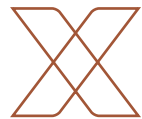


# Rebellion and Judgment

Session 4 • Numbers 14:11-24



## ENGAGE

**PREPARE:** On a focal wall, display **Pack Item 3** (Poster: *The Journey of the Spies*) and **Pack Item 4** (Poster: *Key Verse: Numbers 14:18a*). Make copies of **Pack Item 9** (Handout: *Complaints in the Wilderness*).

**INTRODUCE:** As adults arrive, enlist a volunteer to read the opening paragraph (p. 37). Lead a discussion about times when they asked (or were asked by their parents) about jumping off a bridge, roof, and so forth.

**ASK:** How much does the opinion of others affect your decision-making? How much should it affect it? (p. 37)

**EXPLAIN:** Point out **Pack Item 3** (Map: *The Journey of the Spies*) and remind the group that Moses sent out spies to scout the promised land. Mention both the positives of the spies' report (milk and honey) as well as the negatives (giants in the land). Explain that today's session is the continuation of that story and focuses on the reaction of the people to the spies' report—and the consequences of that response.

## EXPLORE THE TEXT

**OVERVIEW:** Distribute **Pack Item 9** (Handout: *Complaints in the Wilderness*). Summarize

Numbers 14:1-10. Remind adults that the negative report of the spies had led the people to reject God's plan and consider returning to Egypt.

**SAY:** *While the people mourned and wept, they also complained about the leadership of Moses and Aaron. Of course, this was the equivalent of complaining about God's leadership. And while Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb all tried to convince the people to change their hearts and minds, nothing could move the people back toward God and His plan.*

**READ:** Invite a volunteer to read aloud **Numbers 14:11-16** as the group listens for God's reaction to the Israelites' complaints.

**DISCUSS:** Lead the group to recall signs God had performed for the people. Record their responses on the board. Point out that despite His faithful care in the past, the Israelites did not trust the Lord to guide and protect them as they entered Canaan. Share that God said He would destroy the nation with a single blow and restart with Moses.

**ASK:** How would you have felt if you were in Moses's situation as God considered wiping out the people and starting fresh with you? (p. 39)

**SUMMARIZE:** Use the following content to highlight Moses's concern for God's reputation.

- **(14:15-16)** Moses knew that the Lord's protecting His people and providing for them would be a testimony of who He was to the Canaanites and Egyptians. In essence, Moses was saying, "Lord, your reputation is at stake." If God wiped out Israel "with a single blow," it would affect how the nations viewed Him. Moses suggested that the Egyptians would twist the narrative from a God who had led His people out of bondage to a God who couldn't bring them into the promised land. He would be equated with the impotent deities of the pagans.

**ASK: What impact does our faithfulness to God have on our witness?** (p. 39)

**READ: Invite a volunteer to read aloud Numbers 14:17-19** and direct the group to listen for words that describe God's character.

**REFLECT:** Encourage the group to share the words they noted. Record responses under the heading. Lead a brief discussion on how God's character often is misunderstood by our culture.

**REVIEW:** Read the following content for verse 18:

- **(14:18)** Moses's words echoed part of what God had said about Himself when He passed in front of him on Mount Sinai (Ex. 34:6-7). The message that God is slow to anger and abounding in faithful love resounds throughout the Old Testament.

The Hebrew word translated "faithful love" is *hesed* (HEH-sed), which occurs about 250 times in the Old Testament. This word has many translations, including "lovingkindness," "goodness," "loyalty," and "favor." For example, the word appears in every verse of Psalm 136: "His faithful love endures forever."

**SHARE:** Direct attention to **Pack Item 4** (Poster: Key Verse: Numbers 14:18a). Explain that this is the memory verse for this session. Point out the "Key Doctrine" on page 39. Remind adults that God's greatest act of love was sending Jesus to die for our sins. As time allows, walk adults through the Plan of Salvation on the inside front cover.

**SAY:** *Moses's prayer was an intercessory prayer, appealing to God to forgive the people's rebellion. He based his requests on God's character, which is always a powerful way to pray.*

**ASK: What are some appropriate ways of appealing to God's character when praying?** (p. 39)

**READ: Invite a volunteer to read aloud Numbers 14:20-24** as the group listens for God's response to Moses. Direct them to underline the consequence the people faced because of their sins.

**EXAMINE:** Encourage adults to scan the information for verses 20-23 (**Daily Exploration**, p. 42) to learn more about God's response to Moses. Allow a few volunteers to share their thoughts. Highlight both God's forgiveness and the consequences the people faced because of their decisions.

Point out the honor God bestowed on Caleb by calling him, “my servant” and contrast that to the judgment meted out to the rest of the nation.

- **(14:24)** The Lord also emphasized that Caleb possessed a different spirit that set him apart from the ten unbelieving scouts. While they saw only the obstacles, Caleb trusted God’s promise and power. He had remained loyal to God, a quality also emphasized when he actually entered the promised land in the book of Joshua (Josh. 14:8,14). Caleb and Joshua were the only two spies who urged the people to take the land. As a result, each received an inheritance in Canaan when the time came (14:6-14; 19:49-50).

**REFLECT:** Lead adults to reflect silently on some consequences they have faced for their sin. Affirm that the consequences still leave a mark even when the sin itself is forgiven. Invite a volunteer to share an experience from his or her own life.

**ASK: Since God is willing to grant forgiveness for our sin, why do you think He does not remove the consequences as well?** (p. 39)

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## CHALLENGE

**SUMMARIZE:** Review these points from this week’s Bible passage:

- Believers honor God by trusting Him.
- We can count on God to act according to His character.

- We must understand that sin has consequences.

**IDENTIFY:** Guide adults to point out verses from today’s session that correspond to the statements above. Lead them to rank the statements from least to most difficult to apply in their own lives. Allow a few volunteers to share why a particular truth is difficult for them to apply.

**DISCUSS:** Direct adults to examine the **Apply the Text** set of questions on page 39. Lead adults to compile a list of prayer requests that include intercessory prayers for people they know.

**PRAY:** Close in prayer. Pray for the requests on the list you have just completed. Ask God to help adults recognize His glory in the world and to act faithfully in honoring Him each day.

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## AFTER THE SESSION

Lead adults to continue intercessory prayers by emailing the prayer list you compiled at the end of the session. Challenge them to add other requests to the list by asking family members, friends, and coworkers how they might pray for them this week. Encourage them to look for God’s glory around them and to make His glory known among the people they interact with this week.