

# Numbers 13 - The 10 Spies' Reconnaissance Mission; The Spies' Report

- II. Failure of the first generation (Num 11:1—25:18)
  - (2) Failure at Kadesh Barnea (Num 13:1—14:45)
    - (A) Investigation of the land (13:1-33)
      - (a) Election of the spies (13:1-16)
      - (b) Duties of the spies (13:17-20)
      - (c) Spying of the land (13:21-24)
      - (d) Spies' report (13:25-33)

## **Journey to Kadesh Barnea: "What Might Have Been" (Num 10-14)**

- Num 10 - The Departure from Sinai
- Num 11 - "Quailing" the Rebellion
- Num 12 - Miriam's Murmuring
- **Num 13 - The Intelligence Mission**
- Num 14 - The Banishment

## **Numbers 13**

- (2) Failure at Kadesh Barnea (Num 13:1—14:45)
  - (A) Investigation of the land (13:1-33)
    - (a) Election of the spies (13:1-16)
- 1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,
- 1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses saying,
- 1 Later, the LORD told Moses,
- 1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 "Send out men for yourself to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am going to give the sons of Israel; you shall send a man from each of their fathers' tribes, every one a leader among them."

2 "Send out for yourself men so that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I am going to give to the sons of Israel; you shall send a man from each of their fathers' tribes, every one a leader among them."

2 "Send men to explore the land of Canaan that I'm about to give to the Israelis. Send one man to represent each of his ancestor's tribes, every one of them a distinguished leader among them."

2 Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them.

3 So Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran at the command of the LORD, all of them men who were heads of the sons of Israel.

3 So Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran at the command of the LORD, all of them men who were heads of the sons of Israel.

3 So that's just what Moses did, sending them from the Wilderness of Paran according to the LORD's instructions. All of the men were Israeli leaders.

**3** And Moses by the commandment of the LORD sent them from the wilderness of Paran: all those men were heads of the children of Israel.

- Israel has reached Kadesh-barnea, which borders the Promised Land

- It is sad to see that Kadesh becomes their Waterloo because of their unbelief

- This chapter includes the cause of their sending spies, the choice of the spies, the commission of the spies, the conduct of the spies, the spies' confirmation of the facts, and the two interpretations of those facts—a majority and a minority report

4 These then *were* their names: from the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur;

4 These then *were* their names: from the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur;

4 These were their names: From Reuben's tribe, Zaccur's son Shammua;

4 And these were their names: of the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur.

5 from the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori;

5 from the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori;

5 From Simeon's tribe, Hori's son Shaphat;

5 Of the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori.

6 from the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh;

6 from the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh;

6 From Judah's tribe, Jephunneh's son Caleb;

6 Of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh.

7 from the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph;

7 from the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph;

7 from Issachar's tribe, Joseph's son Igal;

7 Of the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph.

8 from the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Nun;

8 from the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Nun;

8 From Ephraim's tribe, Nun's son Hoshea;

8 Of the tribe of Ephraim, Oshea the son of Nun.

9 from the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu;

9 from the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu;

9 From Benjamin's tribe, Raphu's son Palti;

9 Of the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu.

10 from the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi;

10 from the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi;

10 from Zebulun's tribe, Sodi's son Gaddiel;

10 Of the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi.

11 from the tribe of Joseph, from the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of Susi;

11 from the tribe of Joseph, from the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of Susi;

11 from Joseph's tribe of Manasseh, Susi's son Gaddi;

11 Of the tribe of Joseph, namely, of the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of Susi.

12 from the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli;

12 from the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli;

12 From Dan's tribe, Gemalli's son Ammiel;

12 Of the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli.

13 from the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael;

13 from the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael;

13 from Asher's tribe, Michael's son Sethur;

13 Of the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael.

14 from the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi;

14 from the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi;

14 from Naphtali's tribe, Vophsi's son Nahbi;

14 Of the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi.

15 *and* from the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi.

15 from the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi.

15 and from Gad's tribe, Machi's son Geuel.

15 Of 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; but Moses called **Hoshea** the son of Nun, **Joshua**.

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

16 These are the names of the men sent by Moses to explore the land.

**16** These are the names of the men which Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Oshea the son of Nun Jehoshua.

- "...Hoshea" - "a desire of salvation"

- "...Joshua" - by prefixing the name of God means "divinely appointed" "head of salvation"; "Savior" the same as Jesus

(b) Duties of the spies (13:17-20)

**17** When Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, he said to them, "Go up there into the Negev; then go up into the hill country.

**17** When Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, he said to them, "Go up there into the Negev; then go up into the hill country.

**17** Then he sent them out to explore the land of Canaan. He instructed them, "Go up from here through the Negev, then ascend to the hill country.

**17** And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this way southward, and go up into the mountain:

18 See what the land is *like*, and whether the people who live in it are strong or weak, whether they are few or many.

18 See what the land is like, and whether the people who live in it are strong *or* weak, whether they are few or many.

18 See what the land is like. Observe whether the people who live there are strong or weak, or whether they're few or numerous.

18 And see the land, what it is; and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many;

- The spies were sent to explore Canaan's two regions, the Negev in the south and the hills to the north

- They travelled as far as its northern boundary, covering the land spoken of in God's promise

19 And how is the land in which they live, is it good or bad? And how are the cities in which they live, are *the people* in *open* camps or in fortifications?

19 How is the land in which they live, is it good or bad? And how are the cities in which they live, are *they* like *open* camps or with fortifications?

19 Look to see whether the land where they live is good or bad, and whether the cities in which they live are merely tents or if they're fortified.

19 And what the land is that they dwell in, whether it be good or bad; and what cities they be that they dwell in, whether in tents, or in strong holds;

20 And how is the land, is it productive or unproductive? Are there trees in it or not? And show yourselves courageous and get some of the fruit of the land." Now the time was the season of the first ripe grapes.

20 How is the land, is it fat or lean? Are there trees in it or not? Make an effort then to get some of the fruit of the land." Now the time was the time of the first ripe grapes.

20 Examine the farmland, whether it's fertile or barren, and see if there are fruit-bearing trees in it or not. Be very courageous, and bring back some samples of the fruit of the land."

As it was, that time of year was the season for the first fruits of the grape harvest.

20 And what the land is, whether it be fat or lean, whether there be wood therein, or not. And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land. Now the time was the time of the firstripe grapes.

- That it was the season for the first ripe grapes (ie., the end of July) indicates it was about two months after leaving Sinai

- The spies travelled about 250 miles (400 km) northwards and did not return until mid-September

- They visited Hebron (v22), where the patriarchs were buried (Gen 23:17-20; 49:29-33; 50:13)

- Numbers tells us that Hebron was built seven years before Zoan (Tanis or Avaris), which was the Hyksos capital in Egypt, built ~1700 BC (v22)

- Perhaps the author of Numbers knew about Egypt's building of Zoan because Israel had been involved

- Hebron was a powerful reminder of God's promise. But here, at the heart of Israel's goal, were the Anakim, renowned warriors (Deut 9:2)

- They are even mentioned in Egyptian texts of 1800-1700 BC; Caleb eventually defeated them (Josh 15:14; Judges 1:10)

(c) Spying of the land (13:21-24)

**21** So they went up and spied out the land from the wilderness of Zin as far as Rehob, at Lebo-hamath.

**21** So they went up and spied out the land from the wilderness of Zin as far as Rehob, at Lebo-hamath.

**21** So they went to explore the land from the Wilderness of Zin to Rehob, and as far as the outskirts of Hamath.

**21** So they went up, and searched the land from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath.

**22** When they had gone up into the Negev, they came to Hebron where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmaj, the descendants of Anak were. (Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)

**22** When they had gone up into the Negev, they came to Hebron where Ahiman, Sheshai and Talmaj, the descendants of Anak were. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)

**22** They went through the Negev and reached Hebron, where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmaj, the descendants of Anak lived. (Hebron had been constructed seven years before Zoan in Egypt had been built).

**22** And they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron; where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmaj, the children of Anak, were. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)

- The itinerary taken by the explorers began in the Desert of Zin and extended as far north as Rehob at Lebo Hamath (14 miles northwest of Baalbek)

- Hamath was an important Aramean city in the great Central Valley known as the Beqaa

- Lebo Hamath was at the lower part of that valley which began just north of the Sea of Galilee

## **Hebron**

- A powerful reminder of God's promise
- Where the patriarchs were buried (Gen 23:17-20; 49:29-33; 50:13)
- Built seven years before Zoan (Tanis or Avaris), which was the Hyksos capital in Egypt, built ~1730 BC
- But here, at the heart of Israel's goal, were the Anakim (Deut 9:2)
  - They are mentioned in Egyptian texts of 1800-1700 BC
  - Caleb eventually defeated them (Josh 15:14; Judges 1:10)
- Became David's capital over Judah (2 Sam 2:1-4)

**23** Then they came to the Valley of Eshcol, and from there they cut off a branch with a single cluster of grapes; and they carried it on a pole between two *men*, with some of the pomegranates and the figs.

**23** Then they came to the valley of Eshcol and from there cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes; and they carried it on a pole between two *men*, with some of the pomegranates and the figs.

23 Soon they arrived in the valley of Eshcol, where they cut a single branch of grapes and carried it on a pole between two men, along with some pomegranates and figs.

23 And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs.

24 That place was called the Valley of Eshcol, because of the cluster which the sons of Israel cut off from there.

24 That place was called the valley of Eshcol, because of the cluster which the sons of Israel cut down from there.

24 The entire place was called the Eshcol Valley on account of the cluster of grapes that the men of Israel had taken from there.

24 The place was called the brook Eshcol, because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence.

- The "grapes of Eshcol" has become the official insignia of Israel's Ministry of Tourism

(d) Spies' report (13:25-33)

**25** When they returned from spying out the land, at the end of forty days,

**25** When they returned from spying out the land, at the end of forty days,

25 At the end of 40 days, they all returned from exploring the land,

25 And they returned from searching of the land after forty days.

26 they went on and came to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, in the wilderness of Paran at Kadesh; and they brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land.

26 they proceeded to come to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; and they brought back word to them and to all the congregation and showed them the fruit of the land.

26 came in to Moses and Aaron, and delivered their report to the entire congregation of Israel in the Wilderness of Paran at Kadesh. They brought back their report to the entire congregation and showed them the fruit of the land.

**26** And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land.

27 So they reported to him and said, "We came into the land where you sent us, and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.

27 Thus they told him, and said, "We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.

27 "We arrived at the place where you've sent us," they reported, "and it certainly does flow with milk and honey. Furthermore, this is its fruit,

27 And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it.

28 Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified *and* very large. And indeed, we saw the descendants of Anak there!

28 Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified *and* very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there.

28 except that the people who have settled in the land are strong, and their cities are greatly fortified. We also saw the descendants of Anak.

28 Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there.

- The spies' opening words give them away

- The land to which you sent us has no mention that the Lord had sent them and no acknowledgement of His promise (Cf. Num 10:29)

29 Amalek is living in the land of the Negev, the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan."

29 Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan."

29 Amalek lives throughout the Negev, while the Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites live in the hill country. The Canaanites live by the sea and on the bank of the Jordan."

29 The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan.

**30** Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will certainly prevail over it."

**30** Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will surely overcome it."

**30** Caleb silenced the people on Moses' behalf and responded, "Let's go up and take control, because we can definitely conquer it."

**30** And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.

**31** But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, because they are too strong for us."

**31** But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us."

**31** "We can't attack those people," the men who were with him said, "because they're too strong compared to us."

**31** But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.

**32** So they brought a **bad report** of the land which they had spied out to the sons of Israel, saying, "The land through which we have gone to spy out is **a land that devours its inhabitants**; and all the people whom we saw in it are people of *great* stature.

**32** So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of *great* size.

**32** So they put out this false report to the Israelis about the land that they had explored: "The land that we've explored is one that devours its inhabitants. All the people whom we observed were giants.

**32** And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature.

- Verses 32-33 are used by some to support a "second eruption" of Nephilim, after the Flood (Cf. "and after this" Gen 6:4). However, the evidence to support a "second eruption" is tenuous at best...

- "...bad report" - an "evil" report; to base an entire theology on something that is labeled an "evil report" is problematic

-- The Doctrine of Inerrancy of Scripture does not guarantee that everything written in the Bible is true. For example, Satan told Eve that if she ate from the forbidden tree she would

not die (Cf. Gen 3:4). What Satan told Eve was a lie, but it is written in the Bible.

-- What the Doctrine of Inerrancy does guarantee is that Satan actually did say what is written, not that what he said was true

- "...a land that devours its inhabitants" - a figure of speech called personification, which is to assign living attributes to an inanimate object in order to describe it

-- The literal ground/land was not swallowing up people

33 We also saw the **Nephilim** there (the sons of Anak are part of the **Nephilim**); and **we were like grasshoppers in our own sight**, and so we were in their sight."

33 There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."

33 We also saw the Nephilim, the descendants of Anak. Compared to the Nephilim, as we see things, we're like grasshoppers, and that's their opinion of us!"

33 And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

- "...Nephilim" [2x] - didn't the Flood completely wipe out the Nephilim (Cf. Gen 7:19-23)? In fact, wasn't this the purpose of the Flood in the first place? If that is the case, and the angels who committed these atrocities before the Flood were incarcerated (Cf. 1 Peter 3:19-20; 2 Peter 2:4-5; Jude 6-7), is this a second eruption of Nephilim on the earth, similar to Gen 6?

— To understand this reference, we have to differentiate who is speaking here (the intimidated spies, who brought back an "evil report") vs. who is speaking in Gen 6 (God, giving propositional truth)

— There's no doubt that the spies saw giants in the land, but there's no way they could prove that these were genetically-modified Nephilim in the same type as Gen 6

-- If Nephilim survived the Flood, then God's purpose for sending the Flood and wiping out all mankind and animals, His entire creation minus 8 people and some animals, was all for naught. His purpose was not achieved.

- "...we were like grasshoppers in our own sight" - another figure of speech ("like" a simile, comparing two things using "like" or "as")

— The spies were clearly panicking, as you can see in their description. They are exaggerating what they saw to the worst thing that they could think of, which was the pre-Flood Nephilim.

— There were no doubt giants in the land, as the Anakites are documented to be large in size (Cf. Goliath and some of the Philistines, 1 Sam 17). However, these giants were not the same genetically-modified giants as the Nephilim of Gen 6.

— Once the Israelites entered the Land under Joshua, they were there ~800 years before the Babylonian Captivity. Nowhere during that time does Scripture record a battle with the

Nephilim.

-- This passage (v32-33) is not the type of passage that you would build a theological system on related to a second eruption of Nephilim, after the Flood. It is an "evil report" given by men who lacked faith in God, and it's filled with exaggeration.

-- But people have done it anyway, and today there are some who are searching around for an end times eruption of Nephilim based on this passage, along with the "as in the days of Noah" passage.

- The error of the majority was that they left God out of their report! They stopped looking at their circumstances from God's point of view and began looking at it from their own point of view

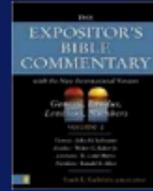
-- They saw giants in the land, and rather than viewing those giants through God's lens, they took their eyes off of God and started analyzing their circumstances through their own power and fell into fear

-- An entire generation that could've enjoyed the blessings God promised in Canaan...lost, because the battle was in their mind



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"Numbers," in Expositor's Bible Commentary, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein et al  
(Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), Numbers 13:31-33.

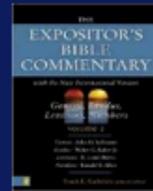


“By speaking evil concerning the land, the faithless spies were speaking evil of him. At this point their words became exaggerations and distortions. The Anakites (who were of large size) were now said to be Nephilim, the race of giants described briefly in the mysterious context of the cohabitation of the sons of God and the daughters of men (Gen 6:4). The use of the term Nephilim seems to be deliberately provocative of fear, a term not unlike the concept of bogeymen and hobgoblins. The exaggeration of the faithless led them to their final folly: ‘We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.’ ” We have noted the possible use of rhetorical . . .



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"Numbers," in Expositor's Bible Commentary, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin et al  
(Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), Numbers 13:31-33.



“. . . exaggeration, hyperbole, in the numbers of the tribes of Israel—power numbers to bring encouragement to the nation in the confidence they must have in the fulfillment of the promises of God (see Introduction, sections on large numbers). In the report of the evil spies, we see that rhetorical exaggeration can work both ways. By describing themselves as mere grasshoppers in the sight of the fabulous Nephilim, they frightened the sandals off the people and led a nation to grievous sin of unbelief against their caring God.”