

Day 161 - SATURDAY: May 20th

Numbers 14

Numbers 14:1-45 NKJV

So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. 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! 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?" So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt." Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. 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; 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. 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.' 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." 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. 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? I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they." And Moses said to the LORD: "Then the

Egyptians will hear it, for by Your might You brought these people up from among them, 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. Now if You kill these people as one man, then the nations which have heard of Your fame will speak, saying, '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.' And now, I pray, let the power of my Lord be great, just as You have spoken, saying, '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.' 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." Then the LORD said: "I have pardoned, according to your word; but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD— 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, they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it. 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. 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." And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, "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. Say to them, 'As I live,' says the LORD, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: 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. 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. But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. 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. 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. 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.' " 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, those very men who brought the evil report about the land, died by the plague before the LORD. But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive, of the men who went to spy out the land. Then Moses told these words to all the children of Israel, and the people mourned greatly. 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!" And Moses said, "Now why do you transgress the command of the LORD? For this will not succeed. Do not go up, lest you be defeated by your enemies, for the LORD is not among you. 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." 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. Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who dwelt in that mountain came down and attacked them, and drove them back as far as Hormah.

Daily Deep Dive:

“The Israelites, it appears, had come to the point where they could have immediately possessed the Promised Land. But a lack of faith would keep them out of this land that flowed with milk and honey for several more decades—making their time in the wilderness a total of 40 years.

Discouragement set in as a result of the evil report of the 10 faithless spies, and once again the children of Israel speak against Moses and Aaron. They begin by wishing they had already died in Egypt or the wilderness rather than face the "dangers" of the land of Canaan (verse 2). But the complaining doesn't stop there. They accuse God of intentionally putting them and their families in harm's way to kill them (verse 3). And then an even more incredible thing happens. They decide that it would be much better to return to Egypt, so they actually call for the selection of a new leader to lead them back to the land of their enslavement.

At this point Moses and Aaron "hit the deck," as it were (verse 5), probably to intercede for the people and perhaps to "dodge the bullets" of God's wrath that would surely follow such outrage. Indeed, how out of touch with reality can people be? Of course, we probably consider ourselves impervious to such a frame of mind. Yet discouragement can also cause *us* to want to give up and go back into the world. Egypt, a type of sin, for us represents those things we believe and do before the Father calls us and grants us repentance and faith. We must, then, never look back. But again, the people were not merely *looking* back—they had already determined to actually *go* back. They were picking a leader for this rebellion when Joshua and Caleb step forward in utter grief. They encourage the people to go forward toward the Promised Land. In Numbers 13:16, we see that Moses has changed the name of Hoshea (Hebrew "Salvation" or "May the Eternal Save") to Joshua (Hebrew "The Eternal Saves")—thus providing an "answer" to the "request" in the former name. The Latinized Greek form of Joshua is Jesus. Indeed, Joshua was a type of Jesus Christ in many respects. Joshua's encouragement gives us a picture of Jesus, our Savior, our Deliverer, our Captain, cheering us on and helping us into His Kingdom (verse 8).

With Caleb, he exhorts the people, "Don't rebel, don't fear our enemies, we'll eat them alive, they will fall apart" (compare verse 9). Like Joshua, Caleb was appropriately named, as his name carries the sense of being "Bold" or "Wholehearted" in Hebrew.

Clearly, to not follow God's lead, to refuse His promises, is rebellion. But the Israelites' rebellion is further magnified when their response to the faithful witnesses is a call to stone them to death. Then the thing that Israel should have truly feared happens—God's presence is manifested before them in the shekinah glory (verse 10), and He is furious. God again considers wiping Israel out altogether, and starting over with Moses. Notice, however, that Moses doesn't seek preeminence for himself. Rather, he is primarily concerned with God's reputation. He reminds the Lord that the nations are watching (verses 13–16).

Furthermore, despite the rebellion of the people and their threats against him personally, Moses loves them and seeks their welfare. In coming to their aid, he appeals to God's patience and mercy (verses 17–19). Moses is very obviously, then, a type of Christ in obtaining pardon for the people.

But for the Israelites it is only a *temporary* pardon—because they will not repent. And ultimately, the very thing that they wished for, that they had fallen dead in the wilderness (verse 2), *will* come upon them (verses 28–29, 32, 35). Of the older generation, only Joshua and Caleb will enter the Promised Land (verses 24, 30). And rather than God placing the Israelites' children in jeopardy as the people had accused, the children would be the only ones spared: "Your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised" (verse 31). Yet for 40 years, the nation will be rejected from entering the Promised Land. Incredibly, as severe as this might sound, it actually displays the tremendous mercy of God that He would still make it possible for a purged Israel to enter the land.

But now we come to an amazing tendency of human nature. When God says, "Do," the carnal mind wants to *not do*. And when God says, "Don't," the carnal mind wants to *do* (compare Romans 8:7; Romans 7:8). Now that God says they can't enter the Promised Land, the people suddenly want to—and attempt to do just that. They do acknowledge their prior sin, but they do not see that by seeking what God has now forbidden by His judgment, they

are guilty of the sin of rebellion just the same. Though Moses warns them, they mount a futile invasion attempt of the land. But it is, of course, doomed to failure from the start because God is not with them (verses 42–45).

Consider then: As a result of the fear and lack of faith of 10 cowardly men, and the people's response to it, the Israelites would have to die in the wilderness. They hardened their hearts, and God made up His mind that they would not enter His rest (Psalm 95:8–11)—that is, the Promised Land. They refused to follow God, though He was visibly with them in the cloud and the fire. We must take warning from all this. God's Word states that the Israelites falling in the wilderness should serve as a powerful example to us (1 Corinthians 10:1–12). They took their eyes off the goal, a mistake we are repeatedly warned not to make. Let us therefore fear, we who have the promise of entering into God's future rest, His millennial Kingdom, lest any of us should come short of it. We can miss out just as assuredly as they did, and for the same reason—a lack of faith. And yet, like the children of Israel, we are so close to entering in (Hebrews 3:8–4:11).” [END]

Verse 9 – Joshua & Caleb gave such wise advice “only do not rebel against the Lord”. Sadly their wise words were not

considered and they were hated for them as the crowd turned against them.

Verse 22 – Regarding the ten times the people of Israel have tested God, John Gill’s commentary states: “which the Jews understand precisely and exactly of such a number, and which they reckon thus; twice at the sea, Exo_14:11; twice concerning water, Exo_15:23; twice about manna, Exo_16:2; twice about quails, Exo_16:12; once by the calf, Exo_32:1; and once in the wilderness of Paran, Num_14:1, which last and tenth was the present temptation: these are reckoned a little otherwise elsewhere; but perhaps it may be better, with Aben Ezra, to interpret it of many times, a certain number being put for an uncertain, they having frequently tempted the Lord:” [END]

Verse 24 – Even though Joshua and Caleb were faithful, they still also paid a price. Sometimes even when we ourselves do right, we sometimes suffer right along with those who do not. Joshua and Caleb and their families would have to wander the wilderness right along with the rest of Israel for the completion of the 40 years.

As we end this week, it's easy to shake our head at Israel. Let's strive to learn from their bad example and be sure to avoid rebellion. Let's commit to trusting God, even in the face of an authority we think might be off base. Let's respond with faithfulness to God, even when the giants of life seem to be against us and life appears hopeless. Let's obey and follow God's instructions with great care.