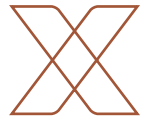




The Land

Session 3 • Numbers 13:17-31



ENGAGE

PREPARE: Display **Pack Item 3** (Poster: *The Journey of the Spies*). Make copies of **Pack Item 7** (Handout: *Numbers, Deuteronomy Time Line*) and **Pack Item 9** (Handout: *Complaints in the Wilderness*).

READ: Enlist a volunteer to read the opening paragraph on page 29.

ASK: What was the last project you had that was more complicated than you imagined it would be? (p. 29)

INTRODUCE: Encourage adults to share about a project that had some unexpected twists and turns. Affirm that we all face situations that are more complicated than originally thought, whether it's a home improvement task or stepping out with faith in God.

IDENTIFY: Distribute copies of **Pack Item 7** (Handout: *Numbers, Deuteronomy Time Line*). Point out the information for 1445 BC. Remind adults that Israel had spent a lot of time at Mount Sinai receiving the law and the instructions for the tabernacle. Now they found themselves on the brink of Canaan, the land that God had promised their ancestors centuries earlier.

TRANSITION: *In today's session, we'll examine how the Israelites responded to God's faithfulness in bringing them to the border of the promised land, especially after they realized the task was going to be more challenging than they expected.*

EXPLORE THE TEXT

READ: Invite a volunteer to read aloud Numbers 13:17-20 as the group listens for the instructions Moses gave the men who would be scouting the land.

ASK: What was significant about the land of Canaan? (p. 31)

RECAP: Direct adults to scan Numbers 13:17-20 again to identify the two main concerns of Moses.

- **(13:17-20)** Moses's two primary concerns were the land and the people. What was the land like typographically? What challenges would the people face? Moses wanted to know how densely the land was populated and how the people looked militarily—were they strong or weak? He wanted to know if the inhabitants were capable of defending their cities and homes. The text never suggests that not entering the land was even an option. The purpose of sending in the scouts was to

determine how, not if, the Israelites would enter the land. God would provide them the victory.

ASK: What do you imagine the spies were thinking while Moses explained the information he wanted them to bring back? What would have caused them to be afraid? (p. 31)

HIGHLIGHT: Point out Moses's command to be courageous. Briefly discuss how believers find courage to fulfill God's plans. Note that once the spies received their marching orders, they set out on their mission. Share that over the next forty days, they thoroughly explored Canaan, just as Moses had directed them.

READ: Direct the group to read silently Numbers 13:21-25, underlining the locations mentioned in the text.

EXPLAIN: Allow volunteers to identify the various places they underlined as they read the passage. Show adults **Pack Item 3** (*Poster: The Journey of the Spies*) and highlight those locations. Note that they started in a desert region known as the Negev.

ASK: How do we balance acting in faith and gathering information before acting? (p. 31)

DESCRIBE: Explain the thoroughness of the scouts' mission from south to north and what they found in Canaan.

- **(13:21)** The Hebrew spies scouted out an area known as "the Wilderness of Zin." This was the southern boundary for Canaan.

The northernmost region the spies scouted out was at the "entrance to Hamath." The text thus highlights the thoroughness of the scouts' mission from south to north.

- **(13:22)** Around Hebron, the spies also caught their first recorded glimpse of the enemies they would face: the descendants of Anak. Known as "Anakim" (which means "long-necked" or "strong-necked"), the relatives of Anak included three powerful leaders in Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi. The Anakim were giant people related to the Nephilim (Gen. 6:4) and would have presented a significant challenge to conquering the land—a fact some scouts later pointed out (Num. 13:33).
- **(13:23-24)** The cluster served as proof that God was faithful to make good on His promises. Unfortunately, the people's amazement would not overcome the fears and doubts planted in their hearts by the ten unfaithful spies (Num. 13:27-29,32-33).

DISCUSS: Write *fear* on the board and encourage adults to list things that create fear in people's lives. Lead a brief discussion on the power of fear and how it can overwhelm a person's thinking and actions. Allow volunteers to share ways they overcome fear.

READ: Invite a volunteer to read Numbers 13:26-31 as the group reflects on the contrast between the ten spies and Caleb.

EXAMINE: Direct adults to identify the "pros" and "cons" of entering the promised land. Highlight how fear affected the spies' faith in God and His promises.

SUMMARIZE: Distribute copies of **Pack Item 9** (*Handout: Complaints in the Wilderness*). Point out the complaints related to Numbers 13. *In the middle of the fear, Caleb took a stand for faith. He understood God's promises and refused to take his eyes off what the Lord wanted to do among His people.*

- **(13:30-31)** Caleb and Joshua were the only scouts who believed the people should go up and conquer the land. They had seen all the same challenges the other spies saw. However, they focused on God's promises rather than circumstances. Unfortunately, the negative report of the ten spies resonated with the people. Their fear overwhelmed their faith.

ASK: What kind of obstacles might prevent or delay us from obeying God? (p. 31)

PRAY: Encourage adults to use the prayer prompts in the **Explore the Bible Prayer Guide** (QR code on page 15) to pray this passage: *Ask God to give you the boldness and faith of Caleb. Ask Him to help you see challenges through His eyes and His strength. Seek forgiveness for the times when doubts and fears have weakened your faith and kept you from obeying Him. Ask God to show you what steps of obedience you need to take this week.*

CHALLENGE

SUMMARIZE: Review these points from this week's Bible passage:

- Believers can depend on God to instruct them in the tasks He has for them.

- Obedience to God includes understanding what He is calling us to do.
- Believers can face obstacles with faith, knowing that God is with them.

DISCUSS: Challenge adults to consider the direction God may be moving them. Remind them that faith overcomes fear, so identifying our fears and giving them up to God is a powerful first step toward overcoming those doubts and anxieties.

CHALLENGE: Encourage adults to use the **Daily Exploration** on pages 33-35 to dig deeper into God's Word during the week.

PRAY: Close in prayer, asking God to help adults recognize their fears and to respond in faith when they face tasks that seem too difficult or complicated for them.

AFTER THE SESSION

Reinforce the session by texting or emailing the group. Remind the adults that God is faithful and will keep all the promises He has made. If possible, share an example from your own life of how God has helped you overcome fear or doubt so you could move forward in obedience. Emphasize the role of trust, noting that fear robs us of our ability to depend on God. Let adults know that you will be praying for them as they confront choices between fear and faith this week.