's funeral, it was like my life was held up to the holiness of God in a moment.

I sat in the back of the funeral home, and just thought, "I am wretched detestable human being,"

The enormity of my crimes against a holy God sickened me in that moment.

Looking back I assume, perhaps my mother or father was praying for me in that moment.

Because I could not shake the feeling of dirtiness and disgust I had over who I had become.

Before this I sinned openly and unashamedly, but all of the sudden shame overwhelmed me.

The shame became so intense it overwhelmed me so much I forgot about the dope I was there to score.

I remember walking across the street, and looking up into the sky in front of the black bear diner, in Havasu, and without a formal prayer, just surrendering myself to Jesus.

And that moment I never felt so free. It was the moment He put my shame upon Himself, and it was the moment of my conversion.

I then from that point stepped into the promises of God with all faith and abandonment.

Now, it would be a lie, to say after I inherited the promises of God, that life got easy.

They did not, you see my dope dealer was my boss, I had to see him everyday, it was my giants in the land, and impossibility I thought I could never overcome.

And as I stepped out in faith, God gave me victory each day, 1 day became two days, then 3 days, then I had a whole week.

I remember thinking “am I really healed of this addiction; how is this possible?”

2 weeks then a month, then two months, God kept giving me victory.

The battles still raged everyday, and I found when I clung to Lord and His promises, these battles were won, when I walked in obedience.

I remember about after the 2 month mark, working late with my dope dealer, I had a side job to do that weekend, and you know that day I chose to follow my own way, and I disobeyed God, and I lost that battle that day in my disobedience.

I got high, this drug that I knew was not apart of my life anymore, Jesus was so much better yet I fell.

But it was interesting, I could not get high that night, I fell asleep, doing meth.

That does not happen, it has the opposite effects.

I remember waking up that morning, and just repenting, and I drove to Don's house, I gave him back the dope, and I told him "Jesus is doing something in me, I am not sure what it is yet but that stuff does not work anymore for me."

It was an incredible moment in my life, as I realized the power of my God over the impossibilities of my life.

But I found God was so faithful to fight my battles.

I don't know what giants you are looking at this evening, what impossibility that is before you.

But understand our God is bigger, He will go before you, He will give you victory, but it comes through obeying His Word.

Lying won't get you out of it, cheating will not bring the victory, complaining will not solve your problem.

Only faith and obedience will bring you into the promise land.

Learn from the nation of Israel, and understand this evening your weakness brings great opportunity for God to bring victory and get glory from your life.

Take God at His Word and obey what He asks of you.

Amen? Now if you want prayer this evening our Elder Steve Dwiggin will be up here, I will be around, let us pray with you.