

Wilderness Wandering With God

Part 7: A Devastating Failure Of Faith

Numbers 13:1-14:45

#1 - Are We There Yet? Numbers 13

Calendar of Events From The Exodus to the Failure at Kadesh

Year	Month	Day	Event	Biblical Reference
1	1	14	Exodus: Departure from Egypt	Exodus 12:1-50
1	3	14	Arrival in Sinai Desert	Exodus 19:1
2	1	1	Tabernacle Erected	Exodus 40:17
2	1	1-12	Israelite Tribe Dedication Offerings	Numbers 7:1-89
2	1	14-22	Passover & Unleavened Bread Celebration	Numbers 9:1-14
2	2	1	First Tribal Military Census	Numbers 1:1-46
2	2	14	Passover Alternative for Unclean and Distant	Numbers 9:6-13
2	2	20	Departure from Sinai Desert	Numbers 10:11
2	2	23	Kiroth Hattaavah (Quail)	Numbers 10:33; 11:34
2			Spies Sent from Kadesh in Paran	Numbers 13:3, 26

The events which are chronicled for us in chapter 13 are as follows:

- 12 Leaders are selected and sent out to spy out the Promised Land (1 from each tribe), vs. 1-16
- Moses' instructions to the spies, vs. 17-20
- Journaling the intelligence trip, vs. 21-24
- The spies' report, vs. 25-29
- Conflict over the spies' report, vs. 30-33

#2 - Who Is Bigger, The Giants Or God? Numbers 13:25-33

Twelve spies were sent into the Promised Land with the task to observe and report back to the Jewish people. They all witnessed the same things: a land of unmatched fertility, a land filled with a number of people groups living in fortified cities; yet, they came to different conclusions.

Ten spies only saw the situation from the human perspective. To them, the giants living in the land were too big to overcome.

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.”

Two spies, Caleb and Joshua, saw the situation from God’s perspective. To them, God was bigger than their challenges.

#3 - A Devastating Failure Of Faith, Numbers 14:1-10

A. Israel accepts the negative report and rebel, vs. 1-4

The outcries of the people were dramatic, and the language of the first verse heightens the effect. Two standard Hebrew expressions for the lifting of one’s voice are merged, “lifted up their voices” and “cried”, followed by a clause describing their intense mourning.

Normally one of two synonymous expressions would be used, either that of “they raised their voice” or “they uttered their voice.” Both are used in contexts of lament in the Old Testament.

The former phrase is used of Hagar lifting her voice as she wept over the potential death of Ishmael, after they had been driven into the desert by Sarah (Gen 21:26); and it is used of Esau’s bitter outcry after he found out that his brother Jacob had received the family blessing from Isaac (Gen 27:34–38).

The latter phrase is employed in Joseph’s weeping before his brothers when he revealed his identity to them in Egypt (Gen 45:2), as well as Jeremiah’s lament over the wicked reign of Jehoiakim (Jer 22:20). In the present context the two phrases are merged into one expression of intense lament as the people bemoaned their situation, brought upon themselves *by their unbelief in God’s promise and power*.

B. An Appeal To Repent And Obey, vs. 5-10

As they move against Moses, Aaron, Caleb and Joshua—God intervenes. Truly they had pushed God too far.

#4 - Pushing God Too Far, Numbers 14:11-37

A. God Is Ready To Wipe Them Out, vs. 11-12

B. Moses Appeals To God To Be Merciful, vs. 13-19

C. God Pardons—But Punishes, vs. 20-37

In His pronouncing judgment, God makes it abundantly clear how far the Hebrew people have pushed Him. Notice again verse 22:

22 “Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice,

- 1) Exodus 5:21: Making bricks without straw.
- 2) Exodus 14:11: The Egyptians chasing them at the Red Sea
- 3) Exodus 15:24: Marah—bitter water
- 4) Exodus 16:2: Wilderness of Sin—no bread
- 5) Exodus 17: 2-3: Rephidim—no water
- 6) Exodus 32:1: Mt. Sinai—making a golden calf
- 7) Numbers 11:1: Taberah—complained of adversity/the fire of God consumed some
- 8) Numbers 11:4: Tabera—the rabble complained about not having meat
- 9) Numbers 12:1: Aaron & Miriam complained about Moses marrying a Cushite woman
- 10) Numbers 14:2: Kadesh—Failure of Faith

#5 - Going It Alone Without God, Numbers 14:39-45