

The Journey

Series 03: Covenant

Week 26: Disbelief and Wandering

We are indebted to [Ethnos360](#) for providing the basis of these lessons

Review (Where We Have Been)

Laws were given at Mount Sinai. The Tabernacle was built, and God came to live with Israel. It was time for Israel to go to the land God had promised to their ancestors.

God had given Three Promises to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3)...

- Nation (fulfilled)

Exodus 19:5 (ESV) “...if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant...
6 you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and **a holy nation.**”

- Deliverer (not yet fulfilled)

Genesis 3:15 (ESV) ...he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

Galatians 3:16 (ESV) ...And to your offspring, who is Christ.

- Land (not yet fulfilled)

This generation had never been to Canaan (400-year slavery in Egypt) and didn't know the way, so God guided them by the cloud throughout their journey.

Exodus 40:36 (ESV) Throughout all their journeys, whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the people of Israel would set out.

BIG Idea

Will God keep His promises? **God is mighty and will do what He has said.**

Israel had already witnessed God's might and power so they could trust Him...

- God sent 10 plagues that delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage
- The Red Sea was parted when Egypt was pursuing Israel
- Food and water were miraculously provided in the wilderness

It was time for Israel to begin their journey into the land, trusting that God would lead them in the way they should go.

Information (What We Need to Know)

Where We Are in Israel's Journey to Canaan...

- When the land was promised to Abraham, it was occupied by the sinful Amorites

Genesis 15:16 (NLT) “After four generations your descendants will return here to this land, for the sins of the Amorites do not yet warrant their destruction.”

- ✓ God was patient with the Amorites, giving them a chance to repent
- ✓ The Amorites fell deeper into *immorality, idol worship, and child sacrifice*

- When Israel reached the edge of Canaan, God would deal with the Amorites (*nearly two years after escaping Egypt*) [MAP]

Numbers 13:1 (ESV) The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **2** “Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the people of Israel. From each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a chief among them. **18** ...and see what the land is, and whether the people who dwell in it are strong or weak, whether they are few or many, **19** and whether the land that they dwell in is good or bad, and whether the cities that they dwell in are camps or strongholds, **20** and whether the land is rich or poor, and whether there are trees in it or not. Be of good courage and bring some of the fruit of the land.”

- Spies scouted out the land for 40 days and returned with a report to Moses/Israel

Numbers 13:27 (ESV) And they told him, “We came to the land to which you sent us. It flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. **28** However, the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large. And besides, we saw the descendants of Anak there. **29** The Amalekites dwell in the land of the Negeb. The Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the hill country. And the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and along the Jordan.”

Events Following the Report of the 12 Spies...

- Joshua and Caleb believed God would give the land as He had promised

Numbers 13:30 (ESV) But Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, “Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it.”

- The other 10 spies did not believe God and thought it was impossible

Numbers 13:31 (ESV) Then 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 are.” **32** “...The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are of great height.”

- Israel believed the 10 spies who brought a fearful report

Numbers 14:1 (ESV) Then all the congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night. **2** And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The whole congregation said to them, “Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! **3** Why is the Lord bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?”

- Joshua and Caleb urged Israel to believe in God’s ability to give them the land

Numbers 14:7 (ESV) “The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceedingly good land. **8** If the Lord delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us... **9** ...the Lord is with us; do not fear them.”

- Israel starts to take action to kill Joshua and Caleb

Numbers 14:10 (ESV) Then all the congregation said to stone them with stones. But the glory of the Lord appeared at the tent of meeting to all the people of Israel.

- God reveals that those 20 years old and older will die in the wilderness

Numbers 14:29 (ESV) “...your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness...from twenty years old and upward... **30** not one shall come into the land where I swore that I would make you dwell, except Caleb and Joshua.”

Events in the 40th Year of Israel's Wandering...

- The next generation complained about lack of water

Numbers 20:2 (ESV) Now there was no water for the congregation. And they assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. **3** And the people quarreled with Moses and said, “Would that we had perished when our brothers perished before the Lord! **4** Why have you brought the assembly of the Lord into this wilderness, that we should die here, both we and our cattle? **5** And why have you made us come up out of Egypt to bring us to this evil place?”

- God commands Moses to speak to the rock and it would provide water

Numbers 20:8 (ESV) “...assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, and tell the rock before their eyes to yield its water. So you shall bring water out of the rock for them and give drink to the congregation and their cattle.”

✓ Moses struck the rock twice (did not speak to it), but God still provided water

Numbers 20:10 (ESV) Then Moses and Aaron...said to them, “Hear now, you rebels: shall we bring water for you out of this rock?” **11** And Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his staff twice, and water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their livestock.

✓ Aaron and Moses were punished for their disobedience; Aaron later died

Numbers 20:12 (ESV) And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not believe in me, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them.”

Numbers 20:24 (ESV) “Let Aaron be gathered to his people, for he shall not enter the land that I have given to the people of Israel, because you rebelled against my command at the waters of Meribah.”

Application (What We Need to Do)

Did Israel learn to trust God? No.

Numbers 21:4 (ESV) ... they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people became impatient on the way. **5** And the people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food.”

God punished them for their continual impatience and complaining.

Numbers 21:6 (ESV) Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. **7** And the people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you. Pray to the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. **8** And the Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.” **9** So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

There was hope for those who sought forgiveness...

- Those who looked on the bronze serpent were healed
- The bronze serpent didn't have power. The power was in obeying what God said.
- God immediately healed all who looked at the snake on the pole. God can be trusted to do what He says.

John 3:14 (ESV) “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, **15** that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. **16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

“Jesus referred to the story of Num. 21:5–9 where the Israelite people who looked at the serpent lifted up by Moses were healed. The point of this illustration or analogy is in the ‘lifted up.’ Just as Moses lifted up the snake on the pole so that all who looked upon it might live physically, those who look to Christ, who was ‘lifted up’ on the cross, will live spiritually and eternally.” - John MacArthur