

**Numbers 13:1 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
Numbers 13:2 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.**

Numbers 13:3 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.

I remembered from my study of Deuteronomy that there seemed to be some discrepancy between the two records of this event...

Deuteronomy 1:20–32 “And I said unto you, Ye are come unto the mountain of the Amorites, which the LORD our God doth give unto us. Behold, the LORD thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged. And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come. And the saying pleased me well: and I took twelve men of you, one of a tribe: And they turned and went up into the mountain, and came unto the valley of Eshcol, and searched it out. And they took of the fruit of the land in their hands, and brought it down unto us, and brought us word again, and said, It is a good land which the LORD our God doth give us. Notwithstanding ye would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God: And ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because the LORD hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us. Whither shall we go up? our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people is greater and taller than we; the cities are great and walled up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there. Then I said unto you, Dread not, neither be afraid of them. The LORD your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes; And in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the LORD thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place. Yet in this thing ye did not believe the LORD your God....”

...and the first discrepancy is noted in verse 1. This verse indicates that the command to go and search out the land came from the LORD, while in Deuteronomy it sounds like the idea originated from the people. We note that in Deuteronomy Moses records that the idea pleased him well, and maybe that is because he had already received the LORD's command.

We have previously noted that God knows all about us. He was well aware that the people would want to spy out the land. As is often the case in God's dealings with His people, He allows them to have their way as a form of judgment or as a means of testing them; it actually served as both in this instance. It proved to reveal them as a people of unbelief and incurred His judgment in consequence of that unbelief.

In both accounts we are told that Moses chose one of the leaders from each tribe to form the team that would spy out the land.

We also learn from the Deuteronomy account that the camp in the wilderness of Paran was at Kadeshbarnea.

Deuteronomy 1:19 "And when we departed from Horeb, we went through all that great and terrible wilderness, which ye saw by the way of the mountain of the Amorites, as the LORD our God commanded us; and we came to Kadeshbarnea."

Numbers 13:4 And these *were* their names: of the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur.

Numbers 13:5 Of the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori.

Numbers 13:6 Of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh.

Numbers 13:7 Of the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph.

Numbers 13:8 Of the tribe of Ephraim, Oshea the son of Nun.

Numbers 13:9 Of the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu.

Numbers 13:10 Of the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi.

Numbers 13:11 Of the tribe of Joseph, *namely*, of the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of Susi.

Numbers 13:12 Of the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli.

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

Numbers 13:14 Of the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi.

Numbers 13:15 Of the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi.

Numbers 13:16 These *are* the names of the men which Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Oshea the son of Nun Jehoshua.

These verses list the representatives from each tribe that were chosen to make up the investigative team. Oshea the son of Nun that Moses called Jehoshua is better known as simply Joshua, his eventual successor as God's appointed leader of the people. The NIV Commentary adds the following insight: "In Hebrew, "Hoshea" means "salvation"; the new form of the name Joshua means "The LORD saves"; the latter form is the Hebrew spelling for Jesus."

Numbers 13:17 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:

Numbers 13:18 And see the land, what it *is*; and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they *be* strong or weak, few or many;

Numbers 13:19 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;

Numbers 13:20 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.

Moses records that the spies were given specific instructions as to where to go and what information to gather. The New Living Translation is more easily understood.

"Go northward through the Negev into the hill country. See what the land is like and find out whether the people living there are strong or weak, few or many. What kind of land do they live in? Is it good or bad? Do their towns have walls

or are they unprotected? How is the soil? Is it fertile or poor? Are there many trees? Enter the land boldly, and bring back samples of the crops you see." (It happened to be the season for harvesting the first ripe grapes.) "

Numbers 13:21 ¶ So they went up, and searched the land from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath.

Numbers 13:22 And they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron; where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi, the children of Anak, were. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)

Once again the NLT is a bit clearer for the first two verses: "So they went up and explored the land from the wilderness of Zin as far as Rehob, near Lebo-hamath. Going northward, they passed first through the Negev and arrived at Hebron, where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi—all descendants of Anak—lived."

It's interesting that it was noted that Hebron was built seven years before the city of Zoan in Egypt. The psalmist makes note of Zoan as a place where God did "marvelous things," or miracles, referring to the plagues that preceded their deliverance out of Egypt.

Psalms 78:12 "Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan."

Easton's Dictionary identifies it as the "capital of the Hyksos, or Shepherd kings, who ruled Egypt for more than 500 years. It was the frontier town of Goshen. Here Pharaoh was holding his court at the time of his various interviews with Moses and Aaron."

Though there are no existing remains of the city of Zoan, the city of Hebron remains to this day as one of the oldest cities in the world. (Coffman notes that it could have been built as early as 2000 BC.) Hebron is best known as the location of the Cave of Machpelah where Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Leah are buried.

Coffman reasons that this parenthetical insertion is another affirmation of the authorship of Moses: "Who but Moses could have known when Zoan, the great Egyptian city of Tanis, a magnificent city on the Nile Delta and having a summer residence of the Pharaohs, was founded? Whitelaw was correct in the discernment that such information shows that 'Moses had access to the archives of Egypt through the priests who had provided his education in Egypt.'"

Numbers 13:23 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.

Numbers 13:24 The place was called the brook Eshcol, because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence.

Numbers 13:25 And they returned from searching of the land after forty days.

When the spies came to the brook of Eshcol, they cut down a branch with one

cluster of grapes and gathered some pomegranates and figs as well. It took two men to carry the staff from which they hung. Note is made that they called the place Eschol, which means “bunch together,” in light of the grapes that were gathered there. They finally returned to the camp after 40 days.

Numbers 13:26 ¶ 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.

Numbers 13:27 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.

The group of spies went before the people to report to Moses and Aaron who waited for them at Kadesh. They showed them the fruit of the land and confirmed that it was indeed a land flowing with milk and honey—an abundance of crops. So far, so good, but...

Numbers 13:28 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.

Numbers 13:29 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.

...their tune quickly changed. They described great walled cities and the people as very strong; in fact, the children of Anak were there. They also noted that the Amalekites lived in the southern part of the land; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites lived in the mountains; and the Canaanites lived by the sea and the coast of the Jordan River.

Numbers 13:30 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.

Numbers 13:31 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.

Numbers 13:32 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.

Numbers 13:33 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.

Caleb didn't want to hear any more negative. He immediately got the people quiet and urged that they go up at once and take the land; he was sure they would be victorious. He obviously had great faith that the LORD would fulfill His promise to give them the land. The men that went with him, however, argued that the people living there were stronger than they. They described the land as “eating up the inhabitants” and emphasized that the men were very tall.

In fact, they once again pointed out that the sons of Anak, the giants, were there and would consider the Israelites as nothing more than grasshoppers—certainly nothing to fear.

I am reminded of the words from the record in Deuteronomy as noted above:
*“The LORD your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes; And in the wilderness....**Yet in this thing ye did not believe the LORD your God....”***

This is the significant truth in this chapter—In spite of all the many ways the LORD had proven Himself to them, the people still did not believe Him!

Thought: How often do our actions testify to the same when the going gets tough or far different than our expectations?