

# Numbers 14 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT 2

Numbers: Journey to God's Rest-Land by Irving Jensen- used by permission

Source: Ryrie Study Bible

THE BOOK OF NUMBERS "Wilderness Wandering"								
WALKING Numbers 1-12			WANDERING Numbers 13-25			WAITING Numbers 26-36		
Counting & Camping Nu 1-4	Cleansing & Congregation Nu 5-8	Carping & Complaining Nu 9-12	12 Spies & Death in Desert Nu 13-16	<a href="#">Aaron</a> & Levites in Wilderness Nu 17-18	Serpent of Brass & Story of Balaam Nu 21-25	Second Census 7 Laws of Israel Nu 26-30	Last Days of Moses as Leader Nu 31-33	Sections, Sanctuaries & Settlements Nu 34-36
Law & Order			Rebellion & Disorder			New Laws for the New Order		
Old Generation			Tragic Transition			New Generation		
Preparation for the Journey: Moving Out			Participation in the Journey: Moving On			Prize at end of the Journey: Moving In		
At Sinai <a href="#">Mt Sinai</a>			To <a href="#">Moab</a> <a href="#">Mt Hor</a>			At <a href="#">Moab</a> <a href="#">Mt Nebo</a>		
En Route to <a href="#">Kadesh</a> (Mt Sinai)			En Route to Nowhere <a href="#">(Wilderness)</a>			En Route to <a href="#">Canaan</a> (Plains of Moab)		
A Few Weeks to 2 Months			38 years, 3 months, 10 days			A Few Months		
Christ in Numbers = Our "Lifted-up One" (Nu 21:9, cp Jn 3:14-15)								
Author: <a href="#">Moses</a>								

**Numbers 14:1 Then all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night.**

BGT Numbers 14:1 καὶ ὁ λαὸς πᾶς συναψὺν ὠκεν φωνὴν καὶ κλαίεν ἅς ἡν τὴν νύκτα κε νῆν

NET Numbers 14:1 Then all the community raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night.

NLT Numbers 14:1 Then the whole community began weeping aloud, and they cried all night.

ESV Numbers 14:1 Then all the congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night.

NIV Numbers 14:1 That night all the people of the community raised their voices and wept aloud.

KJV Numbers 14:1 And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night.

YLT Numbers 14:1 And all the company lifteth up and give forth their voice, and the people weep during that night;

LXE Numbers 14:1 And all the congregation lifted up their voice and cried; and the people wept all that night.

ASV Numbers 14:1 And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night.

CSB Numbers 14:1 Then the whole community broke into loud cries, and the people wept that night.

NKJ Numbers 14:1 So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night.

NRS Numbers 14:1 Then all the congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night.

NAB Numbers 14:1 At this, the whole community broke out with loud cries, and even in the night the people wailed.

NJB Numbers 14:1 The whole community then cried out in dismay, and the people wept all that night.

GWN Numbers 14:1 Then all the people in the Israelite community raised their voices and cried out loud all that night.

- Nu 11:1-4 De 1:45
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Wiersbe's Outline:

- Unbelief led to rebellion (Nu 14:1–10).
- Rebellion led to intercession (Nu 14:11–19).
- Intercession led to pardon (Nu 14:20–38)
- Pardon led to presumption (Nu 14:39–45)

### ALL THE PEOPLE CRYING ALL NIGHT LONG

**NET Note** - This chapter forms part of the story already begun. There are three major sections here: dissatisfaction with the reports (vv. 1–10), the threat of divine punishment (vv. 11–38), and the defeat of the Israelites (vv. 39–45).

**Bush** entitles it "The Murmuring and Mutiny of the People at the Report of the Spies."

**Rod Mattoon** sums up Numbers 13 - The spies have returned from the land. Ten of them were bad and two were good. Two said, "Let's go!" and ten said, "Oh No! Those guys are big, bad, and burly!"

**Brian Bell** - In Ex15 (Red Sea) we see Israel singing in great victory but here they're weeping in defeat! Had they forgotten their song? [See Ex. 15:14–18+] There they had their eye on God & so faith sang; here they looked at giants & so unbelief wept.

**Then** - When is **then**? When the people heard the "grasshopper" description (Nu 13:33+)! That was too much for them!

**All the congregation lifted up their voices and cried** - The use of **all** and **congregation** emphasizes that the entire camp was overcome by grief and tears! This is a veritable spiritual tsunami! So why are almost two million people wailing (note they aren't just whimpering but wailing!)? It is not because God has told them they can't enter the Promised Land (that divine judgement decree comes later), but because of the fear producing, faith destroying report of the 10 spies. Their words were like spiritual poison to their souls! Be wary of speaking discouraging words to others!

The **Septuagint** translates **cried** with [klaio](#) in the imperfect tense (over and over, again and again) means to they were incessantly mourning, weeping, lamenting and wailing all night long. The Greek verb [klaio](#) places emphasis upon the noise accompanying crying. One can only imagine what was going through the minds of Moses, Joshua and Caleb as they listened to this plaintive cry all night long! There is a bitter irony here in their nocturnal wailing, for the Israelites themselves had heard something similar on the night of the Passover when death struck the Egyptian firstborn, Moses recording "Pharaoh arose in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians, and **there was a great cry in Egypt**, for there was no home where there was not someone dead." (Ex 12:30+).

**NET Note** - "The two verbs "lifted up their voice and cried" form a [hendiadys](#); the idiom of raising the voice means that they cried aloud." (NET)

**Bush on lifted up their voices and cried** - Heb. "And gave their voice." This form of expression occurs in reference to any loud voice, noise, or cry, whether as predicated of any creature, or represented as proceeding from the Lord himself. Thus, Ps. 18:14, "The Most High gave his voice." Jer. 2:15, "The young lions roared upon him, (and) yelled." Heb. "gave forth their voice." Ps. 104:12, "The birds—sing (Heb. 'give forth their voice') among the branches." Ps. 77:17, "The clouds poured out water; the skies sent out a sound (Heb. "gave forth a voice)." Hab. 3:10, "The overflowing of the water passed by; the deep uttered his voice" (Heb. "gave forth his voice)." So, likewise, men are said to "give a voice," upon causing a proclamation to be issued, 2 Chron. 24:9. From the force of the expression, therefore, it is evident that the people on this occasion broke forth into open outcries of a rebellious nature, proclaiming thereby their own fickleness, cowardice, imbecility, and shame. Instead of lifting up their ensigns with a heroic resolve to march forward to the land of promise, defying all enemies in the name of the Lord, they sat down in impotent despair, and like so many frightened and fretting children, gave way to sobs and tears! "The rods of their Egyptian task-masters had never been so fit for

them as now for crying. They had cause, indeed, to weep for their infidelity; but now they weep for fear of those enemies they saw not. **I fear, if there had been ten Calebs to persuade, and but two faint spies to discourage them, those two cowards would have prevailed against those two solicitors: how much more, now ten oppose and but two encourage!**”—Bishop. Hall.

**And the people wept that night.** -Hebrew = “In or through that night.” Lxx =. “That whole night.” The report of the majority of the spies brought about a destructive chain reaction in the camp of Israel. Unbelief would soon lead to overt rebellion. Such is the effect of unbelief. Faith looks ahead with courage; unbelief looks back with complaint. Faith unites the people of God; unbelief looks for somebody to blame. There was still time to repent and seek God’s face, but the people refused to listen to Caleb and Joshua.

**NET Note on wept** - There are a number of things that the verb “to weep” or “wail” can connote. It could reflect joy, grief, lamentation, or repentance, but here it reflects fear, hopelessness, or vexation at the thought of coming all this way and being defeated by the Canaanite armies. See Judg 20:23, 26.

**Wiersbe** - At Kadesh-Barnea, on the border of Canaan, the people of Israel foolishly forfeited their opportunity to enter the Promised Land and claim their inheritance. This tragic failure has made the name “**Kadesh**” a synonym for defeat and lost opportunity. Israel’s downfall at Kadesh is a reminder to us today that it’s a dangerous thing to trifle with the will of God. You may end up spending the rest of your life wandering around, just waiting to die. In spite of what some of our hymns declare, Canaan is not a picture of heaven. Certainly there won’t be any battles in heaven! Rather, Canaan is a picture of the inheritance God has planned for each of His children today, the work He wants us to do, and the places He wants us to occupy. Paul called it “good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10NKJV+). The Lord has a perfect plan for each of His children, but we can claim these blessings only by faith and obedience. Like the people of Israel centuries ago, many believers today walk by sight and not by faith, and therefore they fail to enjoy the good things God has for them. They can’t say with David, “The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; yes, I have a good inheritance” (Ps. 16:6NKJV). (Be Counted)

**THOUGHT** - One sin will take a person to hell, but there are some sins which are worse than others. Some sins result in consequences that can’t be undone in this lifetime and will have live changing, even devastating effects! Think about Israel’s grumbling. They had grumbled from the moment God delivered them out of slavery, and yet for the most part those episodes of grumbling were not devastating. But now they grumbled one time too many and it cost them 40 years of wilderness wandering and thousands and thousands dead in the desert! Beloved, we all need to be wary of presumptuous sins, because we do not know when a sin may result in devastating consequences that we will have to live with the rest of our lives. I think for example of a spouse being tempted to have an affair and finally capitulating, only to suffer lifelong consequences (and regret) as a result of a momentary stupid sin! I know a man who by his own admission knew God was calling him into ministry at a young age. But he was a successful engineer working at NASA and involved in putting men into outer space. He choose to stay with NASA and turned down the call of God on His life. By his own admission, his next 50 years were filled with deep regret at his momentary decision to refuse to “enter in to the Promised Land,” which God had prepared for him. Beware of grumbling against Jehovah!

---

### Numbers 14:1-11 Thorns or Roses?

Two boys were eating some grapes. One of them remarked, “Aren’t they sweet!” “I guess so,” the other replied, “but they’re full of seeds.” Wandering into a garden, the first boy exclaimed, “Look at those big, beautiful red roses!” The other commented, “They’re full of thorns!” It was a warm day, so they stopped at the store for a soft drink. After several swallows, the second youngster complained, “My bottle’s half-empty already.” The first quickly responded, “Mine’s still half-full!”

Many people are like the negative-thinking boy in this story. They always look at life through dark glasses. Like the children of Israel in today’s Scripture, they complain and grumble when they should be praising the Lord for His gracious provision. But thank God, not everyone is like that. There are people who concentrate on the bright side and are radiant, happy, and grateful. They are realistic about the somber side of life, but they don’t pout and fret.

You can overcome negative thinking. No matter who you are or what your circumstances, there’s always much to be grateful for. Think about God’s love for you. Praise Him for His providential care. Then, instead of complaining about thorns, you’ll be thankful for the roses.

Some folks see so many thorns,  
They scarce can see one rose,  
While others count two blossoms  
For every thorn that grows.  
—Garrison

Instead of grumbling because you don't get what you want,  
be thankful you don't get what you deserve.

---

### **An Impossible Challenge?**

Do all things without complaining and disputing. —Philippians 2:14

Today's Scripture: Numbers 14:1-5,26-27

A pastor in Kansas City gave what seemed to be an impossible challenge to his congregation—to go 21 days without complaining (the amount of time some say it takes to develop a new habit). Special bracelets were distributed to participants as a reminder to live complaint-free lives. A movement was started, and millions of bracelets have been distributed all over the world.

The biblical principle “Do all things without complaining and disputing” (Phil. 2:14) is an important one. The ancient Israelites discovered this when, because of their constant complaining in the wilderness, they were judged by God and not allowed to enter the Promised Land (Num. 14).

How can we learn to develop a noncomplaining, positive attitude that will please the Lord?

- By disciplining our thoughts (Rom. 12:2). We need to meditate on Scripture and remember our blessings.
- By confessing our critical spirit and committing ourselves to obedience each time we fail (1 John 1:9).
- By enlisting God's help and the help of others. The Spirit will empower us as we depend on Him (John 14:26).

Because God helps us, doing all things without complaining is not an impossible challenge. By: Anne Cetas ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, help me stop complaining  
When things don't go my way;  
Instead, give me a thankful heart  
For all You do each day.  
—Sper

A complaining Christian is a contradiction in terms.

---

### **Numbers 14:1-4, 11-23 Rearview Mirror**

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.- Galatians 5:1

Some people go through life looking into the rearview mirror. They yearn for the "good old days" when life seemed better. Families were stronger, Christians were nobler, people were happier -- or so they think!

The ancient Hebrews were masters of glorifying the ugly past. As slaves in Egypt they had been desperate! Yet after Moses led them out of bondage, they were soon idealizing the "good old days." Many of them actually wanted to go back to Egypt and again stick their necks under a yoke and feel Pharaoh's lash. Little wonder that God canceled their passport to the Promised Land.

Some Christians would like to get back to the "good old days" of the church. But which church? Believers have faced huge difficulties since the days of Paul. The early church was plagued by sexual immorality (1 Cor. 5:1), heresy (Gal. 1:6-7), and dissension (Acts 15:1-2). There were no good old days for the church -- not in the first century, not in the sixteenth, and not in the twentieth.

Avoid the trap of looking back -- unless it's to recall a lesson learned or to glory in what God has accomplished. Remember, for those whose lives are centered in Christ, the best is always yet to come. - H W Robinson ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

How often God gives victory  
And then we revel in the deed,  
While present opportunity  
Slips past its bloom and turns to seed.  
- Gustafson

When we live in the past, we tarnish the present and ignore the future.

**Numbers 14:2 All the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and 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!"**

BGT Numbers 14:2 κα διεγ γγουζον π Μωυσ ν κα Ααρων π ντες ο υ ο Ισραηλ κα ε παν πρ ς α το ς π σα συναγωγ φελον πεθ νομεν ν γ Α γ πτ ν τ ρ μ τα τ ε πεθ νομεν

NET Numbers 14:2 And all the Israelites murmured 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 perished in this wilderness!"

NLT Numbers 14:2 Their voices rose in a great chorus of protest against Moses and Aaron. "If only we had died in Egypt, or even here in the wilderness!" they complained.

ESV Numbers 14:2 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!"

NIV Numbers 14:2 All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, "If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert!"

KJV Numbers 14:2 And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!

YLT Numbers 14:2 and all the sons of Israel murmur against Moses, and against Aaron, and all the company say unto them, 'O that we had died in the land of Egypt, or in this wilderness, O that we had died!

LXE Numbers 14:2 And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron; and all the congregation said to them,

ASV Numbers 14:2 And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would that we had died in this wilderness!

CSB Numbers 14:2 All the Israelites complained about Moses and Aaron, and the whole community told them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt, or if only we had died in this wilderness!"

NKJ Numbers 14:2 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!"

NRS Numbers 14:2 And all the Israelites complained 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!"

NAB Numbers 14:2 All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, the whole community saying to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt, or that here in the desert we were dead!"

NJB Numbers 14:2 All the Israelites muttered at Moses and Aaron, and the whole community said to them, "Would to God we had died in Egypt, or even that we had died in this desert!"

- **grumbled:** Nu 16:41 Ex 15:24 16:2,3 17:3 De 1:27 Ps 106:24,45 1Co 10:10 Php 2:14,15 Jude 1:16
- **Would:** Nu 14:28,29 11:15 1Ki 19:4 Job 3:11 7:15,16 Jon 4:3,8
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GRUMBLING IS A SERIOUS SIN!

The whole congregation quickly shifted from crying to criticizing!

**All the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron-** Grumbled is a key word in Numbers 14 (Nu 14:2; Nu 14:27; Nu 14:29; Nu 14:36;) They had had plenty of practice grumbling in the even after God had miraculously delivered them (Ex 15:24; Ex 16:2; Ex. 16:7; Ex. 16:8; Ex. 17:3); Ultimately of course their grumbling was against God! Paul warned of the danger of grumbling writing "Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an

example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come." (1Co 10:10-11) The Lxx translates the Hebrew word for **grumbled** ([lun](#)) with [diagogguzo](#) (the prefix "dia-" suggests they did it among themselves) which means to murmur greatly, to express dissatisfaction, complain, grumble (aloud), mutter (all uses - Ex. 15:24; Ex. 16:2; Ex. 16:7; Ex. 16:8; Nu 14:2; Nu 14:36; Nu 16:11; Dt. 1:27; Jos. 9:18; Lk. 15:2; Lk. 19:7). This is the same word used to describe the first century unbelieving Israelites, the Pharisees and scribes (see Lk 15:2+, cf Lk 19:7+)

**Grumble** (murmur) ([03885](#))([lun](#)) means to murmur and refers to the Israelites' complaining during their escape from Egypt and their wandering in the desert. It is also used of the people's justified grumbling against the leaders of Israel (Josh. 9:18). **All uses** - Ex 15:24; Ex 16:2; Ex. 16:7; Ex. 16:8; Ex. 17:3; Nu 14:2; Nu 14:27; Nu 14:29; Nu 14:36; Nu 16:11; Nu 16:41; Nu 17:5; Jos. 9:18; Ps. 59:15.

**NET Note on grumbled** - The Hebrew verb "to murmur" is מלל (lun). It is a strong word, signifying far more than complaining or grumbling, as some of the modern translations have it. The word is most often connected to the wilderness experience. It is paralleled in the literature with the word "to rebel." The murmuring is like a parliamentary vote of no confidence, for they no longer trusted their leaders and wished to choose a new leader and return. This "return to Egypt" becomes a symbol of their lack of faith in the LORD.

**THOUGHT** - Grumbling is something that is easy to do (unfortunately) and we all do in to one degree or another from time to time. However, we can control our grumbling because God gave us a command not to grumble and He never commands what He does not enable us to obey. So what's the secret? The secret is the Spirit! Paul writes...

So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) your salvation with fear and trembling (THIS IS THE ESSENCE OF PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION); 13 **FOR** (TERM OF EXPLANATION - EXPLAINING HOW TO WORK OUT!) it is God Who is at work in you (HOLY SPIRIT CONTINUALLY AT WORK = ENERGEO IN PRESENT TENSE), both to will and to work (HE GIVES US THE "DESIRE" AND THE "POWER") for His good pleasure. 14 **D o** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) all things (HOW MANY?) without grumbling or disputing; (Php 2:12-14+)

**COMMENT:** So there is God's antidote for GRUMBLING! As we yield to and are filled with His Spirit (Eph 5:18+), we are supernaturally enabled to quench our natural fleshly tendency to grumble! Try it! You'll like it! Even better you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord pleasing Him in all respects!

**And 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!"** - God heard their "wish" and would fulfill their wish in Nu 14:28-29. Lesson? Be careful what you pray for! This foolish lament by Israel sounds like the same song, second verse (so to speak) for earlier Moses recorded...

The sons of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the LORD'S hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger." (Exod 16:3+)

**NET Note** on their "prayer" - The optative is expressed by לו (lu) and then the verb, here the perfect tense מָתוּ (matnu)—"O that we had died..." Had they wanted to die in Egypt they should not have cried out to the LORD to deliver them from bondage. Here the people became consumed with the fear and worry of what lay ahead, and in their panic they revealed a lack of trust in God.

When your eyes are on yourself and your circumstances,  
you lose your perspective and say and do ridiculous things.  
-- Warren Wiersbe

**Matthew Henry - They wish rather to die criminals under God's justice than live conquerors in his favor.** How base were the spirits of those degenerate Israelites, who, rather than die (if it come to the worst) like soldiers in the field of honor, with their swords in their hands, desire to die like rotten sheep in the wilderness!" (WOE!)

**Bush on Would that we had died in the land of Egypt!** - The more carefully the language of these malcontents is weighed, the more aggravated does it appear. They were wrought up by their disaffection to a point of absolute madness. They speak as if it had been actually better that they had been slain with the first-born in Egypt, or in the wilderness with those who had lately died of the plague for lusting, than run the hazard of holding on their way to Canaan. They forgot that Omnipotence could bring them in thither as triumphantly as it had brought them out of Egypt. The past, with all its miracles of mercy, is hidden from their eyes, and the dreadful future, painted by unbelief, is all that stands before them. Never had people been so honored, favored, and blest, as had the nation of Israel since their departure out of Egypt, and yet, so light is all this in their eyes, that they now mourn that they had not died

NET Numbers 14:3 Why has the LORD brought us into this land only to be killed by the sword, that our wives



and our children should become plunder? Wouldn't it be better for us to return to Egypt?"

NLT Numbers 14:3 "Why is the LORD taking us to this country only to have us die in battle? Our wives and our little ones will be carried off as plunder! Wouldn't it be better for us to return to Egypt?"

ESV Numbers 14:3 Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?"

NIV Numbers 14:3 Why is the LORD bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?"

KJV Numbers 14:3 And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt?

YLT Numbers 14:3 and why is Jehovah bringing us in unto this land to fall by the sword? our wives and our infants are become a prey; is it not good for us to turn back to Egypt?"

LXE Numbers 14:3 Would we had died in the land of Egypt! or in this wilderness, would we had died! and why does the Lord bring us into this land to fall in war? our wives and our children shall be for a prey: now then it is better to return into Egypt.

ASV Numbers 14:3 And wherefore doth Jehovah bring us unto this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will be a prey: were it not better for us to return into Egypt?

CSB Numbers 14:3 Why is the LORD bringing us into this land to die by the sword? Our wives and little children will become plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?"

NKJ Numbers 14:3 "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?"

NRS Numbers 14:3 Why is the LORD bringing us into this land to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become booty; would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?"

NAB Numbers 14:3 Why is the LORD bringing us into this land only to have us fall by the sword? Our wives and little ones will be taken as booty. Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"

NJB Numbers 14:3 Why has Yahweh brought us to this country, for us to perish by the sword and our wives and children to be seized as booty? Should we not do better to go back to Egypt?"

- **Why is the LORD:** Ps 78:40 Jer 9:3
- **our wives:** Nu 14:31,32
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## Related Passage

Yet you were not willing to go up, but rebelled against the command of the LORD your God; 27 and you grumbled in your tents and said, '**Because the LORD hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us.**' (Dt 1:26-27)

**Why is the LORD bringing us into this land** - Notice in verse 2 they blame Moses but now blame God! **This land** sounds like they are referring to it in a slightly disparaging manner. Why don't they BELIEVE the covenant that God promised to Abraham? In that covenant there was a specific divine promise that Abraham's seed would inherit **"THE LAND"** (Ge 12:7+ Ge 13:18, Ge 15:7+). They refused to believe and thus they rejected God's promise. As Jesus said centuries later " you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." (Jn 8:31) Either they did not know the truth, they forgot the truth or they choose to simply reject the truth. We can do the same as believers today and in so doing fail to enter into the abundant life God promises to those who hear and heed the truth (Jn 10:10).

The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth (rages) against the LORD. (KJV)

People ruin their lives by their own foolishness and then are angry at the LORD. (NLT)

-- Proverbs 19:3

**Wiersbe** - In most churches, there are two or three chronic complainers who plague the spiritual leaders and sometime must be disciplined; but here was an entire nation weeping over a plight that they had caused by their own unbelief! They didn't admit their own failings; instead, they blamed God and decided to choose a new leader and return to Egypt (14:3–4). This was rebellion against the will of God.



**THOUGHT**- When the child of God is in the will of God, there is no place for complaining, even if the circumstances are difficult. The will of God will never lead us where the grace of God can't provide for us or the power of God protect us. If our daily prayer is, "Thy will be done," and if we walk in obedience to God's will, then what is there to complain about? A complaining spirit is evidence of an ungrateful heart and an unsundered will. By our grumbling, we're daring to say that we know more than God does about what's best for His people! "Do everything without complaining or arguing" (Phil. 2:14, NIV; and see 1 Cor. 10:10). (Wiersbe)

**Bush** comments on Proverbs 19:3 as related to Israel's complaint - How strikingly is this illustrated in the narrative before us! They blasphemously reflect upon their Divine Benefactor, as if he had brought them hither on purpose that they might fall by the sword, and that their wives and children should fall a prey to the ferocious adversaries whom they were called to encounter.

**Matthew Henry** - "Thus do they in effect charge that God who is Love itself, with the worst of malice, and Eternal Truth with the basest hypocrisy; suggesting that all the kind things he had said to them, and done for them, hitherto, were intended only to decoy them, and to cover a secret design carried on all along to ruin them."

**To fall by the sword?** - Their disbelief distorts their thinking for here they say they will face certain death! How many times had Yahweh already delivered them from death! (Ex 14:24-28+) They forgot that "Yahweh is a warrior. Yahweh is His Name." (Ex 15:3-7+) Where did this come from? They "extrapolated" from the faithless, false words of the 10 spies, words like **The land...is a land** that devours its inhabitants." (Nu 13:32+, cf Nu 13:28+). The **congregation** believed the lie of the 10 and forgot/discarded the truth of Jehovah, the Covenant keeping God!

How quickly they forgot the great "war cry" of Moses as the Ark would begin to lead the way for the nation to move out in preparation to "move in"...

Then it came about when the Ark set out that Moses said, **'Rise up, O LORD! And let Your enemies be scattered, And let those who hate You flee before You.'** (Nu 10:35)

Sadly, Israel failed to gird the loins of their mind with this truth and began to think they would be the ones who would be scattered and destroyed, not their enemies!

**Our wives and our little ones will become plunder** - What is their lame excuse for not going into the land? Wives and children! What a horrible accusation to bring against God! Their wives would die, but their children would not as God says specifically (Nu 14:31-33).

**Plunder** (0957) (baz from bazaz = to spoil, plunder) means spoiling, booty, prey, robbery, spoils. It describes the act of plundering or the loot taken by an enemy after a successful attack. The spoil of war was carried away by enemies (Ezek. 29:19; 38:12, 13) and divided among the victors (Num. 31:32; Isa. 33:23). The spoil of war included people (Num. 14:3, 31; Deut. 1:39; Isa. 42:22), animals (Jer. 49:32), cities (Ezek. 26:5; 36:4, 5) and even whole nations (Jer. 2:14; 30:16; Ezek. 25:7). The Lxx of Nu 14:3 uses diarpagē meaning (act of) plundering (Ezra 9:7) booty (Nu 14:3, Nu 14:31).

**Gilbrant** adds "The word usually refers to the consequences of God's judgment on a sinful people. The Lord will give Israel as plunder to her enemies (2 Ki. 21:14; Jer. 15:13; 17:3; Ezek. 7:21). Israel and Judah will be given up to plunder (Ezek. 23:46). Assyria will seize plunder from Israel (Isa. 10:6). The word is used figuratively of Israel as sheep taken as plunder (Ezek. 34:8, 22, 28). The word is also used as part of a compound name Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, meaning "Speed the spoil" or "Hasten the booty" (Isa 8:1, 3). The name was given to Isaiah's son as a prophetic sign of coming judgment. (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary

**Baz** - 27x in 27v the NT - booty(2), plunder(10), prey(11), spoil(4). - Num. 14:3; Num. 14:31; Num. 31:32; Deut. 1:39; 2 Ki. 21:14; 2 Chr. 28:14; Isa. 8:1; Isa. 10:6; Isa. 33:23; Isa. 42:22; Jer. 2:14; Jer. 15:13; Jer. 17:3; Jer. 30:16; Jer. 49:32; Ezek. 7:21; Ezek. 23:46; Ezek. 25:7; Ezek. 26:5; Ezek. 29:19; Ezek. 34:8; Ezek. 34:22; Ezek. 34:28; Ezek. 36:4; Ezek. 36:5; Ezek. 38:12; Ezek. 38:13

**would it not be better for us to return to Egypt**- This is absolute insanity! As if the Pharaoh would welcome them with open arms! This shows the depraved, deceived thinking of these people! In their unbelief they now prefer enslavement in Egypt to freedom and prosperity in the Promised Land.

**THOUGHT** - Dear believer are you being tempted to go back to the oppression and enslavement of "Egypt" by returning to some sinful habit from which God had graciously and greatly delivered you? Have you encountered some **obstacle** that you fail to see as an **opportunity** for God to show Himself great and mighty

in your behalf? Confess your doubt (cf Ro 14:23+). Repent. Ask Him to revive you according to His Word (Ps 119:25). In Jesus' Name. Amen.

**FSB** - God forbade the Israelites from going back to Egypt (compare Deut 17:16). Israel was forced into slavery in Egypt; now, they willingly seek it out of fear and unbelief. Wishing to return to Egypt later came to be biblical symbol of apostasy (Isa 30:1–7).

**Bush on would it not be better** - Heb. "Were it not good?" It is observable how many obvious considerations they lose sight of in this proposition.

- As for instance, could they expect the presence of the pillar of cloud to conduct them on their way?
- Could they look to be supplied with manna from heaven?
- Would the Lord again divide the waters of the Red Sea for them?
- Could they anticipate a peaceful passage along the territories of the warlike nations that bordered their path?
- And should they even succeed in setting their feet again on Egyptian ground, would they find their ancient oppressors any more favorably disposed towards them?
- Would they have forgotten the death of their first-born?
- Would they have buried the remembrance of the fathers, children, brothers, husbands, who had perished in pursuing them?
- But thus infatuated are men when their hearts are set in them to do evil. Like brute-beasts, they mind only that which is present, and the office of memory and reason appears to be suspended.

#### Numbers 14:4 So they said to one another, "Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt."

BGT Numbers 14:4 κα ε παν τερος τ τ ρ δ μεν ρχηγ ν κα ποστρ ψωμεν ε ς Α γυπτον

NET Numbers 14:4 So they said to one another, "Let's appoint a leader and return to Egypt."

NLT Numbers 14:4 Then they plotted among themselves, "Let's choose a new leader and go back to Egypt!"

ESV Numbers 14:4 And they said to one another, "Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt."

NIV Numbers 14:4 And they said to each other, "We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt."

KJV Numbers 14:4 And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.

YLT Numbers 14:4 And they say one unto another, 'Let us appoint a head, and turn back to Egypt.'

LXE Numbers 14:4 And they said one to another, Let us make a ruler, and return into Egypt.

ASV Numbers 14:4 And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.

CSB Numbers 14:4 So they said to one another, "Let's appoint a leader and go back to Egypt."

NKJ Numbers 14:4 So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt."

NRS Numbers 14:4 So they said to one another, "Let us choose a captain, and go back to Egypt."

- De 17:16 28:68 Ne 9:16,17 Lu 17:32 Ac 7:39 Heb 10:38,39 11:15 2Pe 2:21,22
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Nehemiah 9:16-17 (primary reference = rebellion of Israel at Kadesh) "But they, our fathers, acted arrogantly; They became stubborn and would not listen to Your commandments. 17 "They refused to listen, And did not remember Your wondrous deeds which You had performed among them; **So they became stubborn and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt.** But You are a God of forgiveness, Gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness; And You did not forsake them.

**Comment** - The people must have gone ahead and chosen a different leader, though Numbers 14 contains no record of the actual appointment.

**REBELS REPUDIATE  
MOSES LEADERSHIP**

**So they said to one another** - Literally " "a man to his brother."

Other renderings on **appoint a leader** - Hebrew. "Let us give a head." Chaldee. "Let us appoint or constitute a head (principem)." Lxx. "Let us give (or appoint) a leader." Targum Jon. "Let us appoint a king over us for head."

**Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt** In Acts 7:39+ Stephen says "Our fathers were unwilling to be obedient to him (MOSES), but repudiated ([apotheo/apotheomai](#)) him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt." So clearly the desire for a new leader, is related to their heart problem. The heart of most interpersonal problems is usually a problem with the person's heart (or hearts)! These rebellious people do not want God leading them because to repudiate Moses was to repudiate the man God used to lead them out of Egypt. They may want the blessing of God but they don't want God Himself as is evident by their unwillingness to submit to His commandments which are not burdensome (cf 1 Jn 5:3+).

**Brian Bell** - At Horeb they said, "Let us make a calf" here, "let us make a leader." The calf was made because it had brought them out of Egypt; The leader was to be made in order to lead them back into Egypt!

If this were not recorded in Scripture, it would be difficult to believe. This generation had been enslaved and now they are so hardened in their hearts and deceived by their sin (cf Heb 3:13+) that they actually wanted to return to the oppressive enslavement that had prompted their crying out for relief in Exodus 2:23+ where "the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to God."

**NET Note on appoint** - The verb is נתן (natan, "to give"), but this verb has quite a wide range of meanings in the Bible. Here it must mean "to make," "to choose," "to designate" or the like. **Leader** - The word "head" (רֹאשׁ, ro'sh) probably refers to a tribal chief who was capable to judge and to lead to war

**Numbers 14:5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces in the presence of all the assembly of the congregation of the sons of Israel.**

BGT Numbers 14:5 καὶ πρὸς τὸ ἔδαφος ἐκείνου προσέπεσαν Μωϋσὲς καὶ Ἀαρὼν ἐνώπιον ὅλης τῆς συναγωγῆς υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ

NET Numbers 14:5 Then Moses and Aaron fell down with their faces to the ground before the whole assembled community of the Israelites.

NLT Numbers 14:5 Then Moses and Aaron fell face down on the ground before the whole community of Israel.

ESV Numbers 14:5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the people of Israel.

NIV Numbers 14:5 Then Moses and Aaron fell facedown in front of the whole Israelite assembly gathered there.

KJV Numbers 14:5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.

YLT Numbers 14:5 And Moses falleth -- Aaron also -- on their faces, before all the assembly of the company of the sons of Israel.

LXE Numbers 14:5 And Moses and Aaron fell upon their face before all the congregation of the children of Israel.

ASV Numbers 14:5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.

CSB Numbers 14:5 Then Moses and Aaron fell down with their faces to the ground in front of the whole assembly of the Israelite community.

NKJ Numbers 14:5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.

NRS Numbers 14:5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the Israelites.

- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Then** - This is an important time expression, for it marks a strategic sequence. First spies were lying. Then Israel was wailing. Then Israel was were wanting a new leader.

**Moses and Aaron fell on their faces in the presence of all the assembly of the congregation of the sons of Israel** This is something they would do often in the years ahead (Nu 16:4, 22, 45; Nu 20:6; Nu 22:31). Imagine this scene as the leaders fall on their face before the crowd calling for new leadership! The rebellious crowd has no understanding and/or concern regarding Moses' and Aaron's action which is done on behalf of the people. Clearly they were not just falling to fall but falling to pray and falling as a sign to the people of the greatness of their sin and the great danger they were in because of their continued grumbling!

**NET Note** - This action of Moses and Aaron is typical of them in the wilderness with the Israelites. The act shows self-abasement and deference before the sovereign LORD. They are not bowing before the people here, but in front of the people they bow before God. According to Num 17:6–13 this prostration is for the purpose of intercessory prayer. Here it prevents immediate wrath from God.

**George Bush** has an informative comment - Moses and Aaron, therefore, **fell** down upon their **faces** in the presence of the whole assembly, that the offenders might be awakened to a sense of their danger, and be excited to cry mightily to heaven for mercy. It is ever characteristic of a gracious heart to mourn for the sins of others as well as for its own. If we know the iniquities of others, and do not mourn for them, we in a sense make them our own, and thus become partakers of other men's sins. If we mourn for them, we discharge ourselves from responsibility on account of them; they are theirs, and not ours. Moses and Aaron, therefore, bowed themselves on this occasion in prostration both of body and spirit. The more ordinary posture of prayer among the nation of Israel seems to have been standing, but in cases of special emergency, when they were deeply distressed and exceedingly anxious for a favorable response, they resorted to kneeling; and in the utmost ardor and importunity of prayer, they fell upon their faces, as we learn by the example of our Lord himself, Mat. 26:39, Luke 22:41. The reason of this is, that true humiliation of heart prompts corresponding outward gestures, and when the soul is conscious to itself of its desert of hell, the man sinks himself as deep down in that direction as possible.

#### Related Resource:

- [What does the Bible say about mourning? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Grief, Grieving](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Grief; Grieve](#)

**Numbers 14:6 Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes;**

BGT Numbers 14:6 ησο ς δ το Ναυη κα Χαλεβ το Ιεφοννη τ ν κατασκευαμ νων τ ν γ ν δι ρρηξαν τ μτια α τ ν

NET Numbers 14:6 And Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, two of those who had investigated the land, tore their garments.

NLT Numbers 14:6 Two of the men who had explored the land, Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, tore their clothing.

ESV Numbers 14:6 And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes

NIV Numbers 14:6 Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes

KJV Numbers 14:6 And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes:

YLT Numbers 14:6 And Joshua son of Nun, and Caleb son of Jephunneh, of those spying the land, have rent their garments,

LXE Numbers 14:6 But Joshua the son of Naue, and Chaleb the son of Jephonne, of the number of them that spied out the land, rent their garments,

ASV Numbers 14:6 And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were of them that spied out the land, rent their clothes:

CSB Numbers 14:6 Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who scouted out the land, tore their clothes

NKJ Numbers 14:6 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;

NRS Numbers 14:6 And Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes

- **Joshua:** Nu 14:24,30,38 13:6,8,30
- **tore their clothes:** Ge 37:29,34 Ge 44:13 Jos 7:6 Jdg 11:35 2Sa 3:31 2Ki 18:37 Job 1:20 Joel 2:12,13 Mt 26:65
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## JOSHUA AND CALEB REND THEIR GARMENTS

**Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land** Caleb and Joshua were a minority on the Search Committee and yet they did not give in, even when the nation turned against them and their lives were in danger. They had faith in God, they knew God's will for the people, and they stood their ground. It is not important that we please others, but it is important that we please God. Like Caleb and Joshua, sometimes we must suffer because of the sins of others; but in the end, God will vindicate those who trust Him. (Acts 20:24; 1Co 15:58.)

**Tore their clothes** (see Ge 37:29,34 Ge 44:13 Jos 7:6 Jdg 11:35 2Sa 3:31 2Ki 18:37 Job 1:20) - **This was a** sign of mourning, grief and distress (cf Lv 10:6+). You might ask why Aaron did not tear their garments. Lev 21:10+ makes it clear that "The priest who is the highest among his brothers, on whose head the anointing oil has been poured and who has been consecrated to wear the garments, **shall not uncover his head nor tear his clothes.**" In Joel 2:13+ God said "rend your heart and not your garments" but in the case of **Joshua** and **Caleb** there is no doubt that their external rending reflected the internal rending of their hearts at the people's great sin. Furthermore, they (as well as Moses and Aaron) would not have quickly forgotten the divine punishment at the people's complaining in Numbers 11:1+ (this would have been easy to remember because they had even memorialized the place with the name Taberah - Nu 11:3).

**Bush on tore their clothes** - A well known token of excessive grief, sorrow, or indignation, prompted especially by the hearing of blasphemy against God. In Jer. 36:24, it is mentioned as a sign of culpable apathy on the part of Jehoiakim, and his servants, that on hearing the words of the Lord's prophets against Judah, "they were not afraid, nor rent their garments."

### Related Resources:

- [What does the Bible say about mourning? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Grief, Grieving](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Grief; Grieve](#)

---

### Question: [What did it mean to tear one's clothes in the Bible?](#)

**Answer:** The tearing of one's clothes is an ancient tradition among the Jews, and it is associated with mourning, grief, and loss. The first mention of someone tearing his garments is in Genesis. "When Reuben returned to the cistern and saw that Joseph was not there, he tore his clothes" (Genesis 37:29). A short time later, "Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned for his son many days" (Genesis 37:34) when he thought that Joseph had been killed.

Other biblical examples of men who tore their clothes to express pain and sorrow include David, when Saul and Jonathan were killed (2 Samuel 1:11–12); Elisha, when Elijah was taken up into heaven (2 Kings 2:11–12); Job, when he was bereft of all he possessed (Job 1:20); Jephthah, when he learned the result of his rash vow (Judges 11:34–35); Mordecai, when he learned of Haman's plot to destroy the Jews (Esther 4:1); Ahab, when Elijah pronounced a judgment against him (1 Kings 21:27); and Paul and Barnabas, when the people of Lystra began to worship them (Acts 14:14).

Sometimes, the tearing of one's clothes was accompanied by other signs of humility and grief, such as shaving one's head (Job 1:20), throwing dust on oneself (Job 2:12), and wearing sackcloth (2 Samuel 3:31).

There were times when people should have torn their garments but did not. The prophet Jeremiah received the Word of God

concerning a soon-coming judgment on Judah. Jeremiah faithfully wrote the prophecy in a scroll and delivered it to King Jehoiakim. The king listened to the first part of the prophecy, but then he took a knife, cut the scroll in pieces, and burned it in a brazier (Jeremiah 36:23). This impious act was met with chilling stoicism from his aides: "The king and all his attendants who heard all these words showed no fear, nor did they tear their clothes" (verse 24). If ever there was a time to tear one's clothes, this was it; but these men had no fear of God, no remorse, no conviction of sin.

It is interesting that the high priest was not allowed to tear his clothes: "The high priest, the one among his brothers who has had the anointing oil poured on his head and who has been ordained to wear the priestly garments, must not . . . tear his clothes" (Leviticus 21:10). The special nature of the high priestly office dictated a separation from some of the common customs, including that of mourning.

Tearing one's clothes was a public and powerful expression of grief in ancient times. The practice is continued today in the Jewish practice of *keriah*. Today's ritual is less spontaneous and more regulated: the garment is cut by a rabbi at a funeral service, as the bereaved recite words relating to God's sovereignty. One tradition says that the mourner must tear the clothing over the heart—a sign of a broken heart.

More important than outward shows of grief are true sorrow for sin and genuine repentance of the heart. The prophet Joel relayed God's command: "Rend your heart and not your garments" (Joel 2:13). The One who sees the heart requires more than external ritual. And the command came with a promise: "Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity" (Joel 2:13; cf. Psalm 34:18). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

---

### **C H Spurgeon - The report of the spies Numbers 14:6–7**

Every unguarded word you use, every inconsistent act, puts a slur on Christ. The world, you know, does not find fault with you—they lay it all to your Master. If you make a slip tomorrow, they will not say, "That is John Smith's human nature;" they will say, "That is John Smith's religion." They know better, but they will be sure to say it; they will be sure to put all the mischief at the door of Christ. Now, if you could bear the blame yourself you might bear it manfully; but do not allow Christ to bear the blame—do not suffer his reputation to be tarnished—do not permit his banner to be trampled in the dust. Then there is another consideration. You must remember, if you do wrong, the world will be quite sure to notice you. The world carries two bags: in the bag at the back they put all the Christian's virtues—in the bag in front they put all our mistakes and sins. They never think of looking at the virtues of holy men; all the courage of martyrs, all the fidelity of confessors, and all the holiness of saints, is nothing to them; but our iniquities are ever before them. Please do recollect, that wherever you are, as a Christian, the eyes of the world are upon you; the Argus eyes of an evil generation follow you everywhere. If a church is blind the world is not. It is a common proverb, "As sound asleep as a church," and a very true one, for most churches are sound asleep; but it would be a great falsehood if anyone were to say, "As sound asleep as the world," for the world is never asleep. Sleeping is left to the church. And remember, too, that the world always wears magnifying glasses to look at Christians' faults.

**Numbers 14:7 and they spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, "The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land.**

BGT Numbers 14:7 κα ε παν πρ ς π σαν συναγωγ ν υ ν Ισραηλ λ γοντες γ ν κατεσκεψ μεθα α τ ν γαθ σπιν σφ δρα σφ δρα

NET Numbers 14:7 They said to the whole community of the Israelites, "The land we passed through to investigate is an exceedingly good land.

NLT Numbers 14:7 They said to all the people of Israel, "The land we traveled through and explored is a wonderful land!

ESV Numbers 14:7 and said to all the congregation of the people of Israel, "The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceedingly good land.

NIV Numbers 14:7 and said to the entire Israelite assembly, "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good.

KJV Numbers 14:7 And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land.

YLT Numbers 14:7 and they speak unto all the company of the sons of Israel, saying, 'The land into which we



have passed over to spy it, is a very very good land;

LXE Numbers 14:7 and spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, The land which we surveyed is indeed extremely good.

ASV Numbers 14:7 and they spake unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceeding good land.

CSB Numbers 14:7 and said to the entire Israelite community: "The land we passed through and explored is an extremely good land.

NKJ Numbers 14:7 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.

NRS Numbers 14:7 and said to all the congregation of the Israelites, "The land that we went through as spies is an exceedingly good land.

- **exceedingly good land:** Nu 13:27 Dt 1:25 Dt 6:10,11 Dt 8:7-9
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 1:25 "Then they took some of the fruit of the land in their hands and brought it down to us; and they brought us back a report and said, '**It is a good land which the LORD our God is about to give us.**'

Deuteronomy 8:7-9 "For **the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land**, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills; 8 a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; 9 a land where you will eat food without scarcity, in which you will not lack anything; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper.

### JOSHUA AND CALEB SPEAK OUT BOLDLY

**and they spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel** - How 2 million plus could hear them is unclear.

**Bush** - Nothing could well be a stronger proof of their undaunted courage and incorruptible fidelity than daring thus, in the face of so vast a multitude, to bear a testimony directly opposite to that which had been given by the faithless spies.

**Saying, "The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land** - They had first hand witness to these facts! Note the land was not just "**good**" but "**exceedingly good!**" This should be enough to motivate a change of heart in the congregation, but their hearts had become hardened. That is what sin will do to our hearts Hebrews 3:13 stating we are to "But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened ([skleruno](#)) by the deceitfulness ([apate](#)) of sin." Sin had deceived the congregation into thinking their fate in Egypt would be better than their fate in the Promised Land!

**NET Note on exceedingly good** - The repetition of the adverb τᾶν (mé'od) is used to express this: "very, very [good]."

**Bush** - Heb. "Is a good land, very, very." Gr. "Exceeding, exceeding good;" that is, every way desirable. This is the mode of expressing the superlative degree in Hebrew.

**Numbers 14:8 "If the LORD is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us--a land which flows with milk and honey.**

BGT Numbers 14:8 ε ἂν περ ζῇ μὲν κριοὶ ἐσθλὰ μὲν ἐστὶν γὰρ τὰ τήν καὶ δοῦναι αὐτοῖς μὲν γὰρ τις σὺν οὐσὶν γὰρ καὶ μὲν

NET Numbers 14:8 If the LORD delights in us, then he will bring us into this land and give it to us— a land that is flowing with milk and honey.

NLT Numbers 14:8 And if the LORD is pleased with us, he will bring us safely into that land and give it to us. It is a rich land flowing with milk and honey.



ESV Numbers 14:8 If the LORD delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey.

NIV Numbers 14:8 If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us.

KJV Numbers 14:8 If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey.

YLT Numbers 14:8 if Jehovah hath delighted in us, then He hath brought us in unto this land, and hath given it to us, a land which is flowing with milk and honey;

LXE Numbers 14:8 If the Lord choose us, he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which flows with milk and honey.

ASV Numbers 14:8 If Jehovah delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it unto us; a land which floweth with milk and honey.

CSB Numbers 14:8 If the LORD is pleased with us, He will bring us into this land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and give it to us.

NKJ Numbers 14:8 "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."

NRS Numbers 14:8 If the LORD is pleased with us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey.

- **pleased:** De 10:15 2Sa 15:25,26 22:20 1Ki 10:9 Ps 22:8 147:10,11 Isa 62:4 Jer 32:41 Zep 3:17 Ro 8:31
- **a land which:** Nu 13:27

## THE MINORITY REPORT CONTINUES

**If the LORD is pleased with us** What pleases Yahweh? Hebrews 11:6+ says "**without faith** it is impossible to **please** Him, for he who comes to God **must believe** that He is and that **He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.**" Samuel said "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, **to obey is better than sacrifice**, And to heed than the fat of rams." (1Sa 15:22). In short Yahweh would have been **pleased with** the sons of Israel if they had taken Him at His Word and in their belief would have been willing to enter the Promised Land. The old Hymn says it best, "[Trust and obey](#), for there's no better way to be happy in Jesus, then to trust and obey."

**Bush** - The meaning is, if we are careful not to forfeit the divine favor by our remissness or disobedience.

**THOUGHT** - That sinful men can even potentially please a perfect God ought to make us fall on our face in wonder and awe and thankfulness. How great is our Father's love?

1 John 3:1+ - See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

**Then He will bring us into this land and give it to us** - Note the verbs indicate God would bring them in and God would give them the land. This was in essence His promise of the land to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but it was a promise that had to be obtained by faith, which they seem to be sorely lacking.

**A land which flows with milk and honey** - They amplify their description of **an exceedingly good land** with the picture of a land flowing with **milk and honey** (which even the 10 spies acknowledged in Nu 13:27+). God is not asking them to believe in something horrible, but in something exceedingly wonderful.

**NET Note on milk and honey** - The subjective genitives "milk and honey" are symbols of the wealth of the land, second only to bread. Milk was a sign of such abundance (Gen 49:12; Isa 7:21, 22). Because of the climate the milk would thicken quickly and become curds, eaten with bread or turned into butter. The honey mentioned here is the wild honey (see Deut 32:13; Judg 14:8–9). It signified sweetness, or the finer things of life (Ezek 3:3).

### Related Resource:

- Why was Israel called the land of milk and honey?

---

**G Campbell Morgan** - These are the outstanding words of the minority report. They reveal the difference in viewpoint between the minority and the majority. These men saw all the others saw, and more. They had clear apprehension of the goodness of the land; they were by no means blind to the formidable nature of the difficulties that stood between them and possession. But they saw God. They started with that vision, and saw everything else in its light. Therefore the enemies were "as bread" for them; their defences were removed, if indeed Jehovah were with them. Yet these men also saw that there was a condition and they named it in the words: "If Jehovah delight in us." In these words there was surely the recognition of a fact, and the statement of a responsibility. The fact was patent. Jehovah did delight in them. He had ransomed them from slavery, brought them to Himself, provided for all their need, promised them this very land. What further proofs could they have of His delight in them? Nevertheless, they were in danger of placing themselves outside the benefits of that delight, by their rebellion and their unworthy fear. These things were surely written for our learning. Every call of God to His people is a call to those in whom He delights. Therefore they should know that no difficulties need daunt them. They are not called to meet them in their own strength. He will be with them in the path of obedience. (Life Applications from Every Chapter of the Bible)

---

## Chimp Eden

If the Lord delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us. —Numbers 14:8

Today's Scripture: Numbers 14:1-10

Eugene Cussons rescues chimpanzees. Orphaned by those in the business of bush-meat trade and taken from the jungle as infants, many have lived their entire lives confined in a space smaller than a prison cell. When Cussons arrives to take them to the game reserve he calls "Chimp Eden," he often finds them hostile and untrusting.

"These chimps don't realize that I am one of the good guys," Cussons says. When he tries to put them into a smaller crate for the trip to their new home, they put up quite a fight. "They don't know that I'm going to take them back to Chimp Eden and give them a life so much better."

On a much grander scale, God's offer to liberate us from the slavery of sin is often met with resistance. When He rescued the children of Israel from Egypt, God took them through difficult places that caused them to doubt His good intentions. "Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" they cried (Num. 14:3).

On our journey of faith, there are times when the "freedom" of sin that we left behind is more appealing than the restrictions of faith that lie ahead. We must trust the protective boundaries found in God's Word as the only way to get to the place of ultimate freedom. By: Julie Ackerman Link

Sin's lure may look like freedom But in its grip we're bound; It's when we're bound to Jesus Real freedom will be found. —D. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Obedience to God is the key to freedom.

**Numbers 14:9 "Only do not rebel against the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they will be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them."**

BGT Numbers 14:9 ἂλ π το κυρ ου μ ποστ ται γ νεσθε με ς δ μ φοβηθη τε τ ν λα ν τ ς γ ς τι κατ βρωμα μ ν σιν φ στηκεν γ ρ και ς π α τ ν δ κ ριος ν μ ν μ φοβηθη τε α το ς

NET Numbers 14:9 Only do not rebel against the LORD, and do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection has turned aside from them, but the LORD is with us. Do not fear them!"

NLT Numbers 14:9 Do not rebel against the LORD, and don't be afraid of the people of the land. They are only helpless prey to us! They have no protection, but the LORD is with us! Don't be afraid of them!"

ESV Numbers 14:9 Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection is removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them."

NIV Numbers 14:9 Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them."

KJV Numbers 14:9 Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not.

YLT Numbers 14:9 only, against Jehovah rebel not ye: and ye, fear not ye the people of the land, for our bread they are; their defence hath turned aside from off them, and Jehovah is with us; fear them not.'

LXE Numbers 14:9 Only depart not from the Lord; and fear ye not the people of the land, for they are meat for us; for the season of prosperity is departed from them, but the Lord is among us: fear them not.

ASV Numbers 14:9 Only rebel not against Jehovah, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is removed from over them, and Jehovah is with us: fear them not.

CSB Numbers 14:9 Only don't rebel against the LORD, and don't be afraid of the people of the land, for we will devour them. Their protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us. Don't be afraid of them!"

NKJ Numbers 14:9 "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."

NRS Numbers 14:9 Only, do not rebel against the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they are no more than bread for us; their protection is removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them."

- **rebel:** De 9:7,23,24 Isa 1:2 63:10 Da 9:5,9 Php 1:27
- **do not fear:** De 7:18 20:3
- **prey:** Nu 24:8 De 32:42 Ps 14:4 74:14
- **protection:** Ps 91:1 121:5 Isa 30:2,3 32:2 Jer 48:45
- **the Lord:** Ge 48:21 Ex 33:16 De 7:21 Dt 20:1-4 Dt 31:6,8 Jos 1:5 Jud 1:22 2Ch 13:12 15:2 20:17 32:8 Ps 46:1,2,7,11 Isa 8:9,10 41:10 Mt 1:23 Ro 8:31
- **do not fear:** Isa 41:14
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Deuteronomy 7:16 "You shall **consume** (Heb - [akal](#) = eat) all the peoples whom the LORD your God will deliver to you; your eye shall not pity them, nor shall you serve their gods, for that would be a snare to you.

Numbers 24:8 (BALAAM'S PROPHECY OF ISRAEL) "God brings him (ISRAEL) out of Egypt, He is for him like the horns of the wild ox. **He will devour** (Heb - [akal](#) = eat) the nations who are his adversaries, And will crush their bones in pieces, And shatter them with his arrows.

## PROHIBITIONS AND A PROMISE

**Only do not rebel against the LORD**(stop rebelling) **and do not fear**(stop fearing) **the people of the land** - Here we see that rebellion against Yahweh is associated with fear of men. The latter can cause one to rebel against God. Years later Solomon would echo their words in Pr 29:25 writing "The fear of man brings a snare, But he who trusts in the LORD will be exalted." Israel was in grave danger of being ensnared in their fear of the giants, etc. in the land.

This passage begins and ends with the exhortation "Do not fear!"

**Bush** - Lxx "Be ye not revolvers, or apostates, from the Lord." Give way to no murmuring or discontented thoughts; nor think or speak of returning to Egypt.

Joshua and Caleb call on Israel to choose faith over fear.

**For** - Term of explanation. Explaining why Israel did not need to fear the inhabitants of the Promised Land.

**They will be our prey** - NET = "for they are bread for us." **Prey** is [lechem](#) which means "**bread**" and presumably is meant to convey to the people the graphic picture that Israel could destroy the people of the land as easily as they could eat bread! And this could also be a rebuttal to the declaration by the 10 spies that the land "**devours** (Heb - [akal](#) = eat cf Dt 7:16 above; Lxx - [katesthio](#) = consumes) **its inhabitants**." (Nu 13:32+) It was as if they were saying "[Au contraire](#), we will **devour**" them!" Joshua and Caleb are speaking prophetically at this point, declaring what God would do for Israel when they entered the Promised Land. (lechem = bread): Israel is assured that the conquest will be as easy as eating bread (cf. Nu 13:32; Nu 24:8; Dt 7:16; Jer 10:25; Ps 14:4).

**Wiersbe** - The ten unbelieving spies argued that the land of Canaan would "eat up" the Jewish people (13:32), but Joshua and

Caleb saw the Canaanites as “bread” for the Jewish army to “eat up”.

**FSB on be our prey** - The Hebrew phrase used here, *lachmenu hem*, presents an unusual metaphor. The idea may be that the toil of the people living in Canaan will put food in Israel's mouth. Alternately, the metaphor may be comparing the destruction inherent in the consumption of food with the destruction brought by war. Caleb and Joshua also emphasize that the people are without real protection since Yahweh is on Israel's side, so the metaphor may reflect their expectation of the ease of conquest. **Food on the plate typically does not fight back before it is eaten.**

**George Bush on be our prey** - Heb. “They are our bread.” That is, we shall devour and consume them as a hungry man does bread. As if they should say, We seemed, indeed, but as grasshoppers to them, but we say unto you that they shall be bread for us; we shall utterly destroy them. The expression is doubtless designed to stand in direct opposition to what was said by the faithless spies, ch. 13:32, “The land through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof.” Gr. “They shall be food for us.

**Their protection has been removed from them - Protection** (see tsel below) is often rendered “shadow” (or shade) and in the hot arid region of Kadesh Joshua's use of this term would have graphically illustrated the protection (shade) without which life could not exist in the intense desert sun. Their adversaries would have no protection, whereas Israel would have the ultimate protection of the Protector Himself with them (**Immanuel**)! Joshua and Caleb are painting a very clear picture, that Israel will not lose when they battle the people of the land. Their clear pictures reminds me of the old comic strip “**Ripley's - Believe it or Not!**” Sadly Israel did not believe their words!

**Protection (06738)(tsel)** means shade or shadow and figuratively speaks of a defense, protection or refuge. Tsel frequently used in Psalms in the phrase “in the shadow of Your (Jehovah's) wings.” (Ps. 17:8; Ps. 36:7; Ps. 57:1; cf Ps 121:5 “The LORD is your shade”, Ps 91:1 = “shadow of the Almighty”). Hartley adds that “Shade, even that of a boulder, gives some relief from the heat of the day, especially for the slave (cf. Job 7:2). “Under the shadow of one's roof” connotes that the head of the house provides protection for his guests (Genesis 19:8, ASV). Similarly a strong nation may offer someone or another nation shelter (Isaiah 30:2f.; cf. Ezekiel 17:23). But God may remove a nation's shelter or defenses in order to enable his people to conquer them (Numbers 14:9). On the other hand shadow serves as a negative metaphor when it is viewed as ephemeral and fleeting. Man's life is compared to a shadow, for it has no permanence and flees quickly away (1 Chron. 29:15). Shadow also describes the failing condition of one who is enduring a sickness (Job 17:7). Yahweh is the shade or the source of protection for his people (Psalm 121:5f.; Isaiah 25:4). Therefore the Psalmist prays that God may hide him under “the shadow of his wings” (Psalm 17:8; cf. Psalm 36:7 [H 8]; Psalm 91:1). God promises to hide the suffering servant in the shadow of his hand in order that he can proclaim his penetrating message for a period of time (Isaiah 49:2): And in the latter days Yahweh's glory will return to Jerusalem. It will be a shade from the heat and a shelter from the other elements (Isaiah 4:6; cf. Hosea 14:8). (TWOT)

Tsel - 53x in 51v - protection(4), shade(15), shadow(30), shadows(3), shelter(1). Gen. 19:8; Num. 14:9; Jdg. 9:15; Jdg. 9:36; 2 Ki. 20:9; 2 Ki. 20:10; 2 Ki. 20:11; 1 Chr. 29:15; Job 7:2; Job 8:9; Job 14:2; Job 17:7; Job 40:22; Ps. 17:8; Ps. 36:7; Ps. 57:1; Ps. 63:7; Ps. 80:10; Ps. 91:1; Ps. 102:11; Ps. 109:23; Ps. 121:5; Ps. 144:4; Eccl. 6:12; Eccl. 7:12; Eccl. 8:13; Cant. 2:3; Cant. 2:17; Cant. 4:6; Isa. 4:6; Isa. 16:3; Isa. 25:4; Isa. 25:5; Isa. 30:2; Isa. 30:3; Isa. 32:2; Isa. 34:15; Isa. 38:8; Isa. 49:2; Isa. 51:16; Jer. 6:4; Jer. 48:45; Lam. 4:20; Ezek. 17:23; Ezek. 31:6; Ezek. 31:12; Ezek. 31:17; Hos. 4:13; Hos. 14:7; Jon. 4:5; Jon. 4:6

**NET on protection** - Heb “their shade.” The figure compares the shade from the sun with the protection from the enemy. It is also possible that the text is alluding to their deities here.

**George Bush** - The original Hebrew (צלם tzillâm) is far more expressive:—“Their shadow, or shade, has departed from them.” That is, their defence, covert, protection, rendered by the Chald. “Their strength has departed from them.” Vulg. “All aid or protection has gone from them.” The Gr. has a rendering peculiar to itself:—“For their time (i. e. season of prosperity) has withdrawn from them;” implying that their iniquities had come to the full, and they had nothing more to hope from the Divine favor. Among the old English versions, Matthews', Bishop's, and Geneva have, “Their shield is departed from them.” Comp. Ps. 91:1, “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” Ps. 121:5, 6, “The Lord is thy keeper; the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.” The metaphor seems to have been derived originally from the effects of the cloudy pillar in affording a cool and refreshing shade from the ardors of the sun as they journeyed through the desert. But the idea of protection was equally associated with this marvellous cloud, in which the divine presence was supposed to be especially resident.

**and the LORD is with us** - They are saying Jehovah is **Immanuel, God with us**! That statement should have been like an divine exclamation point in their closing argument as they made the case for why Israel should go forward in faith! We see Moses repeating this truth to the Second Generation preparing to go in and conquer the Promised Land...

Deuteronomy 7:21 **"You shall not dread them, for the LORD your God is in your midst, a great and awesome God.**

Deuteronomy 20:1-4 "When you go out to battle against your enemies and see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt, **is with you.** 2 "When you are approaching the battle, the priest shall come near and speak to the people. 3 He shall say to them, 'Hear, O Israel, you are approaching the battle against your enemies today. Do not be fainthearted. Do not be afraid, or panic, or tremble before them, 4 for **the LORD your God is the one who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.**'

Deuteronomy 31:6; 8 "Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, **for the LORD your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you.**"...**"The LORD is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you.** Do not fear or be dismayed."

**NIVSB** - There are no walls, no fortifications, no factors of size or bearing, and certainly no gods that can withstand the onslaught of God's people when the Lord is with them.

**Do not fear them** - In the passages above from Deuteronomy note that the "antidote" for fear of the people in the Promised Land, is a firm conviction that God was on the side of Israel! This is the second time Joshua and Caleb give this prohibition (they recognize the danger of fear in the camp), but now it is buttressed with the truth that the LORD is with them. That should squelch all arguments and quell all fears. Israel had no reason to fear the giants, for God was bigger than the giants. God made the giants and God had removed their protection!

#### **Related Resource:**

- [How to Handle Fear](#) - four part series

---

#### **David Jeremiah - WE CAN DO IT! NUMBERS 14:9 The LORD is with us. Do not fear them.**

I love the story of the Israelites when they were in Kadesh Barnea (Numbers 13). Moses sent spies into the land to check it out. The majority came back and reported, "We can't do it. We checked it out, and we are like grasshoppers in front of the giants of the land." But Joshua and Caleb went to the same land, saw the same giants, and probably experienced the same initial fear, but they said, "We're no match for them, but they are no match for God. We can do it!" Joshua and Caleb were honored for their faith. That's why they got to go into the Promised Land while the other spies didn't.

When you worship God, when you praise Him, when you honor Him, when you hallow His name, your vision will be expanded. You will become a more visionary businessperson, a more visionary spouse, a more visionary parent. You will see life not in the little restricted areas that are yours, but you will begin to see that part of your life expand into that which God wants to do through you. (Sanctuary)

---

#### **Not Fear but Faith**

The Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them. Numbers 14:9

Today's Scripture: Numbers 13:25–14:9

"My husband was offered a promotion in another country, but I feared leaving our home, so he reluctantly declined the offer," my friend shared with me. She explained how apprehension over such a big change kept her from embracing a new adventure, and that she sometimes wondered what they missed in not moving.

The Israelites let their anxieties paralyze them when they were called to inhabit a rich and fertile land that flowed "with milk and honey" (Ex. 33:3). When they heard the reports of the powerful people in large cities (Num. 13:28), they started to fear. The majority of the Israelites rejected the call to enter the land.

But Joshua and Caleb urged them to trust in the Lord, saying, "Do not be afraid of the people in the land" for the "Lord is with us" (14:9). Although the people there appeared large, they could trust the Lord to be with them.

My friend wasn't commanded to move to another country like the Israelites were, yet she regretted letting fear close off the opportunity. What about you—do you face a fearful situation? If so, know that the Lord is with you and will guide you. With His never-failing love, we can move forward in faith. By: Amy Boucher Pye ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Loving Father, may I not let my fear stop me from following You, for I know that You will always love me and will never leave me.

Fear can paralyze but faith propels us to follow God.

---

## Trouble Ahead

Only do not rebel against the Lord, nor fear the people of the land; . . . the Lord is with us. Do not fear them. —  
Numbers 14:9

Today's Scripture: Numbers 13:25–14:9

Inevitably, trouble will invade our lives: A bad report from a medical test, the betrayal of a trusted friend, a child who rejects us, or a spouse who leaves us. The list of possibilities is long, but there are only two options: forge ahead on our own, or turn to God.

Flying solo into the face of trouble is not a good idea. It can lead to bad behavior patterns, blaming God, and retreating into defeat. Like the Israelites, we may spin out of control and into despair (Num. 14:1-4).

When the majority of the spies brought a report of intimidating giants and dangers ahead, they used the pronoun **we** seven times with no reference to the Lord (Nu 13:31-33+). The Israelites were on the cusp of the ultimate blessing that God promised to them. They were eyewitnesses to the miracles in Egypt and their feet had walked the dry bottom of the Red Sea in jaw-dropping victory. God's faithfulness had been amazingly evident. What short memories! What disappointing faithlessness! Sadly, they turned their backs on God and left the blessing behind.

Caleb and Joshua, on the other hand, opted to turn to the Lord with this confidence: "The Lord is with us" (14:9). When your giants show up, what will you do? By: Joe Stowell ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

In this world of sin and trouble  
Where so many ills are known,  
If I shun the ways of evil,  
I am kept by Him alone.  
—Smith

God's presence is a life preserver that keeps the soul from sinking in a sea of trouble.

---

## Lurking Lions

The Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them. Numbers 14:9

Today's Scripture & Insight: Numbers 14:1–9

When I was young, my dad would "scare" us by hiding in the bush and growling like a lion. Even though we lived in rural Ghana in the 1960s, it was almost impossible that a lion lurked nearby. My brother and I would laugh and seek out the source of the noise, thrilled that playtime with Dad had arrived.

One day a young friend came for a visit. As we played, we heard the familiar growl. Our friend screamed and ran. My brother and I knew the sound of my father's voice—any "danger" was merely a phantom lion—but a funny thing happened. We ran with her. My dad felt terrible that our friend had been frightened, and my brother and I learned not to be influenced by the panicked reaction of others.

Caleb and Joshua stand out as men unfazed by the panic of others. As Israel was poised to enter the Promised Land, Moses commissioned 12 scouts to spy out the region. They all saw a beautiful territory, but 10 focused on the obstacles and discouraged the entire nation (Num. 13:27-33). In the process, they started a panic (14:1-4). Only Caleb and Joshua accurately assessed the situation (vv. 6-9). They knew the history of their Father and trusted Him to bring them success.

Some "lions" pose a genuine threat. Others are phantoms. Regardless, as followers of Jesus our confidence is in the One whose voice and deeds we know and trust. By: Tim Gustafson ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, we face many fears today. Help us distinguish between real danger and empty threats, and help us trust You with all of it. May we live not in fear, but in faith.

The wicked flee though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion. Proverbs 28:1



**Numbers 14:10 But all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Then the glory of the LORD appeared in the tent of meeting to all the sons of Israel.**

BGT Numbers 14:10 κα ε πεν π σα συναγωγ καταλιθοβολ σαι α το ς ν λ θοις κα δ ξα κυρ ου φθη ν νεφ λ π τ ς σκην ς το μαρτυρ ου ν π σι το ς υ ο ς Ισραηλ

NET Numbers 14:10 However, the whole community threatened to stone them. But the glory of the LORD appeared to all the Israelites at the tent of meeting.

NLT Numbers 14:10 But the whole community began to talk about stoning Joshua and Caleb. Then the glorious presence of the LORD appeared to all the Israelites at the Tabernacle.

ESV Numbers 14:10 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.

NIV Numbers 14:10 But the whole assembly talked about stoning them. Then the glory of the LORD appeared at the Tent of Meeting to all the Israelites.

KJV Numbers 14:10 But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel.

YLT Numbers 14:10 And all the company say to stone them with stones, and the honour of Jehovah hath appeared in the tent of meeting unto all the sons of Israel.

LXE Numbers 14:10 And all the congregation bade stone them with stones; and the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud on the tabernacle of witness to all the children of Israel.

ASV Numbers 14:10 But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of Jehovah appeared in the tent of meeting unto all the children of Israel.

CSB Numbers 14:10 While the whole community threatened to stone them, the glory of the LORD appeared to all the Israelites at the tent of meeting.

NKJ Numbers 14:10 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.

NRS Numbers 14:10 But the whole congregation threatened to stone them. Then the glory of the LORD appeared at the tent of meeting to all the Israelites.

- **But all:** Ex 17:4 1Sa 30:6 Mt 23:37 Ac 7:52,59
- **the glory:** Nu 16:19,42 20:6 Ex 16:7,10 24:16,17 40:34 Lev 9:23
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **YAHWEH COMES TO THE RESCUE OF HIS FAITHFUL MEN**

**But** - Term of contrast. This is another horrible change of direction (so to speak)!

**All the congregation said to stone them with stones.** (cf. 1Sa30:6; 1Ki12:18) The people's reaction recalls Moses' words in Exodus 17:4+ when "Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "What shall I do to this people? A little more and they will stone me."

**THOUGHT** - When a person walks by sight and not by faith, they do not have sense enough to know who their true friends are. They tend to turn against those who can help them the most, including their parents, pastor, and Christian friends (ED: IN FACT THEY MAY WANT TO STONE THEM!!!). Israel is turning against their true friends who have told them the truth, but they will not realize it until the damage is done and it's too late. The Forward Four was leading them to do the will of God. True friends will want you to do the will of God in your life. God's will is vital if you want to be a victorious Christian.(Mattoon)

**Bush** - They would thus reward the exemplary fidelity and firmness of these true-hearted servants of the Most High, who were mainly intent upon turning from the heads of their brethren the storm of divine displeasure which they saw impending. "Though Moses and Aaron entreat upon their faces, and Joshua and Caleb persuade, yet they move nothing. The obstinate multitude, grown more violent with opposing, is ready to return them stones for their prayers. Such have been ever the thanks of fidelity and truth.



Crossed wickedness proves desperate; and, instead of yielding, seeks for revenge. Nothing is so hateful to a resolute sinner, as good counsel.”—Bishop. Hall.

When we walk by sight and not by faith,  
we don't have sense enough to know who our real friends are,  
and we turn against those who can help us the most.

-- Warren Wiersbe

**Then** - When?

**NET Note** - The vav (ו) on the noun “glory” indicates a strong contrast, one that interrupts their threatened attack.

**The glory of the LORD appeared in the tent of meeting to all the sons of Israel-** This is an interesting description because we know the pillar of cloud was always over the Tabernacle but day. Now the glory was actually in the Tent of meeting. The very truth that Joshua and Caleb had just promised to the nation (**the LORD is with us**) they were now experiencing and one would have thought any thinking Israelite would have seen this “visual” demonstration of the truth of Nu 14:9!

**THOUGHT** - Those who, like Caleb and Joshua, faithfully expose themselves for God, are (1) sure to be attacked and (2) are sure to be taken under His protection, and hidden from the rage of men. One thinks of the 3 Hebrew men in Daniel 3 when threatened with the command to “bow or burn” to which they replied

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. 17 “If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. 18 “But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.” ...25 He said, “Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!” 26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the furnace of blazing fire; he responded and said, “Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, come out, you servants of the Most High God, and come here!” Then Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego came out of the midst of the fire.(Da 3:16-18, 25-26+)

**NET Note** - **The glory of the LORD** refers to the reality of the LORD's presence in a manifestation of his power and splendor. It showed to all that God was a living God. The appearance of the glory indicated blessing for the obedient, but disaster for the disobedient.

**FSB** on the **tent of meeting** - The exact meaning of the Hebrew phrase used here, *ohel mo'ed*, is unknown. It may refer exclusively to the tabernacle, to a different, simpler structure, or both. It is possible that the simpler structure gave way to the larger tabernacle, and the term was used interchangeably.

**George Bush** - It would seem that their murderous purpose would have been accomplished had they not been deterred by a sudden manifestation of the divine glory, which spoke to their perception the language of fearful threatening. The Shekinah, which usually abode within the Tabernacle, now displayed itself in connection with the cloudy pillar, that seems on this occasion to have lowered itself from its usual elevation, and taken its station immediately over or upon the Tabernacle, and not in it, as we read in our version; as otherwise it could not have been seen by the congregation, as we are nevertheless assured it was. Gr. “And the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud on the tabernacle of witness.” The great and glorious Being, who was invisibly present while the sin conceived in their hearts was working out its fruits, now shows himself to have been all along cognizant of its operation, and he becomes fearfully manifest. Thus the guilty conscience realizes the divine Being present to itself when a sinful act has been committed as it does not before. The pain of remorse is aggravated by the reflection, that the Lord might have been previously seen with the eye of faith to the prevention of that sin which now fills the soul with anguish. Another inference drawn from the narrative is, that the Lord is prone to appear in behalf of his servants when reduced to their utmost straits. For wise ends he withholds the sensible tokens of his presence till danger is fully ripe, till their condition seems absolutely hopeless, and then he triumphantly comes forth from his secret place and rescues and vindicates them.

**Brian Bell** - God waited until the people expressed a desire to replace Moses and return to Egypt; then He began to act. (Warren Wiersbe; Outlines in O.T.) But within 10 verse: The people wept, complained, looked back to Egypt, wanted a new leader, & even threatened to stone Caleb & Joshua. Such are the evidences of unbelief. Faith looks ahead with courage; unbelief looks back with complaint. Faith unites the people of God; unbelief looks for someone to blame.

**Wiersbe** on the **will of God** - The will of God is the expression of the love of God for His people, for His plans come from His heart (Ps. 33:11). God's will isn't punishment, it's nourishment (John 4:31–34); not painful chains that shackle us (Ps. 2:3), but loving cords that tie us to God's heart so He can lead us in the right way (Hosea 11:4). Those who rebel against God's will are denying His

wisdom, questioning His love, and tempting the Lord to discipline them. Sometimes God has to put a “bit and bridle” on rebels in order to control them (Ps. 32:8–9), and that’s not enjoyable.

God wants us to know His will (Acts 22:14), understand His will (Eph. 5:17), delight in His will (Ps. 40:8), and obey His will from the heart (Eph. 6:6). As we yield to the Lord, trust Him, and obey Him, we “prove by experience” what the will of God is (Rom. 12:1–2). The Spirit of God opens up the Word of God to us and helps us discern what God wants us to do. But it’s important that we are willing to **obey**, or He won’t teach us what we need to know (John 7:17). The British Anglican minister F.W. Robertson (1816–1853) was right when he said that **obedience was the organ of spiritual knowledge**. If we aren’t willing to obey, God isn’t obligated to reveal His will to us (Be Counted)

“If anyone is **willing** to do His **will**, he **will** know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself.”

-- Jesus Christ (Jn 7:17)

#### Related Resources:

- [Shekinah glory cloud](#)
- Garland's [The Abiding Presence of God](#)

**Numbers 14:11 The LORD said to Moses, "How long will this people spurn Me? And how long will they not believe in Me, despite all the signs which I have performed in their midst?"**

NET Numbers 14:11 The LORD said to Moses, "How long will this people despise me, and how long will they not believe in me, in spite of the signs that I have done among them?"

NLT Numbers 14:11 And the LORD said to Moses, "How long will these people treat me with contempt? Will they never believe me, even after all the miraculous signs I have done among them?"

ESV Numbers 14:11 And the LORD said to Moses, "How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them?"

NIV Numbers 14:11 The LORD said to Moses, "How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the miraculous signs I have performed among them?"

KJV Numbers 14:11 And the LORD said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them?

YLT Numbers 14:11 And Jehovah saith unto Moses, 'Until when doth this people despise Me? and until when do they not believe in Me, for all the signs which I have done in its midst?'

LXE Numbers 14:11 And the Lord said to Moses, How long does this people provoke me? and how long do they refuse to believe me for all the signs which I have wrought among them?

ASV Numbers 14:11 And Jehovah said unto Moses, How long will this people despise me? and how long will they not believe in me, for all the signs which I have wrought among them?

CSB Numbers 14:11 The LORD said to Moses, "How long will these people despise Me? How long will they not trust in Me despite all the signs I have performed among them?"

NKJ Numbers 14:11 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?"

NRS Numbers 14:11 And the LORD said to Moses, "How long will this people despise me? And how long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them?"

- **How long will this:** Nu 14:27 Ex 10:3 16:28 Pr 1:22 Jer 4:14 Ho 8:5 Zec 8:14 Mt 17:17
- **spurn:** Nu 14:23 De 9:7,8,22,23 Ps 95:8 Heb 3:8,16
- **believe:** De 1:30-32 Ps 78:22,32,41,42 106:24 Mk 9:19 Joh 10:38 12:37 Joh 15:24 Heb 3:18
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 1:30-32 'The LORD your God who goes before you will Himself fight on your behalf, just as He did for you in Egypt before your eyes, 31 and in the wilderness where you saw how the LORD your God carried you, just as a man carries his son, in all the way which you have walked until you came to this place.' 32 "But for all this, **you did not trust** (see [aman](#) same word used here in Nu 14:11) the LORD your God,

Deuteronomy 6:16 "You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested Him at Massah.

Deuteronomy 9:23 "When the LORD sent you from Kadesh-barnea, saying, 'Go up and possess the land which I have given you,' then you rebelled against the command of the LORD your God; you neither **believed** (see [aman](#) same word used here in Nu 14:11) Him nor listened to His voice. (ED: Note how "listening" is linked to belief - listening is not just hearing but heeding, responding in faith to what is heard).

Jude 1:5 Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed **those who did not believe**.

Psalms 78:22 Because they **did not believe** in God And did not **trust** in His salvation.

Hebrews 3:8-13 DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME, AS IN THE DAY OF TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS, 9 WHERE YOUR FATHERS TRIED Me BY TESTING Me, AND SAW MY WORKS FOR FORTY YEARS. 10 "THEREFORE I WAS ANGRY WITH THIS GENERATION, AND SAID, 'THEY ALWAYS GO ASTRAY IN THEIR HEART, AND THEY DID NOT KNOW MY WAYS'; 11 AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, 'THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.'" 12 Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. 13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

**The LORD said to Moses, "How long will this people spurn Me? - NIV** "How long will these people treat me with contempt? Bush says "Heb. "Despise, blaspheme, or contemptuously treat me." Gr. "Irritate me." Vulg. "Detract me." The general import is that of contemning, with special marks of indignity. It occurs Is. 5:24, 52:5, Prov. 1:30, 15:5."

Like a stubborn child, the Jews never seemed to learn their lesson.

Instead of pleasing the Lord who had done so much for them, they provoked Him to anger and dared Him to act.

**Spurn** (despise, reject, blaspheme) ([05006](#))([naas](#)) means to revile, to scorn, to reject, despise, abhor (hate extremely or with contempt), spurn, treat with contempt, revile. God tells Moses His people "**spurn**" Him (Nu 14:11) and that those who "**spurned**" Him would not enter the promised land (Nu 14:23) The rebellion of Korah and those with him in effect "**spurned** the LORD" (Nu 16:30) by challenging Moses' divinely appointed role as leader (Nu 16:1-3). God prophesied that His people would "**spurn**" Him by turning to other gods and serving them and thus breaking His (Mosaic) covenant (Dt 31:20). Israel made Jehovah jealous with strange gods, provoking Him to anger (even sacrificing to demons!) and thus Jehovah "**spurned** them because of the provocation." (Dt 32:19, context Dt 32:16-18) The sons of Eli were worthless men who did not know Jehovah and as a result "**despised** the offering of the LORD." (1Sa 2:17). Naas is used in the Psalms of a greedy man who "spurns Jehovah" (Ps 10:3), the wicked who "spurned God" (Ps 10:13), "the enemy" who spurned His Name (Ps 74:10), foolish people who "spurned" His Name (Ps 74:18) and His people who "spurned the counsel of the Most High." (Ps 107:11). Israel was disciplined because they "**despised** the word of the Holy One of Israel" (Isa. 5:24, cp Isa 1:4 "**despised** the Holy One of Israel").

**NET Note on spurn** - The verb נָאַס (na'ats) means "to condemn, spurn" (BDB 610 s.v.). Coats suggests that in some contexts the word means actual rejection or renunciation (Rebellion in the Wilderness, 146, 7). This would include the idea of distaste.

**And how long will they not believe in Me,** "The unbelief now evinced is frequently alluded to elsewhere as the grand procuring cause of their exclusion from the land of promise." (Bush) The Lxx translates [aman](#) with [pisteuo](#) which is in the present tense which can be translated "how long they **did not keep on believing** in Him."

Compare Jn 3:36+ = "He who **believes** (present tense = keeps on believing) in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

So Israel did have a form of belief but it was only transient and was not genuine belief unto salvation. For example observe Ex 14:31+ which says "When Israel saw the great power which the LORD had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in His servant Moses." At first glance that sounds like they were "believers" (analogous to someone who is born again in the New Testament). But Here in Numbers 14:11 we see God's own assessment of the authenticity of their belief, for He says **they do not believe in Him** (And the word for "**not**" in the Lxx is "ou" signifying absolute negation = they

"absolutely did not believe in Him!") And so their "belief" in Exodus 14:31+ was not unto salvation. In the Septuagint **believe** is present tense speaking of continual belief. In other words God is asking how long they would continue in unbelief! I would submit that this statement by God supports the premise that Israel's belief in Exodus 14:31 was not belief that led to genuine salvation. The statement by the writer of Hebrews would also support this premise that Israel's belief was not saving belief writing

"For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they (CONTEXT SPEAKING OF ISRAEL IN THE OT) also; but the word they heard **did not profit them**, (WHY NOT?) because it was **not united by faith** in those who heard." (Hebrews 4:2+)

**Comment:** - Israel's problem was a faith problem and so the "good news" in effect did them no good! The **ESV Study Bible** on Hebrews 4:2 says "the exodus generation did not receive the promised benefit since they failed to respond in faith." **Faith Life Study Bible** says this on "faith" in Hebrews 4:2 - "The Greek word used here, *pistis*, entails believing in the promises of God. People who do not trust God's promises, who reject that which they have not yet experienced, are excluded from the benefits of those promises." **NLTSB** says "the hearers were deficient in faith, distrusting God's word of promise." **John MacArthur** adds "From the human side, the first requirement for salvation is faith. Hearing the gospel is essential, but it is not enough. **The ancient Israelites heard God's good news of rest, but it did them no good since they did not accept it. They did not trust in the God who gave them the good news. It does no good to hear if we do not believe. That is the point here. Hearing the good news of the rest of God is of no benefit, no profit, to any person at any time unless the hearing is united by faith.** It is tragic that hell is going to be populated with people who will say, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?" To which Jesus will reply, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness" (Matt. 7:22–23+; cf. Luke 13:26–27+). Their knowledge and their work was not united with faith. Jews prided themselves on the fact that they had God's law and God's ordinances and God's rituals. They were especially proud to be descendants of Abraham. But Jesus warned that true children of Abraham believe and act as Abraham did (John 8:39). Paul reminded his fellow Jews that "He is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God" (Rom. 2:29). Spiritually, an unbelieving Jew is a contradiction in terms." (MNTC-Hebrews)

Our actions ("works") demonstrate whether our belief is unto salvation or is only intellectual belief (See James 2:19+).

#### HOW LONG? Some other "how longs"...

- How long will you live? 2Sa 19:34
- How long will you falter between two opinions? 1Ki 18:21
- How long will you reject God? Nu 14:11
- How long will you not believe? Nu 14:11
- How long will you sleep? Pr 6:9
- How long will you refuse to humble yourself? Ex 10:3

**Believe** (0539)(**aman**) conveys the basic idea of providing stability and confidence. The most significant meaning is to have faith, to put trust in something or someone. To be steady, firm and thus trustworthy. **Aman** speaks of certainty and thus can mean to confirm or to affirm. Some sources consider the primary root meaning of **aman** to be "to prop" or "to support", a meaning which is literally portrayed in the use in 2Ki 18:16 where **aman** is used to depict the **doorposts**, clearly emphasizing the ideas stability or support. Another picture of the meaning of '**aman**' is seen in the related (derivative) noun '**emunah**' in Ex 17:12+ ("his hands were **steady** (**emunah** derived from '**aman**') until the sun set.")

**Baker on Aman** - to be firm, to build up, to support, to nurture, or to establish. The primary meaning is that of providing stability and confidence, like a baby would find in the arms of a parent. It is used to signify support of a pillar (2 Kgs. 18:16); nurture and nourishment (Num. 11:12; Ruth 4:16; thus, a nurse, 2 Sam. 4:4); cradling in one's arms (Isa. 60:4); a house firmly founded (1 Sam. 2:35; 25:28); a secure nail that finds a solid place to grip (Isa. 22:23); a lasting permanence (Ps. 89:28[29]; with negative particle, Jer. 15:18). Metaphorically, the word conveys the notion of faithfulness and trustworthiness, such that one could fully depend on (Deut. 7:9; Job 12:20; Ps. 19:7[8]; Isa. 55:3; Mic. 7:5). Therefore, the word can also signify certitude or assurance (Deut. 28:66; Job 24:22; Hos. 5:9) and belief, in the sense of receiving something as true and sure (Gen. 15:6; Ex. 4:5; 2 Chr. 20:20; Ps. 78:22; Isa. 53:1; Jon. 3:5). (WSOT)

**NET Note on believe** - The verb "to believe" (root *אמן*, 'aman) has the basic idea of support, dependability for the root. The Hiphil has a declarative sense, namely, to consider something reliable or dependable and to act on it. The people did not trust what the LORD said.

**Despite all the signs** - Red Sea split, manna falling from heaven, water from rock, etc, etc. These were but tokens of God's power and evidence of His presence. Israel has witnessed them, but failed to act trustfully (cf. Dt 4:34; 6:22; 7:19; 28:8; 29:3). The purpose of **signs** performed in Egypt was to encourage the people's faith in God (Ex 4:5- "that they may **believe** that the LORD")

What a foreshadowing Israel's response was to first century Israel's response was to the Messiah, John recording

But though He had performed **so many signs** before them, yet **they were not believing** in Him. (John 12:37)

**Which I have performed in their midst** - The people rejected (1). Promised Land (Nu 13:32; 14:2, 31), (2). Moses their leader (Nu 14:4) (3). the Lord Himself (Nu 14:9-11). Their sin is "unfaithfulness" [Nu 14:33] = harlotry (Jer 3:2, 9; 13:27; Ezek 23:27; 43:7, 9; Ho4:11; 6:10).

---

### C H Spurgeon - Morning, August 27 "How long will it be ere they believe me?" —Numbers 14:11

Strive with all diligence to keep out that monster unbelief. It so dishonours Christ, that he will withdraw his visible presence if we insult him by indulging it. It is true it is a weed, the seeds of which we can never entirely extract from the soil, but we must aim at its root with zeal and perseverance. Among hateful things it is the most to be abhorred. Its injurious nature is so venomous that he that exerciseth it and he upon whom it is exercised are both hurt thereby. In thy case, O believer! it is most wicked, for the mercies of thy Lord in the past, increase thy guilt in doubting him now. When thou dost distrust the Lord Jesus, he may well cry out, "Behold I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves." This is crowning his head with thorns of the sharpest kind. It is very cruel for a well-beloved wife to mistrust a kind and faithful husband. The sin is needless, foolish, and unwarranted. Jesus has never given the slightest ground for suspicion, and it is hard to be doubted by those to whom our conduct is uniformly affectionate and true. Jesus is the Son of the Highest, and has unbounded wealth; it is shameful to doubt Omnipotence and distrust all-sufficiency. The cattle on a thousand hills will suffice for our most hungry feeding, and the granaries of heaven are not likely to be emptied by our eating. If Christ were only a cistern, we might soon exhaust his fulness, but who can drain a fountain? Myriads of spirits have drawn their supplies from him, and not one of them has murmured at the scantiness of his resources. Away, then, with this lying traitor unbelief, for his only errand is to cut the bonds of communion and make us mourn an absent Saviour. Bunyan tells us that unbelief has "as many lives as a cat:" if so, let us kill one life now, and continue the work till the whole nine are gone. Down with thee, thou traitor, my heart abhors thee.

**Numbers 14:12 "I will smite them with pestilence and dispossess them, and I will make you into a nation greater and mightier than they."**

BGT Numbers 14:12 *πατ ξω α το ς θαν τ κα πολ α το ς κα ποι σω σ κα τ ν ο κον το πατρ ς σου ε ς θνο ς μ γα κα πολ μ λλον το το*

NET Numbers 14:12 I will strike them with the pestilence, and I will disinherit them; I will make you into a nation that is greater and mightier than they!"

NLT Numbers 14:12 I will disown them and destroy them with a plague. Then I will make you into a nation greater and mightier than they are!"

ESV Numbers 14:12 I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they."

NIV Numbers 14:12 I will strike them down with a plague and destroy them, but I will make you into a nation greater and stronger than they."

KJV Numbers 14:12 I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they.

YLT Numbers 14:12 I smite it with pestilence, and dispossess it, and make thee become a nation greater and mightier than it.'

LXE Numbers 14:12 I will smite them with death, and destroy them; and I will make of thee and of thy father's house a great nation, and much greater than this.

ASV Numbers 14:12 I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a nation greater and mightier than they.

CSB Numbers 14:12 I will strike them with a plague and destroy them. Then I will make you into a greater and mightier nation than they are."

NKJ Numbers 14:12 "I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they."

NRS Numbers 14:12 I will strike them with pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they."

- **smite:** Nu 16:46-49 25:9 Ex 5:3 2Sa 24:1,12-15
- **will make:** Ex 32:10
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Exodus 32:10+ ([GOLDEN CALF EPISODE](#)) "Now then let Me alone, that My anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a great nation."

**"I will smite them with pestilence and dispossess them, and I will make you into a nation greater and mightier than they."**-

The Lxx translates **pestilence** with [thanatos](#) the word for death. God would deprive them of the land promised to their fathers. Their bodies would fall but the covenant would not fail. For the second time God offered to make of Moses a new nation in place of this one

Now then let Me alone, that My anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a great nation." (Ex 32:10+).

**Pestilence** ([01698](#))([deber](#) from **dabar** = to speak) refers to plague. In the first 3 uses in Exodus **deber** speaks of divinely induced pestilence on Egypt (Ex 5:3, 9:3, 15). In Lev 26:25 as punishment for Israel's sin God promises "I will send **pestilence** among you, so that you shall be delivered into enemy hands." (Compare Nu 14:12, Dt 28:21) **Pestilence** in the English dictionary = a deadly or highly infectious epidemic outbreak usually of an infectious disease but figuratively can be an evil influence.

**Bush** comments that "The noble disinterestedness of Moses appears conspicuous in his reply. He is much more concerned for the divine honor than his own."

**Numbers 14:13 But Moses said to the LORD, "Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for by Your strength You brought up this people from their midst,**

BGT Numbers 14:13 κα ε πεν Μωυς ς πρ ς κ ριον κα κο σεται Α γυπτος τι ν γα γες τ σχ ι σου τ ν λα ν το τον ξ α τ ν

NET Numbers 14:13 Moses said to the LORD, "When the Egyptians hear it— for you brought up this people by your power from among them—

NLT Numbers 14:13 But Moses objected. "What will the Egyptians think when they hear about it?" he asked the LORD. "They know full well the power you displayed in rescuing your people from Egypt.

ESV Numbers 14:13 But Moses said to the LORD, "Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for you brought up this people in your might from among them,

NIV Numbers 14:13 Moses said to the LORD, "Then the Egyptians will hear about it! By your power you brought these people up from among them.

KJV Numbers 14:13 And Moses said unto the LORD, Then the Egyptians shall hear it, (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them;)

YLT Numbers 14:13 And Moses saith unto Jehovah, 'Then have the Egyptians heard! for Thou hast brought up with Thy power this people out of their midst,

LXE Numbers 14:13 And Moses said to the Lord, So Egypt shall hear, for thou hast brought up this people



from them by thy might.

ASV Numbers 14:13 And Moses said unto Jehovah, Then the Egyptians will hear it; for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them;

CSB Numbers 14:13 But Moses replied to the LORD, "The Egyptians will hear about it, for by Your strength You brought up this people from them.

NKJ Numbers 14:13 And Moses said to the LORD: "Then the Egyptians will hear it, for by Your might You brought these people up from among them,

NRS Numbers 14:13 But Moses said to the LORD, "Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for in your might you brought up this people from among them,

- **Then the:** Ex 32:12 De 9:26-28 32:27 Jos 7:8,9 Ps 106:23 Eze 20:9,14
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## MOSES REASONS THAT YAHWEH'S REPUTATION WILL BE TARNISHED

**But Moses said to the LORD, "Then the Egyptians will hear of it -** Moses had made a similar appeal in Exodus 32:12+ asking God "Why should the Egyptians speak, saying, 'With evil intent He brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your burning anger and change Your mind about doing harm to Your people."

**Wiersbe** - It's the mark of great and godly leaders that they think only of the good of their people and not their own personal gain. In fact, Moses was willing to die for the nation rather than let God destroy it (Ex. 32:32; see Rom. 9:1–3).

**Brian Bell** - A short time before, Moses was complaining because the people were such a burden, and now he was pleading on their behalf.

**For by Your strength You brought up this people from their midst-** The Egyptians had seen Yahweh's power but if Israel were destroyed they would question that power.

**FSB** - Yahweh wants to destroy Israel outright, but as before, Moses pleads with Him to relent on the basis of Yahweh's own reputation (compare Ex 32:11–14). Others would hear of the destruction and presume Yahweh lacked the power to bring Israel into the land. Ezekiel later uses this idea as a basis for predicting the return of Israel from exile (Ezek 36:16–36; 39:21–29). Moses' argument is effective

---

**F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily** - The Egyptians shall hear it.

What a noble concern for the credit of God! Here was a great opportunity for Moses. God was testing him by the proposal, that, the entire nation of Israel being cut off as a judgment for their repeated shortcomings and transgressions, Moses should become the slip or stock of the Hebrew race: "I will disinherit them, and make of thee a nation greater and mightier than they." This was not the settled purpose of God; but a suggestion to test his servant, who would not entertain it for a moment. All thought of the honor to be done to himself was submerged in his great eagerness for the Divine credit. "The Egyptians shall hear it: the nations which have heard the fame of Thee will speak, saying, Because the Lord was not able...."

The Egyptians are always around us, watching and listening. They can only judge of God by our behavior and the course of our experience: and are only too ready to catch up anything which they may interpret to the discrediting of the Eternal. How careful we should be in all our life and conversation so that the ungodly may have, not lower, but loftier conceptions of our God.

When tempted to anything which is not perfectly noble and honorable; when inclined to murmur and complain of God's dealings with you; when an opportunity comes, as it did to Moses, to make gain at the expense of others; then remember the name of God, and the urgency of need that exists, to maintain it unsullied and untarnished. We should be restrained by a double fear: first, lest we should grieve God; second, lest the Egyptians should have a handle against Him, and should be prejudiced against religion.

**Numbers 14:14** and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that You, O LORD, are in the midst of this people, for You, O LORD, are seen eye to eye, while Your cloud stands over them; and You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night.



BGT Numbers 14:14 ἄλ κα π ντες ο κατοικο ντες π τς γς τα της κηκ ασιν π σ ε κ ριος ν τ λα το τ σπς φθαλμο ς κατ φθαλμο ς π τ ζ κ ριε κα νεφ λη σου φ σθηκεν π α τ ν κα ν σ τ λ νεφ λης σ πορε πρ τερος α τ ν τ ν μ ραν κα ν σ τ λ πυρ ς τ ν ν κ τ α

NET Numbers 14:14 then they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that you, LORD, are among this people, that you, LORD, are seen face to face, that your cloud stands over them, and that you go before them by day in a pillar of cloud and in a pillar of fire by night.

NLT Numbers 14:14 Now if you destroy them, the Egyptians will send a report to the inhabitants of this land, who have already heard that you live among your people. They know, LORD, that you have appeared to your people face to face and that your pillar of cloud hovers over them. They know that you go before them in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.

ESV Numbers 14:14 and they will tell the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that you, O LORD, are in the midst of this people. For you, O LORD, are seen face to face, and your cloud stands over them and you go before them, in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night.

NIV Numbers 14:14 And they will tell the inhabitants of this land about it. They have already heard that you, O LORD, are with these people and that you, O LORD, have been seen face to face, that your cloud stays over them, and that you go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

KJV Numbers 14:14 And they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that thou LORD art among this people, that thou LORD art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by day time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night.

YLT Numbers 14:14 and they have said it unto the inhabitant of this land, they have heard that Thou, Jehovah, art in the midst of this people, that eye to eye Thou art seen -- O Jehovah, and Thy cloud is standing over them, -- and in a pillar of cloud Thou art going before them by day, and in a pillar of fire by night.

LXE Numbers 14:14 Moreover all the dwellers upon this land have heard that thou art Lord in the midst of this people, who, O Lord, art seen by them face to face, and thy cloud rests upon them, and thou goest before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire.

ASV Numbers 14:14 and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that thou Jehovah art in the midst of this people; for thou Jehovah art seen face to face, and thy cloud standeth over them, and thou goest before them, in a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night.

CSB Numbers 14:14 They will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that You, LORD, are among these people, how You, LORD, are seen face to face, how Your cloud stands over them, and how You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night.

NKJ Numbers 14:14 "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.

- **they:** Ex 15:14 Jos 2:9,10 5:1
- **seen:** Nu 12:8 Ge 32:30 Ex 33:11 De 5:4 34:10 Joh 1:18 14:9 1Co 13:12 1Jn 3:2
- **cloud:** Nu 9:15-21 10:34 Ex 13:21,22 40:38 Ne 9:12,19 Ps 78:14 105:39
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**And they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land** - This would diminish the fear of the Lord if Israel were destroyed.

**FSB** - "From the [Amarna Letters](#) and other ancient Near Eastern sources, we know that correspondences were regularly exchanged between Egypt—a super-power—and city-states throughout the Levant." (FSB)

**They have heard that You, O LORD, are in the midst of this people, for You, O LORD, are seen eye to eye, while Your cloud stands over them** - "That is, in the most open, plain, and visible manner, without any interposing medium" (Bush) Moses was the one who actually spoke with Yahweh "face to face" (Ex 33:11+).

**NET Note** - "eye to eye." It only occurs elsewhere in Isa 52:8. This expresses the closest communication possible."

**and You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night**- The point is that the pagans would say that Yahweh is intimately involved with His people Israel. This prepares us for the next passage where Moses speaks of killing them.

**FSB on a pillar of cloud** - The activities of Yahweh's cloud are detailed in Nu 9:15–23+; it is referred to numerous times throughout the Pentateuch as a key component of theophany (e.g., Ex 13:21–22; Ex 14:19–24; Ex 16:10; Ex 19:9, 16; Ex 33:9–10; Nu 10:34).

**Brian Bell** -3 arguments in Moses' intercession: 1. God's Reputation; God's Consistency; God's Mercy.

**Numbers 14:15 "Now if You slay this people as one man, then the nations who have heard of Your fame will say,**

BGT Numbers 14:15 καὶ κτρ ψεις τ ν λα ν το τον σε νθρωπον να κα ρο σιν τ θνη σοι κηκ ασιν τ νομ σου λ γοντες

NET Numbers 14:15 If you kill this entire people at once, then the nations that have heard of your fame will say,

NLT Numbers 14:15 Now if you slaughter all these people with a single blow, the nations that have heard of your fame will say,

ESV Numbers 14:15 Now if you kill this people as one man, then the nations who have heard your fame will say,

NIV Numbers 14:15 If you put these people to death all at one time, the nations who have heard this report about you will say,

KJV Numbers 14:15 Now if thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying,

YLT Numbers 14:15 'And Thou hast put to death this people as one man, and the nations who have heard Thy fame have spoken, saying,

LXE Numbers 14:15 And if thou shalt destroy this nation as one man; then all the nations that have heard thy name shall speak, saying,

ASV Numbers 14:15 Now if thou shalt kill this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying,

CSB Numbers 14:15 If You kill this people with a single blow, the nations that have heard of Your fame will declare,

NKJ Numbers 14:15 "Now if You kill these people as one man, then the nations which have heard of Your fame will speak, saying,

NRS Numbers 14:15 Now if you kill this people all at one time, then the nations who have heard about you will say,

- Jdg 6:16
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## RESULTS OF DESTROYING ENTIRE NATION

**"Now if You slay this people as one man** - NET = "f you kill this entire people at once"; NLT = "Now if you slaughter all these people with a single blow."

**then the nations who have heard of Your fame will say** - They will draw a conclusion based on the destruction of the the entire nation.

**Fame** (08088) (shema from shama = to hear) means news, report, fame, refers to the "thing heard," such as family news (Ge. 29:13), news of military movement (Jer 37:5; 50:43) and news of judgment (Nah. 3:19). Shema' can refer to a report of an event, such as the report of the downfall of Tyre (Isa. 23:5), the report of some wrongdoing (Hos. 7:12), the report of Israel's victories (Deut. 2:25) or even a false report about someone (Exo. 23:1). Shema' can refer idiomatically to a report as "the hearing of the ear" (Job 42:5; Ps. 18:44). And it can refer to someone's fame, such as God's fame (Nu 14:15; Isa. 66:19; Hab. 3:2), Solomon's fame (1 Ki. 10:1; 2 Chr. 9:1) and Wisdom's fame (Job 28:22). **TWOT** - Used 1) of **news** generally, whether good or bad, 2)

of the **fame** attached to a person, and 3) of **hearsay**, as opposed to personal experiential knowledge. Thus it is used in Isaiah 23:5 of the report or news of Jacob's arrival. In 1 Kings 10:1 it is used to describe Solomon's fame that had reached as far as Sheba. In Job's great confession (Job 42:5) he testifies that his former knowledge of God had been but hearsay, and that as a result of his personal encounter with God he has come to see his own nothingness in the face of the greatness of God.

**Shema** - 17x - about(1), fame(4), hear\*(1), hearing(1), news(1), proclamation(1), report(8). Gen. 29:13; Exod. 23:1; Num. 14:15; Deut. 2:25; 1 Ki. 10:1; 2 Chr. 9:1; Job 28:22; Job 42:5; Ps. 18:44; Isa. 23:5; Isa. 66:19; Jer. 37:5; Jer. 50:43; Hos. 7:12; Nah. 3:19; Hab. 3:2

**Numbers 14:16 'Because the LORD could not bring this people into the land which He promised them by oath, therefore He slaughtered them in the wilderness.'**

BGT Numbers 14:16 παρ τ μ ὀ νασθαί κ ριον ε σαγαγε ν τ ν λα ν το τον ε ς τ ν γ ν ν μ οσεν α το ς κατ στρωσεν α το ς ν τ ρ μ

NET Numbers 14:16 'Because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land that he swore to them, he killed them in the wilderness.'

NLT Numbers 14:16 'The LORD was not able to bring them into the land he swore to give them, so he killed them in the wilderness.'

ESV Numbers 14:16 'It is because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land that he swore to give to them that he has killed them in the wilderness.'

NIV Numbers 14:16 'The LORD was not able to bring these people into the land he promised them on oath; so he slaughtered them in the desert.'

KJV Numbers 14:16 Because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness.

YLT Numbers 14:16 From Jehovah's want of ability to bring in this people unto the land which He hath sworn to them -- He doth slaughter them in the wilderness.

LXE Numbers 14:16 Because the Lord could not bring this people into the land which he sware to them, he has overthrown them in the wilderness.

ASV Numbers 14:16 Because Jehovah was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness.

CSB Numbers 14:16 'Since the LORD wasn't able to bring this people into the land He swore to give them, He has slaughtered them in the wilderness.'

NKJ Numbers 14:16 `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.'

NRS Numbers 14:16 'It is because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land he swore to give them that he has slaughtered them in the wilderness.'

- De 9:28 32:26,27 Jos 7:9
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **YAHWEH'S PROMISE TO PATRIARCHS MUST BE KEPT**

**Because the LORD could not bring this people into the land which He promised them by oath, therefore He slaughtered them in the wilderness** - The **oath** speaks of the Abrahamic Covenant as in Genesis 12:1-3+ or Genesis 15:1-21+. Here is the essential point of Moses' plea -- the pagans will think God is not powerful enough. They would say yes, he was able to bring them out (of Egypt) but He was not powerful enough to **bring** them **into** the promised land, so by their pagan logic they would reason that the "gods" of the land of Canaan were stronger than the God of the Israelites. Moses' sought to preserve the glory of God among the godless nations.

**NIVSB** - The enemies of God's people will charge the Lord with inability to complete his deliverance and will be contemptuous of his power.

**FSB** - Yahweh was unable Meaning he is not able to overpower the gods of the land to which the people are going.

**Numbers 14:17 "But now, I pray, let the power of the Lord be great, just as You have declared,**

BGT Numbers 14:17 καὶ νῦν ψωθῶ σὺς σου κριε νῦν τὸν ἐπὶ τῶν ἁγίων

NET Numbers 14:17 So now, let the power of my Lord be great, just as you have said,

NLT Numbers 14:17 "Please, Lord, prove that your power is as great as you have claimed. For you said,

ESV Numbers 14:17 And now, please let the power of the Lord be great as you have promised, saying,

NIV Numbers 14:17 "Now may the Lord's strength be displayed, just as you have declared:

KJV Numbers 14:17 And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying,

YLT Numbers 14:17 'And now, let, I pray Thee, the power of my Lord be great, as Thou hast spoken, saying:

LXE Numbers 14:17 And now, O Lord, let thy strength be exalted, as thou spakest, saying,

ASV Numbers 14:17 And now, I pray thee, let the power of the Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying,

CSB Numbers 14:17 "So now, may my Lord's power be magnified just as You have spoken:

NKJ Numbers 14:17 "And now, I pray, let the power of my Lord be great, just as You have spoken, saying,

NRS Numbers 14:17 And now, therefore, let the power of the LORD be great in the way that you promised when you spoke, saying,

- Mic 3:8 Mt 9:6,8
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### MOSES APPEALS TO THE LORDS CHARACTER

This is Moses' third ground of appeal to Jehovah - first His glory, next His covenant and here His character, a good pattern for intercessory praying! (See [fourth ground](#) for Moses' appeal)

**But now, I pray, let the power of the Lord be great, just as You have declared-** How would it be shown "great?" If He brought Israel into the land inhabited by strong and giant adversaries, it would clearly show His omnipotence.

**Numbers 14:18 'The LORD is slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generations.'**

BGT Numbers 14:18 κριος μακρ θυμος κα πολυ λεος κα ληθιν ς φαιρ ν νομ ας κα δικ ας κα μαρτ ας κα καθαρισμ ο καθαριε τ ν νοχον ποδιδο ς μαρτ ας πατ ρων π τ κνα ως τρ της κα τετ ρτης

NET Numbers 14:18 'The LORD is slow to anger and abounding in loyal love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children until the third and fourth generations.'

NLT Numbers 14:18 'The LORD is slow to anger and filled with unfailing love, forgiving every kind of sin and rebellion. But he does not excuse the guilty. He lays the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected-- even children in the third and fourth generations.'

ESV Numbers 14:18 'The LORD is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but he will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, to the

third and the fourth generation.'

NIV Numbers 14:18 'The LORD is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.'

KJV Numbers 14:18 The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.

YLT Numbers 14:18 Jehovah is slow to anger, and of great kindness; bearing away iniquity and transgression, and not entirely acquitting, charging iniquity of fathers on sons, on a third generation, and on a fourth; --

LXE Numbers 14:18 The Lord is long-suffering and merciful, and true, removing transgressions and iniquities and sins, and he will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation.

ASV Numbers 14:18 Jehovah is slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression; and that will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation.

CSB Numbers 14:18 The LORD is slow to anger and rich in faithful love, forgiving wrongdoing and rebellion. But He will not leave the guilty unpunished, bringing the consequences of the fathers' wrongdoing on the children to the third and fourth generation.

NKJ Numbers 14:18 '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.'

NRS Numbers 14:18 'The LORD is slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the parents upon the children to the third and the fourth generation.'

- **lovingkindness:** Ex 34:6,7 Ps 103:8 145:8 Jon 4:2 Mic 7:18 Na 1:2,3 Ro 3:24-26 Ro 5:21 Eph 1:7,8
- **visiting:** Ex 20:5 34:7 Jer 23:2
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Exodus 34:6-7+ Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; 7who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations."

**The LORD is slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression-** Moses is reminding God of His character which was described in Ex 34:6-7+. Moses had witnessed this aspect of God's character after the golden calf episode. And so Moses is not making an abstract allusion, but is appealing based on his own experience with Yahweh. The love of God is emphasized after the power of God in the previous passage.

**Slow** (patience, long) ([0750](#)) see word study on [arek](#)

**Anger** (nose, nostril, wrath) ([0639](#)) see word study on [aph](#)

**Lovingkindness** ([02617](#)) see word study on [hesed/chesed/heced](#)

**Iniquity** (punishment, guilt) ([05771](#)) see word study on ['avon](#)

**Transgression** (rebellion) ([06588](#)) see word study on [pesha'](#)

**NET Note** - The expression is רַב־חֶסֶד (rav kheseḏ) means "much of loyal love," or "faithful love."

**But - Term of contrast.** This is the opposite side of the coin. Yes, God is love, but God is also just and holy and righteous and therefore must punish sin against Himself. If we understood the holiness of God better we would wrestle less with the truth that He must punish sins. And it would also serve to motivate us to be more resilient in our resistance against temptations.

**He will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generations** - This is not teaching "generational curses." The parallel passage in Exodus (see below) helps us better understand this passage for in that passage there is in effect a "qualifying" statement regarding why God will visit iniquity to future generations. The statement "of those who hate Me" identifies those in the third and fourth generations who will be punished. Each person will be punished for their own individual sins and not for the sins of others, including their fathers. Furthermore the verb "hate" in the Septuagint is [miseo](#) in the present tense indicating that these individuals are manifesting a lifestyle of hatred toward God as show by their habitually godless behavior.

Exodus 20:5+ "You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,

**Clear** the guilty (acquit) ([05352](#)) see word study on [naqah](#)

**Visiting** (punishing) ([06485](#)) see word study on [paqad](#)

**Wiersbe** - He doesn't hold the children responsible for the sins of their parents, but children can suffer because of their parents' sins. Since many Jewish homes were comprised of three or four generations, this meant that the entire household would suffer because of the sins of the fathers.

**Brian Bell** - How did the sins of the fathers effect the children? Their children, like Moses, had to wander bearing the consequences of other people's sins.

**FSB** - The idea that later generations would be punished for the sins of others is qualified in Deuteronomy which implies that Yahweh would punish succeeding generations only if they repeated the sins of their ancestors (Dt 5:9–10; compare Ezek 18:4). Although God is a God of forgiveness, he does not erase the consequences of iniquity

---

## Seeing God

The Lord is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished. Numbers 14:18

Today's Scripture & Insight: Exodus 34:1–9

Caricature artists set up their easels in public places and draw pictures of people who are willing to pay a modest price for a humorous image of themselves. Their drawings amuse us because they exaggerate one or more of our physical features in a way that is recognizable but funny.

Caricatures of God, on the other hand, are not funny. Exaggerating one of His attributes presents a distorted view that people easily dismiss. Like a caricature, a distorted view of God is not taken seriously. Those who see God portrayed only as an angry and demanding judge are easily lured away by someone who emphasizes mercy. Those who see God as a kindhearted grandfather will reject that image when they need justice. Those who see God as an intellectual idea rather than a living, loving being eventually find other ideas more appealing. Those who see God as a best friend often leave Him behind when they find human friends who are more to their liking.

God declares Himself to be merciful and gracious, but also just in punishing the guilty (Ex. 34:6–7).

As we put our faith into action, we need to avoid portraying God as having only our favorite attributes. We must worship all of God, not just what we like. By: Julie Ackerman Link ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, I worship You. You are holy, just, kind, and loving. You are God alone.

God is God alone.

---

## Numbers 14:18 (Read Exodus 34:1-9+) Caricature God

### Our Daily Bread

Caricature artists set up their easels in public places and draw pictures of people who are willing to pay a modest price for a humorous image of themselves. Their drawings amuse us because they exaggerate one or more of our physical features in a way that is recognizable but funny.

Caricatures of God, on the other hand, are not funny. Exaggerating one of His attributes presents a distorted view that people easily

dismiss. Like a caricature, a distorted view of God is not taken seriously. Those who see God portrayed only as an angry and demanding judge are easily lured away by someone who emphasizes mercy. Those who see God as a kindhearted grandfather will reject that image when they need justice. Those who see God as an intellectual idea rather than a living, loving being eventually find other ideas more appealing. Those who see God as a best friend often leave Him behind when they find human friends who are more to their liking.

God declares Himself to be merciful and gracious, but also just in punishing the guilty (Ex. 34:6-7).

As we put our faith into action, we need to avoid portraying God as having only our favorite attributes. We must worship all of God, not just what we like. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—

Oh, Thou blessed Trinity:

One in essence, yet three persons—

Thou, our God, we worship Thee.

—D. De Haan

All-powerful, merciful, wise, and just is the God in whom we trust.

**Numbers 14:19 "Pardon, I pray, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of Your lovingkindness, just as You also have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now."**

- **Pardon:** Ex 32:32 34:9 1Ki 8:34 Ps 51:1,2 Eze 20:8,9 Da 9:19
- **according:** Isa 55:7 Tit 3:4-7
- **just as:** Ex 32:10-14 Ex 33:17 Ps 78:38 106:7,8,45 Jon 3:10 4:2 Mic 7:18 Jas 5:15 1Jn 5:14-16
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## MOSES PLEADS FOR PARDON BASED ON GOD'S ATTRIBUTE OF LOVINGKINDNESS

**Pardon, I pray, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of Your lovingkindness-** Moses bases his plea for pardon not on the intensity of his pleas, but based solely on the infinite and great mercy of God.

**Wiersbe** points out that this is a fourth ground for Moses' intercessory prayer - Moses' final argument for Israel's forgiveness was the fact that the Lord had forgiven His people many times before (Num. 14:19). "He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities" (Ps. 103:10, NKJV; see Ezra 9:13). The fact that God forgives us isn't an encouragement for us to go on sinning, because the Lord chastens those who rebel against Him. He forgives us so we'll fear Him (Ps. 130:4) and have no more desire to sin (John 8:10–11).

**NET Note on pardon** - The verb סָלַח (selakh-na'), the imperative form, means "forgive" (see Ps 130:4), "pardon," "excuse." The imperative is of course a prayer, a desire, and not a command.

**Pardon** (05545) **salach** ([See another study](#)) means **to free from or release from something** and so to pardon, to forgive, to spare. God's offer of pardon and forgiveness to sinners. Salach is never used of people forgiving each other but used of God forgiving. Jehovah Himself announces, in response to Moses' prayers for Israel, that He has forgiven Israel at two of their darkest moments, the golden calf incident and the murmuring at Kadesh Barnea (Ex 34:9; Nu 14:19-20).

**Vine** adds that "The basic meaning (of **salach**) undergoes no change throughout the Old Testament. God is always the subject of "forgiveness." No other Old Testament verb means "to forgive," although several verbs include "forgiveness" in the range of meanings given a particular context (e.g., naca and awon in Ex. 32:32; kapar in Ezek. 16:63)... Most occurrences of calach are in the sacrificial laws of Leviticus and Numbers. In the typology of the Old Testament, sacrifices foreshadowed the accomplished work of Jesus Christ, and the Old Testament believer was assured of "forgiveness" based on sacrifice (see Nu 15:25, 28)... he mediators of the atonement were the priests who offered the sacrifice. The sacrifice was ordained by God to promise ultimate "forgiveness" in God's sacrifice of His own Son. Moreover, sacrifice was appropriately connected to atonement, as there is no forgiveness without the shedding of blood (Lev.



4:20; cf. Heb. 9:22). Out of His grace, God alone “forgives” sin. The Israelites experienced God’s “forgiveness” in the wilderness and in the Promised Land. As long as the temple stood, sacrificial atonement continued and the Israelites were assured of God’s “forgiveness.” When the temple was destroyed and sacrifices ceased, God sent the prophetic word that He graciously would restore Israel out of exile and “forgive” its sins (Jer. 31:34).

The [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) translates **salach** with the Greek verb [aphiemi](#). The verb **aphiemi** (from **apo** = prefix implies separation + **hiemi** = put in motion, send; See also study on noun [aphesis](#)) conveys the basic idea of an action which causes separation and means to send from one's self, to forsake, to hurl away, to put away, let alone, disregard, put off. It depicts an action which causes separation that results in total detachment, total separation, from a previous location or condition. In secular Greek **aphiemi** initially conveyed the sense of to throw and in one secular writing we read "let the pot drop" (aphiemi). From this early literal use the word came to mean leave or let go. **Aphiemi** basically means to send away and was used to indicate the legal repayment or cancellation of a debt or the granting of a pardon. It is used in Scripture to refer to God’s forgiveness of sin. Through the shedding of His own blood, Jesus Christ actually took the sins of the world upon His own head, as it were, and carried them an infinite distance away from where they could never return. That is the extent of the forgiveness of our trespasses.

**Just as You also have forgiven** (see [salach](#)) **this people, from Egypt even until now** - Moses acknowledges Israel has been a rebellious people the moment they crossed the Red Sea, and that God had repeatedly forgiven them, most notably forgiving them for the abominable worship of an idolatrous golden calf (read Ex 32:10-14+).

**Numbers 14:20 So the LORD said, "I have pardoned them according to your word;**

- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## JEHOVAH PARDON'S ISRAEL

**So** - term of conclusion.

**the LORD said, "I have pardoned them according to your word;** Intercession led to pardon (Nu 14:20-38) and they were spared immediate judgment. God pardoned the people, but would eventually judge their sins. As Paul said centuries later

**Do not be deceived** ([present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)), God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. (Gal 6:7-8+).

**Brian Bell** - In His grace, God pardoned their sin; but In His government, He had to allow that sin to produce its bitter fruit.

### Related Passage:

Psalms 106:23 Therefore He said that He would destroy them, Had not Moses His chosen one stood in the breach before Him, To turn away His wrath from destroying them.

**Spurgeon** - Had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach. Like a bold warrior who defends the wall when there is an opening for the adversary and destruction is rushing in upon the city, Moses stopped the way of avenging justice with his prayers. Moses had great power with God. He was an eminent type of our Lord, who is called, as Moses here is styled, "mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth." As the Elect Redeemer interposed between the Lord and a sinful world, so did Moses stand between the Lord and his offending people. The story as told by Moses himself is full of interest and instruction, and tends greatly to magnify the goodness of the Lord, who thus suffered himself to be turned from the fierceness of his anger.

With disinterested affection, and generous renunciation of privileges offered to himself and his family, the great Lawgiver interceded with the Lord

to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them. Behold the power of a righteous man's intercession.

Mighty as was the sin of Israel to provoke vengeance, prayer was mightier in turning it away. How diligently ought we to plead with the Lord for this guilty world, and especially for his own backsliding people! Who would not employ an agency so powerful for an end so gracious! The Lord still harkens to the voice of a man, shall not our voices be often exercised in supplicating for a guilty people?

**Numbers 14:21 but indeed, as I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of the LORD.**

- **indeed** De 32:40 Isa 49:18 Jer 22:24 Eze 5:11 18:3 33:11,27 Zep 2:9
- **all the**: Ps 72:19 Hab 2:14 Mt 6:10
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **YAHWEH'S PROPHECY OF FUTURE GLORY**

**But indeed, as I live**, A common oath form. In the Pentateuch, it occurs only here and in (Nu 14:28). All of God's dealings with His people up to this point should have conveyed the idea that He was a living God. Here it is explicitly stated. He is not like dead images that cannot speak, see, or move. By contrast, God is the living God who communicates with us and is involved in the events of His world.

**All the earth will be filled with the glory of the LORD** - This was to have been the role of the Chosen People, to carry the glory of Jehovah to all of the peoples of the world. They failed miserably, but one offspring, succeeded majestically when He died a cruel death on a Cross. This opened the path for the glory of the LORD to begin to fill the whole earth as the Gospel of Jesus was carried globally by His ambassadors. The ultimate fulfillment of this is a prophecy will be in the time of the Messianic Kingdom.

Habakkuk 2:14+ "For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea.

Psalm 72:19 And blessed be His glorious name forever; And may the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen.

**FSB** - God has power over all nations. It was important that God preserve the covenant, since the covenant contained an element (Gen 12:3) guaranteeing that Israel would be the divine instrument for reclaiming all the nations disinherited at Babel (Deut 32:8–9; compare Gen 11:1–9).

**Numbers 14:22 "Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice,**

- **have seen**: Nu 14:11 De 1:31-35 Ps 95:9-11 106:26 Heb 3:17,18
- **test**: Ex 17:2 Ps 95:9 106:14 Mal 3:15 Mt 4:7 1Co 10:9 Heb 3:9
- **ten times**: Ge 31:7,41 Job 19:3
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Surely all the men who have seen My glory** - Day and night they have seen the [Shekinah glory](#)!

**and My signs which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness** - The Passover, bread from heaven, water from a rock, etc.

**yet** - Term of contrast. In spite of the clear evidence of Jehovah's existence and His love and care for the nation of Israel.

**Have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice**- Here God associates testing Him with not listening to Him.

**Bush on ten times** - These many times; a definite number for an indefinite, as in Gen. 31:7, "And changed my wages ten times," i. e. frequently. Job 19:3, "These ten times have ye reproached me." Lev. 26:26.

**Test** (tempt) (05254)([nacah/nasah](#) Lxx = [peirazo](#)) in most OT uses has idea of testing or proving quality of someone or something and doing so often through adversity or hardship. As the following context makes clear (note "to see," lit., "to know," in 3:4), the purpose of this divine test was to determine if Israel was truly loyal. An examination of parallel passages shows that such divine tests were designed to reveal otherwise hidden

character qualities. Testing which shows what someone is really like generally involves difficulty or hardship.

34x in OT - Gen. 22:1; Exod. 15:25; Exod. 16:4; Exod. 17:2; Exod. 17:7; Exod. 20:20; Num. 14:22; Deut. 4:34; Deut. 6:16; Deut. 8:2; Deut. 8:16; Deut. 13:3; Deut. 28:56; Deut. 33:8; Jdg. 2:22; Jdg. 3:1; Jdg. 3:4; Jdg. 6:39; 1 Sam. 17:39; 1 Ki. 10:1; 2 Chr. 9:1; 2 Chr. 32:31; Job 4:2; Ps. 26:2; Ps. 78:18; Ps. 78:41; Ps. 78:56; Ps. 95:9; Ps. 106:14; Eccl. 2:1; Eccl. 7:23; Isa. 7:12; Dan. 1:12; Dan. 1:14

**NET Note on test** - The verb נָסָה (nasah) means "to test, to tempt, to prove." It can be used to indicate things are tried or proven, or for testing in a good sense, or tempting in the bad sense, i.e., putting God to the test. In all uses there is uncertainty or doubt about the outcome. Some uses of the verb are positive: If God tests Abraham in Genesis 22:1, it is because there is uncertainty whether he fears the LORD or not; if people like Gideon put out the fleece and test the LORD, it is done by faith but in order to be certain of the LORD's presence. But here, when these people put God to the test ten times, it was because they doubted the goodness and ability of God, and this was a major weakness. They had proof to the contrary, but chose to challenge God.

**Ten times** - possibly it was just the Hebrew way of saying. For example Job 19:3 says "These ten times you have insulted me; You are not ashamed to wrong me."

**FSB on ten times** - This does not necessarily refer to a literal 10 times, but is a figure of speech meaning "too many" (compare Gen 31:7). The point is that Israel has a habit of testing Yahweh, and this is a habit he does not appreciate.

**Ten Times** - "Ten" is here a round figure, emphasizing the complete testing." (NET) And while we can make a list of "Ten" the truth is that the list could probably be much longer! Here are some examples...

1. Red Sea (Ex 14:10-12)
2. Marah (Ex 15:22-24)
3. wilderness of Sin (Ex 16:1-3)
4. connection w manna (Ex 16:19-20)
5. connection w manna (Ex 16:27-30)
6. Rephidim (Ex 17:1-4)
7. Horeb (Ex 32:1-35, 7)
8. Taberah (Nu 11:1-3)
9. complaint of rabble (Nu 11:4-34)
10. Kadesh-barnea (Nu 14:3).

**Numbers 14:23 shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who spurned Me see it.**

BGT Numbers 14:23 μ ν ο κ ψονται τ ν γ ν ν μ ο σ α τ ο ς πατρ σιν α τ ν λ λ τ τ κ ν α α τ ν σ τ ι ν μετ μ ο δε σοι ο κ ο δ α σ ι ν γ α θ ν ο δ κ α κ ν π ς ν ε τ ε ρ ο ς π ε ι ρ ο ς τ ο τ ο ι ς δ σ ω τ ν γ ν π ν τ ε ς δ ο παροξ ναντ ς με ο κ ψονται α τ ν

NET Numbers 14:23 they will by no means see the land that I swore to their fathers, nor will any of them who despised me see it.

NLT Numbers 14:23 They will never even see the land I swore to give their ancestors. None of those who have treated me with contempt will ever see it.

ESV Numbers 14:23 shall see the land that I swore to give to their fathers. And none of those who despised me shall see it.

NIV Numbers 14:23 not one of them will ever see the land I promised on oath to their forefathers. No one who has treated me with contempt will ever see it.

KJV Numbers 14:23 Surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it:

YLT Numbers 14:23 they see not the land which I have sworn to their fathers, yea, none of those despising Me see it;

LXE Numbers 14:23 surely they shall not see the land, which I sware to their fathers; but their children which are with me here, as many as know not good or evil, every inexperienced youth, to them will I give the land;

but none who have provoked me shall see it.

ASV Numbers 14:23 surely they shall not see the land which I swore unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that despised me see it:

CSB Numbers 14:23 will ever see the land I swore to give their fathers. None of those who have despised Me will see it.

NKJ Numbers 14:23 "they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it.

NRS Numbers 14:23 shall see the land that I swore to give to their ancestors; none of those who despised me shall see it.

- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE CONSEQUENCES OF ISRAEL'S UNBELIEF

**shall by no means see the land** God is saying that they did not believe the "good news" and so they shall never enter His rest!! One enters His rest by faith which is demonstrated by obedience to His clear commands. Obedience per se does not save a person, but it is evidence that the person truly believes (otherwise why would he obey?).

**NET Note** - The word  $\text{אין}$  ('im) indicates a negative oath formula: "if" means "they will not." It is elliptical. In a human oath one would be saying: "The LORD do to me if they see ...," meaning "they will by no means see." Here God is swearing that they will not see the land.

**Which I swore to their fathers** - This again refers to the [Abrahamic Covenant](#) (Genesis 12:1-3+, Genesis 15:1-21+)

**Nor shall any of those who spurned Me see it** - This same truth is seen in the NT. For example Jesus declared in Mark 8:38+ "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." And again Jesus declared "But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven." (Mt 10:33+)

**Spurn** (despise, reject, blaspheme) ([05006](#))([naas](#)) means to revile, to scorn, to reject, despise, abhor (hate extremely or with contempt), spurn, treat with contempt, revile. God tells Moses His people "**spurn**" Him (Nu 14:11) and that those who "**spurned**" Him would not enter the promised land (Nu 14:23) The rebellion of Korah and those with him in effect "**spurned** the LORD" (Nu 16:30) by challenging Moses' divinely appointed role as leader (Nu 16:1-3). God prophesied that His people would "**spurn**" Him by turning to other gods and serving them and thus breaking His (Mosaic) covenant (Dt 31:20). Israel made Jehovah jealous with strange gods, provoking Him to anger (even sacrificing to demons!) and thus Jehovah "**spurned** them because of the provocation." (Dt 32:19, context Dt 32:16-18) The sons of Eli were worthless men who did not know Jehovah and as a result "**despised** the offering of the LORD." (1Sa 2:17). Naas is used in the Psalms of a greedy man who "spurns Jehovah" (Ps 10:3), the wicked who "spurned God" (Ps 10:13), "the enemy" who spurned His Name (Ps 74:10), foolish people who "spurned" His Name (Ps 74:18) and His people who "spurned the counsel of the Most High." (Ps 107:11). Israel was disciplined because they "**despised** the word of the Holy One of Israel" (Isa. 5:24, cp Isa 1:4 "**despised** the Holy One of Israel").

**Numbers 14:24 "But My servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it.**

BGT Numbers 14:24 δ πας μου Χαλεβ τι γενθη πνεμα τερον νατ κα πηκολοθησν μοι εσξατν  
εστν γνεσνεσθεν κε κατσπρματοκληρονομσειατν

NET Numbers 14:24 Only my servant Caleb, because he had a different spirit and has followed me fully— I will bring him into the land where he had gone, and his descendants will possess it.

NLT Numbers 14:24 But my servant Caleb has a different attitude than the others have. He has remained loyal to me, so I will bring him into the land he explored. His descendants will possess their full share of that land.

ESV Numbers 14:24 But my servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit and has followed me fully, I will

bring into the land into which he went, and his descendants shall possess it.

NIV Numbers 14:24 But because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it.

KJV Numbers 14:24 But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.

YLT Numbers 14:24 and My servant Caleb, because there hath been another spirit with him, and he is fully after Me -- I have brought him in unto the land whither he hath entered, and his seed doth possess it.

LXE Numbers 14:24 But my servant Chaleb, because there was another spirit in him, and he followed me, I will bring him into the land into which he entered, and his seed shall inherit it.

ASV Numbers 14:24 but my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.

CSB Numbers 14:24 But since My servant Caleb has a different spirit and has followed Me completely, I will bring him into the land where he has gone, and his descendants will inherit it.

NKJ Numbers 14:24 "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.

NRS Numbers 14:24 But my servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit and has followed me wholeheartedly, I will bring into the land into which he went, and his descendants shall possess it.

- **my servant:** Nu 14:6-9 13:30 26:65 De 1:36 Jos 14:6-14
- **followed me:** Nu 32:11,12 De 6:5 Jos 14:8,9 1Ch 29:9,18 2Ch 25:2 Ps 119:80,145 Pr 23:26 Ac 11:23 Eph 6:6 Col 3:23
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passage

Nu 13:30+ Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will surely overcome it."

Joshua 14:8; 9; 14 "Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt with fear; but **I followed the LORD my God fully**.... 14:9 "So Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land on which your foot has trodden will be an inheritance to you and to your children forever, because **you have followed the LORD my God fully**.'... 14:14 Therefore, Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite until this day, because **he followed the LORD God of Israel fully**.

Numbers 32:11; 12 (**NOTE THE STRIKING CONTRAST**) 'None of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob; **for they did not follow Me fully**, 12 except Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua the son of Nun, **for they have followed the LORD fully**.'

Deuteronomy 1:35-36 (**CONTRAST OF DAVID AND SOLOMON**) 'Not one of these men, this evil generation, shall see the good land which I swore to give your fathers, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him and to his sons I will give the land on which he has set foot, **because he has followed the LORD fully**.'

1 Kings 11:6 Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and **did not follow the LORD fully**, as David his father had done. (SEE Acts 13:22+)

**But My servant Caleb** - Now God speaks of the one (along with Joshua) who believed His Word of promise regarding the Promised Land. God considers Caleb My servant, where "My" is the personal possessive pronoun. Caleb belongs to God. Who could wish for a better Master?

Other **servants:** Abraham, Job, Joshua, David, Eliakim (Isa 22:20), Zerubbabel (Hag 2:23), Caleb, Moses, Isaiah, Israel (Jacob) (Isa 41:8,9).

**Servant** ((05650) '**ebed** from '**abad** = work in any sense) This noun appears over 750 times in the Old Testament. and means a slave or bondservant. Slavery in Israel amounted to indentured servitude. A fellow Israelite could not be held indefinitely against his will. In fact, his time of service was limited to 6 yr (Ex 21:2). The master could be punished if evil intent against the slave was proven (Ex 21:14) or if the slave died (Ex 21:20). These types of servants held a position of honor (Ge 24:2ff; 41:12, 15:2). The phrase, the servant of the Lord, is the most outstanding reference to the Messiah in the Old Testament, and its teachings are concentrated at the

end of Isaiah (Isa. 42:1, 19; 43:10; 49:3, 5–7; 52:13; 53:11). The “**servant**” was not a free man. He was subject to the will and command of his master. But one might willingly and lovingly submit to his master (Ex 21:5), remaining in his service when he was not obliged to do so. Hence it is a very fitting description of the relationship of man to God.

The **Septuagint** translates **ebed** here in Numbers 14:24 not with the Greek word we might have expected ([doulos](#)), but [pais](#), which literally means a child, a youth, but in relation to God speaks of men as God's servants (Lk 1:54, 69, Acts 4:25) and is even used of Jesus Christ! (Mt 12:18, Acts 3:13, 26; 4:27, 30). So here in Nu 14:24 [pais](#) is used in reference to social position of a servant, slave "boy" (Lk 7.7), as a servant in a ruler's household (Mt 14.2).

**NIVSB** - Caleb may be singled out—even from Joshua—because he took the initiative to encourage the people to possess the land (Nu 13:30). His ultimate vindication came 45 years later (See commentary on Joshua 14:6ff)

**Because** - Term of explanation. In a sense it explains why God considers Caleb a servant, but it is also the explanation (that follows) of what He will reward His servant.

**He has had a different spirit - Different** than who or what? Well, in context, different than the 10 spies, but also different than the two million! Caleb has a "one in a million" spirit. As the context shows, this is a spirit of submission and obedience to the will of the Master.

**Bush on different spirit** - That is, he was actuated by a very different spirit from the rest of the spies. His was a bold, resolute, courageous spirit, while theirs was a base, cowardly, and pusillanimous spirit...The same testimony is doubtless to be understood as applicable to Joshua, though not here named, for the reason probably that he was not classed with the mass of the people, but was a constant attendant upon Moses. He is expressly included in the promise, Nu 32:12.

Caleb and Joshua (see Nu 27:18+) had a different spirit, so God preserved their lives until they entered the land. That's a common dynamic among God's followers. Those who submit to His processes experience fulfillment of promises; those who complain about the processes don't.

**TSK** - Caleb had another spirit; not only a bold, generous, courageous, noble, and heroic spirit, but the Spirit and influence of God, which thus raised him above human inquietudes and earthly fears. Therefore he followed God fully; literally, "and he filled after me:" God shewed him the way he was to take and the line of conduct he was to pursue, and he filled up this line, and in all things followed the will of his Maker.

**Spurgeon**: "Be out-and-out for him; unfurl your colours, never hide them, but nail them to the mast, and say to all who ridicule the saints, "If you have any ill words for the followers of Christ, pour them out upon me. . . . but know this – ye shall hear it whether you like it or not, - 'I love Christ.'" (The Secret of Love to God)

**And has followed Me fully** - What a beautiful description of a human being, that God would say **he has followed Me fully**. **Followed fully** is two words in Hebrew (achar male - also in Josh 14:8, 9, 14) but is translated with one word [epakolouthéo](#) (from **epi** = upon or an intensifier + **akolouthéo** = to follow and figuratively in a moral sense - see below) literally means to follow after, to follow upon or follow closely. To follow close upon. Literally to go along in someone's footsteps. The figurative meaning is to follow or imitate someone's life, living in the same way. Another nuance describes pursuing a matter (with devotion, dedication or attention) (as in 1Ti 5:10). The root verb **akolouthéo** in the NT refers to being a disciple of Christ, which can include external following (Mt 8:19+, Mk 10:28+) but with the added idea of "a total commitment and in an exclusive relation to one who is recognized as not just a teacher but the Messiah. This discipleship brings participation in salvation (Mk 10:17, Lk 9:61, 62, Jn 8:12, Rev 14:4) but also in suffering (Mt 8:19, 20, Mk 8:34, Jn 12:25, 26)" (TDNTA) **One might say that Caleb was like an "Old Testament Disciple" of Jehovah, and as such gives a perfect pattern for the NT disciple of Jesus to imitate. [Epakolouthéo](#) is used in 1 Peter 2:21 "For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps."**

May God's Spirit enable us all to follow Christ the way Caleb fully followed Jehovah so that so that He might bring us fully into our spiritual inheritance in Christ all for His glory and fame. Amen

Note the contrasting description of those who did not inherit the land

"None of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob; for **they did not follow Me fully** ([male](#)) except Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have followed the LORD fully ([male](#))." (Nu 32:11+). (See the [related passage in Joshua below](#) where fully - [male](#) is used THREE TIMES -- clearly [male](#) is a key word in the description of Caleb!).



**Bush on followed Me fully** - That is, hath exhibited a full, constant, and complete obedience in this matter; hath neither turned aside, halted, or come short in following or complying with my commands. The same original phrase occurs Deut. 1:3, Josh. 14:8, 9, 14,

**Fully** (04390)(**male**) means to fill or to be full, to complete, to fulfill, to finish, to satisfy. Male is used of something full in both the spatial and temporal sense. This same word is used in Nu 14:21 "all the earth **will be filled** (**male**) with the glory of the LORD."

Don't miss the principle that **obedience** is the path to divine **blessing**!  
There are no shortcuts and no bypaths!

Caleb's song could have been "**Single Heart**" or even better "**Pure Heart**" both sung by Craig Smith...

Over and over I hear it again  
That the Father desires pure heart  
Not to seek earthly treasure or the favor of man  
But to be found with pureness of heart

Chorus

Pure heart is what the Father desires  
Holy heart purified by God's holy fire  
Broken heart, proven to be faithful and true  
Fashion in me a heart that's thirsting for You

Search ever chamber, expose them to me  
Create motives of honor and simplicity  
May you find faithfulness, integrity  
A heart which is worthy for Your eyes to see

Chorus

My only ambition is to stand before You  
And find I was pleasing in Your sight  
And obedient child of God, faithful and true  
Found with pureness of heart

Chorus

Craig Smith not only wrote and sang "Pure Heart" but wrote the following regarding "Pure Heart"

The pure heart is free of mixed motives. It is one emptied of self, and filled with total devotion to the Lord.--  
Craig Smith

In the natural realm, when we speak of the heart, we are referring to the chief physical organ in the human body. Though failure of other human organs can result in death, no other part plays a more important life sustaining role than that of the heart. This is also true in the spiritual realm. Throughout Biblical history, the heart has represented the man himself. The very center of his every emotion and appetite. It is no wonder then, that the Lord requires we love Him with all our heart. A heart wholly devoted to the Lord is a heart which is pure, it has no admixture. It is not divided, polluted, or contaminated by foreign substances. The Psalmist tells us (Ps 51:16,17) God is not pleased with sacrifices and burnt offerings. In fact, He told the Israelites, the very ones He set up the sacrificial system through, that He no longer took pleasure in their burnt offerings, and that the offerings had even become "worthless." (Is 1:11-13) The problem was not in His system, but was instead in the hearts of His people. He knew their hearts, and their hearts were void of the necessary total devotion and love for Him. They were merely going through a heartless motion of meaningless religious ceremony. The result, "When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you, yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen." (Is 1:15) He then appeals to them to repent of their sins and by doing so, even though their "sins are a scarlet, they will be washed white as snow..." I cannot help but mention the close parallel in Israel's situation then, with the present situation in our western culture today. According to various polling systems, the majority of people living in the United States have a belief in God. However, for a majority, we do not seem to have a great effect on our society. Could it be that a great many of those polled are just going through "meaningless religious ceremony"? We would all do well to compare our present

relationships with Christ with the early churches relationships to Christ. Once again, what pleases the Father is the whole heart devoted to Him. The acceptable sacrifices to the Lord are no longer "burnt offerings" but instead "...a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart..." The word "broken" in these passages refers to a crushing into the form of powder. If you were to take a small stone and toss it into a swift stream of water, the stone would resist the flow and quickly sink to the bottom. However, you could recover the same small stone, pound it into a fine powder, and then pour it from your hand into the stream and even though it is the same mineral substance, it no longer resists the stream's flow, but instead floats wherever the stream carries it. In many ways we are like the small stone. With selfish, unsubmissive hearts, we resist God's flow or direction and find ourselves sinking. However, if we are wise, we will approach the Lord and ask Him to reveal any and hurtful object in our hearts. Reveal anything that divides us from a right relationship with Him and restore us to the joy of our salvation. May our prayers be that He will crush us into submissive, totally devoted hearts. Suddenly we will realize we are flowing with Him and being totally fulfilled by our relationship with Him, instead of living in the strife of resistance. We will never know total fulfillment, until He has from us a total heart, a whole heart, a pure heart.--Craig Smith

**I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it-** Note 2 promises. First Caleb would be brought into the Promised Land. It took 45 years, but God answered (cf Joshua 14:6-15, Joshua 15:13-19. Who are Caleb's "descendants?" Indeed they were his physical descendants but applicationally this is anyone who obeys God believing that what He has promised He will perform no matter what the "odds" may look like. Cp Heb 11:6 for similar truth.

**THOUGHT** - Frances Havergal in the great hymn [Like a River Glorious](#) wrote: "**They who trust Him wholly, find Him wholly True.**" Caleb experienced this wonderful blessing and joy and we can too. Lord God give each of us a "different spirit" one that follows You "wholly" so that we too might joyfully find You "wholly true". In Your Name Faithful and True. Amen. Lord You promised that those who diligently seek You will find you (Pr 8:17). Let it be Lord. Amen.

In Joshua 14 Caleb now recalls the promise from the Lord 45 years earlier at Kadesh Barnea

(Joshua 14:6-13+) Then the sons of Judah drew near to Joshua in Gilgal, and **Caleb the son of Jephunneh** the Kenizzite said to him, "You know the word which the LORD spoke to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh-barnea. 7 "I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land, and I brought word back to him as it was in my heart. 8 "Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt with fear; but **I followed the LORD my God fully (male)**. 9 "So Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land on which your foot has trodden will be an inheritance to you and to your children forever, because **you have followed the LORD my God fully (male)**.' 10 "Now behold, the LORD has let me live, just as He spoke, these forty-five years, from the time that the LORD spoke this word to Moses, when Israel walked in the wilderness; and now behold, I am eighty-five years old today. 11 "I am still as strong today as I was in the day Moses sent me; as my strength was then, so my strength is now, for war and for going out and coming in. 12 "Now then, give me this hill country about which the LORD spoke on that day, for you heard on that day that Anakim were there, with great fortified cities; perhaps the LORD will be with me, and I will drive them out as the LORD has spoken." 13 So Joshua blessed him and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance. 14 Therefore, Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite until this day, because **he followed the LORD God of Israel fully (male)**).

**Take possession** - (Dt 32:47) is [yarash](#) which has the legal sense of becoming an heir (Jer 32:8+) and the military sense of invasion for the purpose of settling in the territory. Both meanings are prominent with regard to God's covenant with Israel. God told Abraham that the land of Canaan would belong to his descendants but, after leaving Egypt, they had to take possession of the Promised Land.

Note the juxtaposition of **God's sovereignty** ("will bring (him) into the land") and **man's responsibility** (Caleb "entered") When? He entered with 12 spies--the difference being that Caleb entered by faith, taking God at His Word and laying hold of His promises not just with his mouth but by his walk.

---

**Spurgeon - Caleb—the man for the times'** Numbers 14:24

I would to God that we had all of us that which is the distinguishing mark of a right spirit, the spirit of faith, that spirit which takes God at his word, reads his promise, and knows it to be true. He that has this spirit will soon follow the Lord fully. Unbelief is the mother of sin, but faith is the nurse of virtue. (2Pe 1:5KJV+) More faith, Lord, may we have more simple childlike faith upon a precious Saviour! (Mk 9:24+, Lk 17:5+)

Then a faithful spirit always begets a meek spirit, and a meek spirit always begets a brave spirit. It is said of the wood of the elder tree that none is softer, but yet it is recorded of old that Venice was built upon piles of the elder tree because it will never rot; and so the meek-spirited man who is gentle and patient lasts on bravely, holding his own against all the attacks of the destroying adversary.

The true believer has also a loving spirit as the result of Jesus' grace. He loves God, therefore he loves God's people and God's creatures, and having this loving spirit he has next a zealous spirit, and so he spends and is spent for God, and this begets in him a heavenly spirit and so he tries to live in heaven and to make earth a heaven to his fellow-men, believing that he shall soon have a heaven for himself and for them too on the other side of the stream.

Such a spirit had good Caleb. We cannot imitate him till we get his spirit; we are dead until God quickens us. O that his Holy Spirit would lead us to go to Jesus just as we are, and look up to Him and beseech Him to fulfil that great covenant promise—"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you....I will put My Spirit within you" (Ezek 36:26-27+)

---

#### Related Resources:

- Who is Caleb in the Bible?
- James Hastings on Caleb (from Great Men and Women of the Bible)

---

#### Richard Mayhue - People of God's Word

Let me introduce you to some people in Scripture who exemplified a key element in having a right relationship to God's Word. If you will incorporate each of these examples into your experience, you can lead the normal Christian life.

First, Job hungered for and craved God's Word. He prioritized spiritual nourishment higher than the physical. 'I have not departed from the command of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food' (Job 23:12).

**Second, Caleb fully obeyed God's Word.** He understood the Word as orders from above with the obligation to follow in every detail. 'But My servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it' (Num. 14:24).

Third, the post-captivity Jews honoured God's Word. When the Word was opened, it was as though God entered their presence. They responded with appropriate respect. 'Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. Then Ezra blessed the LORD the great God. And all the people answered, 'Amen, Amen!' while lifting up their hands; then they bowed low and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground' (Neh. 8:5-6).

Fourth, Ezra studied God's Word. He viewed Scripture not as a shallow stream to wade in but rather a deep river in which to swim. 'For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel' (Ezra 7:10).

Fifth, Apollos understood God's Word. Accuracy became his hallmark. 'Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John' (Acts 18:24-25).

Sixth, Paul disciplined faithful and able men in the Scriptures. He realized the responsibility to hand the Word on to coming generations. 'The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also' (2 Tim. 2:2)

---

#### Wholehearted!

Because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it. Numbers 14:24

Today's Scripture & Insight: Numbers 13:26–32; 14:20–24

Caleb was a "wholehearted" person. He and Joshua were part of a twelve-man reconnaissance team that explored the Promised Land and gave a report to Moses and the people. Caleb said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it" (Num. 13:30). But ten members of the team said they couldn't possibly succeed. In spite of God's promises, they saw only obstacles (vv. 31–33).

Ten men caused the people to lose heart and grumble against God, which led to forty years of wandering in the desert. But Caleb never quit. The Lord said, “Because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it” (14:24). Forty-five years later God honored His promise when Caleb, at the age of 85, received the city of Hebron “because he followed the Lord, the God of Israel, wholeheartedly” (Josh. 14:14).

Centuries later an expert in the law asked Jesus, “Which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied, “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment” (Matt. 22:35–38).

Today Caleb is still inspiring us with his confidence in a God who deserves our wholehearted love, reliance, and commitment. By: David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, may we love You wholeheartedly today and follow You every day of our journey on this earth.

Commitment to Christ is a daily calling.

---

## Do You See Giants?

My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land.  
—Numbers 14:24

Today's Scripture: Numbers 13:17-30

The 12 spies who were sent out by Moses scouted the land of Canaan for 40 days. When they returned, all but Joshua and Caleb gave this pessimistic report: “We were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight” (Num. 13:33).

These faithless ones saw only difficulties and defeat. Yes, the giants were great, but wasn't their God greater? How could they so easily forget the way God led them through the wilderness?

The 10 spies who were filled with doubt died in the wilderness. We know that Joshua led the people into the Promised Land. But what about Caleb? God blessed him and brought him into the land too because he had a different spirit and followed Him wholeheartedly (14:24).

Think for a moment of two balloons. One is filled with carbon dioxide and cannot rise. The other balloon is filled with helium and immediately goes up. So too, if our hearts are filled with doubts and fears, we will not be able to rise in faith to do what God wants us to do.

We need more Calebs—willing to follow the leading of the Lord because they are filled with His Holy Spirit. Are you a Caleb of faith, or are you among the doubters who always see the giants of difficulty? —Henry G. Bosch (ODB Editor 1956-1981) By: Henry G. Bosch ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,  
And looks to God alone,  
Laughs at impossibilities,  
And cries, "It shall be done!"  
—Anon.

Fear sees the obstacle; faith sees the opportunity.

## CALEB

My servant Caleb, because he ... hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went.—  
Num. 14:24.

CALEB is one of the finest characters in the Bible. He is a stalwart, honest character, a man who obeyed God without question, who never feared to do his duty, and never turned his back on an enemy. His father, Jephunneh, is described as “the Kenezite.” The Kenezites were outside the pale of the chosen people. Thus Caleb was not of Israelitish birth or descent. He was of an alien people. He was one of the first-fruits of the Gentile harvest of which Jethro, Rahab, Ruth, Naaman, and many others were samples and signs. Yet this man, a stranger to Israel by birth, became one of Israel's most illustrious ornaments. In spirit and service he was “an

Israelite indeed." The son of the Kenezite was a true son of God.

## I THE WITNESS

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.—Num. 13:30.

1. The year that followed the Exodus was a wonderful one for the children of Israel. It was spent at the foot of Mount Sinai, where measures were taken to organize them into a theocratic commonwealth. It was here that they received the Decalogue. It was here that Moses, as God's viceroy, gathered about him the princes and the forty elders, the former of whom constituted the Upper and the latter the Lower House of Parliament. And it was here that an army of able-bodied men was mustered and mobilized under Joshua as commander-in-chief. Thus, in twelve months, the people who had escaped from Egypt a mere rabble of slaves were transformed into a well-organized and formidable nation.

And now at length they stood facing the land towards which all hearts were yearning. The time was ripe. Everything hinged upon a concerted movement to take possession. But the people must deliberately choose. Moses could lead them only with their will. Accordingly, a committee was representatively appointed, one member from each tribe, through whose eyes the people might see the land and upon the basis of whose report they might act.

2. The men did their work thoroughly, traversing the valleys and climbing the hills, viewing the oliveyards and vineyards, and skirting the slopes of Hebron where the Anakim dwelt. After forty days' search they returned, bringing with them a branch with one cluster of grapes, and also a specimen of the pomegranates and the figs. On the whole, their report was very gloomy. They had, of course, some good things to say about the productiveness of the land, but they gave a very alarming account of the people: "The people be strong that dwell in the land." "All the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature;.... we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."

¶ Thou camest to spy out the land of promise; go not back without one cluster of grapes to show thy brethren for their encouragement. Let them see that thou hast tasted of the wine, by the gladness of thy heart; and that thou hast been anointed with the oil, by the cheerfulness of thy countenance; and hast fed of the milk and honey, by the mildness of thy disposition, and the sweetness of thy conversation. This heavenly fire would melt thy frozen heart, and refine and spiritualize it, but it must have time to operate. Thus pursue the work till something be done, till thy grace be in exercise, thy affections raised, and thy soul refreshed with thy delights above. Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing.

3. The children of Israel, who had counted on an easy victory, gave way to a cowardly despair, even before the report was brought to its conclusion. They heard the words, "The people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great," and there was an immediate outburst of panic and confusion. Caleb, and at this point in the history he alone, "stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." His associates in the exploration, however, repeated their discouraging reports. The whole work of the Exodus and of Sinai seemed on the point of being frustrated: First, there was the despairing wish, "Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! Would God, we had died in this wilderness!" Then there was the natural result of that backward look, "Were it not better for us to return into Egypt?" Then the thought passed into a deliberate purpose, "Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt." And then the two who had not yielded to the first impulse of fear—Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun—stood forward against the madness of the people. They "rent their clothes" in passionate protest against the rebellious cowardice of the people. They testified once more that the land to which they had been sent was an exceedingly good land; that the Lord Jehovah was able to bring them into it, and give it them; that the people of the land would be as "bread" for them to devour. They ended with the watchword of all true hero-souls, "The Lord is with us: fear them not." The others had measured themselves against the trained soldiers and giants, and were in despair. These two measured Amalekites and Anakim against God, and were jubilant. They do not dispute the facts, but they reverse the implied conclusion, because they add the governing fact of God's help.

¶ Once Frederick the Great wrote to one of his generals, "I send you against the enemy with 60,000 men." But, when the troops were numbered, it was found that there were only 50,000; and the officer was surprised and displeased. "There is no mistake," Frederick replied, "I counted you for 10,000 men." But who will say for how many God counts?

4 Caleb and Joshua saw two things. First, they saw and put prominently forward the greatness of the opportunity; and they saw also that behind the land's strength there was a real weakness. It may have been that they detected the moral rottenness of the people among whom they had gone. But, whether or not, there was certainly in them the conviction that God was with Israel to carry through the purpose which He had begun—that astonishing conviction, one of the greatest of the world's miracles, which went with Israel through its history, and which still binds into unity for us the whole of the Old Testament. With that conviction burning in them they gave their voice for the forward policy.

But the heart had gone out of the people. They feared and trembled and refused to advance. It was in vain that Caleb pointed to the grapes he had gathered at Eshcol; it was in vain he tried to tempt his countrymen. There were even some who would have slain Caleb for his earnest exhortations. "Stone him! Stone him!" they cried; and there is no telling what would have happened, but for the fact that just then the cloud appeared above the tabernacle of the congregation to signify that God would speak with the people. And through Moses He delivered this message: "How long will this people despise me? and how long will they not believe in me?... Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my signs, which I wrought in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have tempted me these ten times and have not hearkened to my voice; surely they shall not see the land which I swore unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that despised me see it: but my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it."

¶ If Mistrust and Timorous had been prepared to face the dangers of the way, they, like Christian, would have reached the Celestial City. "Now when he was got up to the top of the Hill, there came two men running to meet him again; the name of the one was Timorous, and the other Mistrust. To whom Christian said, Sirs, what's the matter you run the wrong way? Timorous answered, That they were going to the City of Zion, and had got up that difficult place; but said he, the further we go, the more danger we meet with, wherefore we turned, and are going back again. Yes, said Mistrust, for just before us lies a couple of Lyons in the way, (whether sleeping or waking we know not) and we could not think, if we came within reach but they would presently pull us in pieces.

Chr. Then said Christian, You make me afraid, but whither shall I fly to be safe? If I go back to mine own Countrey, That is prepared for Fire and Brimstone, and I shall certainly perish there. If I can get to the Celestial City, I am sure to be in safety there, I must venture; To go back is nothing but death, to go forward is fear of death, and life everlasting beyond it. I will yet go forward. So Mistrust and Timorous ran down the Hill; and Christian went on his way."

**5. Caleb was an optimist.** He dreamed dreams and saw visions. No wonder he possessed such a spirit, for he "wholly followed the Lord his God." This is a striking expression. In the Hebrew it is a pictorial word, and describes a ship going out at full sail. This was the reason of his optimism: he flung every power of body and soul and spirit like a free sheet to the winds of God's grace and God's Spirit and God's providence. He went in whole-heartedly for God and His cause, unhampered by any spirit of limitation. Caleb had something of Moses in him. He had an eye for the future. He was capable of Pisgah glimpses. His was one of those lives which seem always to be pitched upon a hill; he could see things afar off. He is the real hero of this enterprise; he has made the work of exploration his own. Joshua is the actual conqueror of Canaan; Caleb is the man who predicted the advantage of possessing it. But Caleb's confidence that "we are well able to overcome" was more than natural optimism; it was religious trust, as is plain from God's eulogium on him in Num. 14:24.

¶ We may compare Caleb, to use the metaphor of good old Gotthold, to a tree. The wind had been blowing—it was a dreadful hurricane, and Gotthold walked into a forest and saw many trees torn up by the roots; he marvelled much at one tree which stood alone and yet had been unmoved in the tempest. He said, "How is this? The trees that were together have fallen, and this alone stands fast!" He observed that when the trees grow too closely they cannot send their roots into the earth; they lean too much upon each other; but this tree, standing alone, had space to thrust its roots into the earth, and lay hold on the rock and stones; and so when the wind came it fell not. It was so with Caleb—he always would lay hold upon his God, not upon men; and so when the wind came he stood.

¶ The Rev. F. B. Meyer, in course of an appreciation of the life and work of Dr. Paton, wrote: An invincible optimist! For him, no good cause can ever be a lost cause. I question if he has ever been permanently disappointed, or ever absolutely failed. "Impossible" and "impracticable" are words for which he has no use; and though they have probably been hurled often enough at his schemes, when first announced, they have been found to be inappropriate and untrue. A visionary, whose visions have been realized; a dreamer, whose dreams have clothed themselves in fact! At an age when ninety-nine men out of a hundred leave the conduct of affairs to others, he is in the forefront and thick of the fight; and the rest of us gladly recognize that he is in his right place, and that years have not diminished but enhanced his competence to lead in all that makes for the betterment of the people. His optimism and enthusiasm are so contagious that statesmen, bishops, deans, ministers of every religious body, philanthropists, and shrewd business men are swept into his orbit and become inspired by his aims. His motives are absolutely selfless; his soul is simple and pure as a child's; and the strength of his personality is fairly irresistible. When he begins to weave his web around you to secure your interest and co-operation, you may as well yield at once to his genial persuasiveness, for you will have to do so sooner or later. In fact, you would feel it mean to leave a load on those broad and burdened shoulders



which you could lighten or remove.

¶ Florence Nightingale did many things herself, but she was also the inspirer and instigator of more things which were done by others. She was able of her own initiative to institute considerable reforms; but she was a reformer on a larger scale through the influence which she exercised. Though she was in truth no magician, there were men on the spot who, not being able to understand the secret and sources of her power, seemed to find something uncanny in it. Our good friend, Colonel Sterling, who hated the intrusion of petticoats into a campaign, was very much puzzled. The thing seemed to him “ludicrous,” as we have heard, but he had to admit that “Miss Nightingale queens it with absolute power”; and elsewhere he speaks of “the Nightingale power” as something mysterious and “fabulous.” The secret, however, is simple. “The Nightingale power” was due to causes of which some were inherent in herself and others were adventitious. The inherent strength of her influence lay in the masterful will and practical good sense which gave her dominion over the minds of men. The adventitious sources of her power were that she had both the ear and the confidence of Ministers, and the interest and sympathy of the Court. I have called this accession of influence “adventitious,” but it also accrued to her, in a secondary degree, from the inherent force of her character.

## II THE REWARD

Now therefore give me this mountain.—Josh. 14:12.

**1. Now followed a period of thirty-eight years in which the children of Israel wandered to and fro, entangled in the wilderness.** The life of Caleb, during those weary years, is recorded in the single sentence, “He wholly followed the Lord.” In other words, he was doing his duty and biding his time. Not for a moment did he lose his confidence in the promise of God. Nor was he discontented or over-eager for action. He who “wholly follows the Lord,” knows how to labour and to wait. So Caleb kept his soul in patience. He acquiesced in the postponement of his own heaven. He concealed his aspiration. He hid his contempt for the sordid throng. He gave no hint that he was above their business. He joined them on their own level, in their own work. He took up his brothers’ cares—cares about inferior things. He put his hand to the duties of the desert when his heart was up in Canaan. He saw the people dropping out, one by one, until the entire generation that had come out of Egypt lay in graves along the way. He saw Moses climb to his lonely sepulchre, and heard his last farewell: “Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.” And still the faith of Caleb failed not.

**2. Then came the crossing of the Jordan, the taking of Jericho, the driving out of the native tribes and the distribution of the land.** The deadly plague which befell the ten, and the nearly forty years’ wandering which befell the people, the preservation of the lives of Caleb and Joshua only of all the nation above twenty years of age who came out of Egypt, followed by the ultimate conquest of the land, had been a sufficient vindication of the faithfulness of God and the truthfulness of Caleb and Joshua. Now, however, that the land was to be distributed among the conquerors, and there were still a few unconquered, although greatly weakened, districts—and notably the main stronghold of the Anakim of the south, within whose walls the last chief of the tribe held out against the conquerors—Caleb went to Joshua, his old comrade, repeated the story of forty years before, referred to the promise of Moses that he should possess this stronghold, and pleaded that the privilege might be given him to take it.

His case was a very strong one, his record good and fair. He had been frank when truth was unpopular and hard to speak, and loyal when defection was widespread; he had experienced Providential help and deliverances; he had retained the capacity, and won the moral right, to essay the capture of Hebron; he was an efficient man, but he was in absolute dependence on the sufficiency of God. His estate that was to be was still occupied by the enemy. He was not about to enter upon a peaceful occupation; it was a conquest that lay before him. The Lord had preserved his life during these forty years—preserved it, as he believes, that he might be permitted to conquer the sons of Anak.

**3. It makes the blood run fast in a man’s veins to read the courageous words of the grim old soldier.** He stands there before Joshua and says: “I am this day fourscore and five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, and to go out and to come in. Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakim were there, and cities great and fenced: it may be that the Lord will be with me, and I shall drive them out, as the Lord spake.” There is nothing in the Bible more wonderful in its way than Caleb’s testimony at eighty-five years of age. Nor was this a mere boast. The old man was not self-deluded in the matter of his strength. He was ready for war, ready to storm the stronghold of Hebron. Jubilant in prospect of driving out the Anakim, Caleb had youth’s strength and valour and optimism in extreme old age.

¶ One day when Signor had ended a delightful talk with Sir William Richmond, as this sympathetic friend was leaving the studio he said to me that he found Signor’s interests and range of thought wider even than they were. “Well, to grow still at seventy-eight is youth,” he added. Sir James Knowles spoke in much the same terms, and gave me his interpretation of the saying, “Whom the Gods love die young”; which was, that in mind

they never grew old. Of this Sir James Knowles wrote to me later: "I am so glad you like my interpretation of that old proverb. This is how I put it down:—

'Whom the Gods love die young,' the proverb told;  
The meaning is they never can grow old  
However long their list of labours past;  
God-given youth is with them to the last.

You have the proof of this before your eyes every day, and long may it be so! I send him my best regards." Once, speaking of his own feeling, Signor told me the only difference he found in himself as he grew older was this—"I am interested in more things, and I feel younger instead of older. I know I am quite as eager, quite as much striving for improvement in my work, as I was at the beginning of life."

Therefore I summon age  
To grant youth's heritage,  
Life's struggle having so far reached its term:  
Thence shall I pass, approved  
A man, for aye removed  
From the developed brute; a god though in the germ.

And I shall thereupon  
Take rest, ere I be gone  
Once more on my adventure brave and new:  
Fearless and unperplexed  
When I wage battle next,  
What weapons to select, what armour to indue.

**4. There is something very noble in Caleb's conception of a possession worth the having as that which involves toil and heroism on our part.** God's best gifts are after all given on these conditions. It is "to him that overcometh" that the choicest blessings of the Apocalypse are given. The inheritance of the saints in light, like that of Caleb, is to be the inheritance of the conqueror. Caleb had caught this essential aspect of a noble life. The reward of the man who has done well is that he shall do more.

The fire had been smouldering in the heart of this man for forty-five years; and now in sight of the mountain it flamed up. All that time he had been waiting for an opportunity to have at the giants; and now that the hour had come, he proved himself no idle boaster. He drove the giants from one town to another, and finally they seem to have made their last stand in a strong town called Kirjath-sepher. In his eagerness to gain this town he offered the hand of his daughter Achsah to any warrior who should obtain possession of it, and the prize was claimed by Othniel. It was followed, in the striking story, which breathes in every word the spirit of a remote antiquity, by the grant with it of the "upper and the nether springs," that the city might not be, in any sense of the word, a barren and unfruitful heritage.

Of all the Israelites who received their inheritance in the Land of Promise, Caleb appears to have been the only one who succeeded in entirely expelling the native occupiers of the country. The Israelites generally seem to have made but poor headway against their strong and mighty foes, with their chariots of iron and fenced walls. Repeatedly we encounter the sorrowful affirmation that they were not able to drive them out. But Caleb was a notable exception. What though Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim (Josh. 14:15), what though his three grandsons, Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai, the sons of Anak, were prepared to yield their lives rather than give up possession (15:14), Caleb drove them out—not he indeed, but the Lord, who was with him, and gave him a victory that must have otherwise eluded even his strong hands. The man who "wholly followed the Lord" was alone wholly victorious.

¶ Nowhere is thoroughness more needed than in religious work, nowhere is slackness more prevalent. There are Christians who serve Christ as diligently and faithfully as they do their earthly work, and they shall not miss their reward; but many of Christ's servants would not be tolerated for a week by any other master. The poorest joint-stock company in the land is better served by its directors than many congregations are by their office-bearers. There are no teachers anywhere so ignorant and so casual as certain Sunday-school teachers; there is no clerk in a dry-goods store dare treat his duty as lightly as some of the voluntary officers of the Christian Church. They will absent themselves without leave and without excuse; they will never inquire how their work is being done or whether it is done at all; they will not take the trouble to prepare themselves to do it, and they are not concerned when it fails in their hands. They will place their pleasure and their fancies, and their social engagements, and their imaginary ailments before their Christian duty. And it would be difficult to say how little must be the burden, how short must be the time, that they would be willing to count an obligation upon them and would be prepared to face. One is sometimes inclined to propose a general resignation of the Christian

staff, and then an invitation to all who are prepared to do Christ's work as well as the work of the world is done, and it might be that three hundred thoroughgoing men like the Band of Gideon would do more for Christ than ten times the number of irresponsible casuals.

**5. How much longer Caleb lived after he claimed Hebron for his inheritance we do not know; but the language he uttered in his eighty-fifth year is very remarkable.** What a sublime retrospect! He can look back on the voyage of his life and say, "I wholly followed the Lord." Such a retrospect can be won only by years of fighting the good fight. The people also acknowledged his faithful service. "Joshua blessed him," we read of Caleb in his mellow old age (Josh. 14:13). Joshua prayed for the aged hero and saint. Joshua sought God's anointing for the venerable soldier of Israel. Caleb reaped a harvest of sympathetic prayer. Joshua not only prayed for Caleb but commended him in the sight of Israel. He held him up to honour. He enthroned the brave veteran on the approbation of the people. So the man of complete devotion to God received honour of man.

¶ In February 1889, when he reached his seventieth birthday, Lowell was entertained to dinner by his friends in Boston. Describing the event in a letter to the wife of his English friend Leslie Stephen, Lowell says: "I was dined on my birthday, and praised to a degree that would have satisfied you, most partial even of your sex. But somehow I liked it, and indeed none but a pig could have helped liking the affectionate way it was done. I suppose it is a sign of weakness in me somewhere, but I can't help it. I do like to be liked. It gives me a far better excuse for being about (and in everybody's way) than having written a fine poem does. That'll be all very well when one is under the mould. But I am not sure whether one will care for it much. So keep on liking me, won't you?"

¶ 19th Feb. 1826.—J(ames) B(allantine) came and sat an hour. I led him to talk of Woodstock; and, to say truth, his approbation did me much good. I am aware it may—nay, must—be partial; yet is he Tom Telltruth, and totally unable to disguise his real feelings. I think I make no habit of feeding on praise, and despise those whom I see greedy for it, as much as I should an under-bred fellow, who, after eating a cherry-tart, proceeded to lick the plate. But when one is flagging, a little praise (if it can be had genuine and unadulterated by flattery, which is as difficult to come by as the genuine mountain-dew) is a cordial after all.

13th May 1826.—I think very lightly in general of praise; it costs men nothing, and is usually only lip-salve. They wish to please, and must suppose that flattery is the ready road to the good will of every professor of literature. Some praise, however, and from some people, does at once delight and strengthen the mind, and I insert in this place the quotation with which Lord Chief Baron Shepherd concluded a letter concerning me to the Chief Commissioner (Adam): "Magna etiam ilia laus et admirabilis videri solet tulisse casus sapienter adversos, non fractum esse fortunâ, retinuisse in rebus asperis dignitatem." I record these words, not as meriting the high praise they imply, but to remind me that such an opinion being partially entertained of me by a man of character so eminent, it becomes me to make my conduct approach as much as possible to the standard at which he rates it.

---

**P G Matthew** - In Numbers 13 and 14 we are introduced to two behaviors of the Israelite majority: paralysis and convulsion. We see spiritual paralysis when they failed to trust in God and refused to go up and take possession of the Promised Land. Spiritual convulsion followed God's subsequent prohibition and resulted in defeat. Both behaviors are the result of unbelief. In the end, most of the Israelites died in their sins.

Two men, however, shine as stars in the midst of this crooked generation—Joshua and Caleb. Unlike the others, they did cross the Jordan to enjoy a land flowing with milk and honey. We are told four times in the Bible that they "followed the Lord wholeheartedly." What does this commendation mean?

First, they exercised saving faith in the covenant-keeping, Redeemer Lord who had brought them out of Egypt and had promised to bring them into Canaan. This faith necessarily issued in complete obedience, the very opposite of paralysis and convulsion. Obedience is ridiculed in today's society, yet it alone receives God's commendation. We tend to look upon one hundred percent obedience as an unattainable ideal. But God says that it is his unchangeable requirement.

Mature faith also bears the good fruit of hope and confidence in God and his promises. The majority report emphasized the size of the Anakites and concluded with the counsel of despair. Joshua and Caleb, however, encouraged the people: "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it" (Num. 13:30). They looked to the Lord while the others looked around. A child of God is eager to solve problems, while the unbelieving and the timid retreat from problems.

Joshua and Caleb went on to cross the Jordan, fight their enemies, and triumph. They and their families each inherited a portion of the Promised Land. Caleb's daughter married a proven man of God who had a lively faith. At the end of his life, Joshua could say, "As for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

The choice is clear. We can die in our unbelief and disobedience, or we can choose to follow the Lord wholeheartedly and enjoy covenant life and blessings. May God help us to choose life!

**Numbers 14:25 "Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites live in the valleys; turn tomorrow and set out to the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea."**

BGT Numbers 14:25 ὁ Ἀμαλὴκ καὶ Χαναναὶ οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐν ταῖς κοιλάσι τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ φησὶ καὶ πρᾶτε ἐς τὴν ῥῆμον ὅτι ἠλάσσαν ῥυθρῶς

NET Numbers 14:25 (Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites were living in the valleys.) Tomorrow, turn and journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea."

NLT Numbers 14:25 Now turn around, and don't go on toward the land where the Amalekites and Canaanites live. Tomorrow you must set out for the wilderness in the direction of the Red Sea. "

ESV Numbers 14:25 Now, since the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwell in the valleys, turn tomorrow and set out for the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea."

NIV Numbers 14:25 Since the Amalekites and Canaanites are living in the valleys, turn back tomorrow and set out toward the desert along the route to the Red Sea."

KJV Numbers 14:25 (Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwelt in the valley.) To morrow turn you, and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea.

YLT Numbers 14:25 'And the Amalekite and the Canaanite are dwelling in the valley; to-morrow turn ye and journey for yourselves into the wilderness -- the way of the Red Sea.'

LXE Numbers 14:25 But Amalec and the Chananite dwell in the valley: to-morrow turn and depart for the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea.

ASV Numbers 14:25 Now the Amalekite and the Canaanite dwell in the valley: to-morrow turn ye, and get you into the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea.

CSB Numbers 14:25 Since the Amalekites and Canaanites are living in the lowlands, turn back tomorrow and head for the wilderness in the direction of the Red Sea."

NKJ Numbers 14:25 "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."

NRS Numbers 14:25 Now, since the Amalekites and the Canaanites live in the valleys, turn tomorrow and set out for the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea."

- **the Amalekites:** Nu 13:29
- **turn:** Nu 14:4 De 1:40 Ps 81:11-13 Pr 1:31
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites live in the valleys**- These were peoples Israel feared (and we will soon see their fear was justified!).

**turn tomorrow and set out to the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea**- NLT - "Tomorrow you must set out for the wilderness in the direction of the Red Sea. "

**NET Note** - The judgment on Israel is that they turn back to the desert and not attack the tribes in the land. So a parenthetical clause is inserted to state who was living there. They would surely block the entrance to the land from the south—unless God removed them. And he is not going to do that for Israel.

**FSB - by way of the Red Sea** - Probably refers to the Gulf of Aqaba (see Exod 10:19; 13:18 and note). Since the Israelites are afraid to go forward, they are commanded to go backward, toward the very sea that they crossed on the way out of bondage (Exod 14–15).

**Related Resource:**

- [Who were the Amalekites? | GotQuestions.org](#)

---

**Norman Geisler - When Critics Ask** - NUMBERS 14:25—Did the Amalekites live in the mountain or in the valley?

**PROBLEM:** This verse says the Amalekites and Canaanites “dwell in the valley.” But verse 45 says the opposite, namely, they “dwelt in that mountain.”

**SOLUTION:** There are two possibilities. One is that these two verses may be referring to different groups. Some of them may have lived in the mountain and some in the valley. Or, it may have reference to the same people who lived in a valley or plateau which was also a mountain relative to the lower area around it from which they “came down” to fight (v. 45).

---

**Numbers 14:26 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying,**

- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying,**

---

**Numbers 14:26-35 So Near And Yet So Far**

Back in Canada’s early days, pioneers were taking shelter in Fort Babine. When supplies were nearly exhausted, Victor Clark and a young guide left the fort and walked to the town of Hazelton to get food.

On their way back to the fort, snow began to fall. Soon the two travelers were chilled to the bone by a stinging wind and were unable to follow the trail in the darkness. Forced to stop, they built a fire and spent a miserable night. Then as light slowly dawned, they saw the fort with its warmth and comfort—only a few hundred yards away from where they had stopped. So near and yet so far!

The Israelites were at the very border of the Promised Land (Numbers 13). Caleb and Joshua, the two courageous spies, had brought back the lush foods of Canaan and encouraged the people to take possession of the land (vv.26,30). But the people doubted and condemned themselves to 40 years of wandering and death in the desert (14:28-30). They too were so near and yet so far away!

Have you heard many times about Jesus’ love for you but remain uncommitted to Him? Are you near yet so far away? Choose now to cross over into the “promised land” of salvation found in Jesus. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

A Prayer

Dear Jesus, I admit that I am a sinner, and I ask for Your forgiveness.  
I believe that You died and took my punishment.  
I trust You as my Savior and Lord.  
Now is the time to choose the Lord—later may never come.

---

**Numbers 14:27 "How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who are grumbling against Me? I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel, which they are making against Me.**

---

BGT Numbers 14:27 ως τ νος τ ν συναγωγ ν τ ν πονηρ ν τα την α το γογγ ζουσιν ναντ ον μο τ ν γ γγυσιν τ ν υ ν Ισραηλ ν γ γγυσαν περ μ ν κ κοα

NET Numbers 14:27 "How long must I bear with this evil congregation that murmurs against me? I have heard the complaints of the Israelites that they murmured against me.

NLT Numbers 14:27 "How long must I put up with this wicked community and its complaints about me? Yes, I have heard the complaints the Israelites are making against me.

ESV Numbers 14:27 "How long shall this wicked congregation grumble against me? I have heard the grumbings of the people of Israel, which they grumble against me.

NIV Numbers 14:27 "How long will this wicked community grumble against me? I have heard the complaints of these grumbling Israelites.

KJV Numbers 14:27 How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me.

YLT Numbers 14:27 'Until when hath this evil company that which they are murmuring against Me? the murmurings of the sons of Israel, which they are murmuring against Me, I have heard;

LXE Numbers 14:27 How long shall I endure this wicked congregation? I have heard their murmurings against me, even the murmuring of the children of Israel, which they have murmured concerning you.

ASV Numbers 14:27 How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, that murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me.

CSB Numbers 14:27 "How long must I endure this evil community that keeps complaining about Me? I have heard the Israelites' complaints that they make against Me.

NKJ Numbers 14:27 "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.

NRS Numbers 14:27 How long shall this wicked congregation complain against me? I have heard the complaints of the Israelites, which they complain against me.

- **How long:** Nu 14:11 Ex 16:28 Mt 17:7 Mk 9:19
- **I have heard:** Ex 16:12 1Co 10:10
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who are grumbling against Me?** - **Grumbling** seems to have been Israel modus operandi. Notice here Jehovah clearly states the grumbling ever to His leaders like Moses was ultimately against Him. Bush adds "So also in the ensuing clause the idea is that of a murmuring which is first entertained by one party and thence communicated and propagated to others (ED: In the Lxx [gogguzo](#) is in the present tense speaking of continual murmuring). . It implies the spreading of a disaffection like the widening of the waves on the surface of a lake."

**Grumbling** (murmur)([03885](#))([lun](#)) is a word that has two meaning that are very different. In [Exodus 17:3](#) the meaning is clearly grumble or murmur. See note below on [gogguzo](#) also used here in the Septuagint.

**I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel, which they are making against Me-** These complaints have been going on since they were redeemed from Egypt.

**Complaints** (grumbings) ([08519](#))([telunah](#) from [lun](#) = to murmur) describe speech used of Israel's murmurings against the Lord (or His representatives) and as such represent an overt act rebellion, disbelief, and disobedience to duly constituted authority. Stated another way grumbings are rebellious expressions of complaint and dissatisfaction especially against Yahweh! They complained about having no food, so the Lord rained manna and quail from the sky (Exo. 16:3-15). The congregation also complained about the report of the spies who visited the Promised Land and expressed fear of the inhabitants. The Lord afflicted them with a plague and sent them back to Sinai for forty years (Num. 14). The Israelites grumbled against the authority of Moses and Aaron (cf. Ex 16:41-17:10).

**Telunah** is translated in the Septuagint with [gogguzo](#) which describes making an utterance made in a low tone and can be a direct assault or "behind the scenes talk." It means to [murmur](#), [mutter](#), make complaining remarks or noises under one's breath. Gogguzo is an [onomatopoeic](#) word derived from the sound made when murmuring or muttering in a low and indistinct voice with the idea of complaint. In short this word gives us a vivid picture to help us imagine this scene of Israelites making audible expressions of their dissatisfaction with Jehovah!

**NET NOTE** - It is worth mentioning in passing that this is one of the Rabbinic proof texts for having at least ten men to form a congregation and have prayer. If God called ten men (the bad spies) a "congregation," then a congregation must have ten men. But here the word "community/congregation" refers in this context to the people of Israel as a whole, not just to the ten spies.

**Numbers 14:28 "Say to them, 'As I live,' says the LORD, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will surely do to you;**



NET Numbers 14:28 Say to them, 'As I live, says the LORD, I will surely do to you just what you have spoken in my hearing.

NLT Numbers 14:28 Now tell them this: 'As surely as I live, declares the LORD, I will do to you the very things I heard you say.

ESV Numbers 14:28 Say to them, 'As I live, declares the LORD, what you have said in my hearing I will do to you:

NIV Numbers 14:28 So tell them, 'As surely as I live, declares the LORD, I will do to you the very things I heard you say:

KJV Numbers 14:28 Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you:

YLT Numbers 14:28 say unto them, I live -- an affirmation of Jehovah -- if, as ye have spoken in Mine ears -- so I do not to you;

LXE Numbers 14:28 Say to them, As I live, saith the Lord: surely as ye spoke into my ears, so will I do to you.

ASV Numbers 14:28 Say unto them, As I live, saith Jehovah, surely as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you:

CSB Numbers 14:28 Tell them: As surely as I live," this is the LORD's declaration, "I will do to you exactly as I heard you say.

NKJ Numbers 14:28 "Say to them, 'As I live,' says the LORD, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you:

NRS Numbers 14:28 Say to them, "As I live," says the LORD, "I will do to you the very things I heard you say:

- **As:** Nu 14:21,23 26:64,65 32:11 De 1:35 Ps 90:8,9 Heb 3:17
- **as you have:** Nu 14:2
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## A DIVINE "BOOMERANG"

The people of Israel brought upon themselves their punishment when they declared that they would rather die in the wilderness

**Say to them, 'As I live,' says the LORD** - This is the same oath that God swore in Nu 14:21. It is an oath He swore by himself. "As the LORD lives," or "by the life of the LORD," are ways to render it. As Bush points out "It is here that the Lord swears in his anger that they shall not enter into his rest. Comp.

Psalms 95:11 "Therefore I **swore** in My anger, Truly they shall not enter into My rest."

**Spurgeon comments** - There can be no rest to an unbelieving heart. If manna and miracles could not satisfy Israel, neither would they have been content with the land which flowed with milk and honey. Canaan was to be the typical resting place of God, where his ark should abide, and the ordinances of religion should be established; the Lord had for forty years borne with the ill manners of the generation which came out of Egypt, and it was but right that he should resolve to have no more of them. Was it not enough that they had revolted all along that marvelous wilderness march? Should they be allowed to make new Massahs and Meribahs in the Promised Land itself? Jehovah would not have it so. **He not only said but swore that into his rest they should not come, and that oath excluded every one of them; their carcasses fell in the wilderness. Solemn warning this to all who leave the way of faith for paths of petulant murmuring and mistrust.** The rebels of old could not enter in because of unbelief, "let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of us should even seem to come short of it." (Hebrews 4:1+) One blessed inference from this psalm must not be forgotten. It is clear that there is a rest of God, and that some must enter into it: but "they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief, there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." The unbelievers could not enter, but "we which have believed do enter into rest." Let us enjoy it, and praise the Lord for it for ever. Ours is the true Sabbatical rest, it is ours to rest from our own works as God did from His. While we do so, let us "come into his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms." (Ps 95:2)

Hebrews 3:18 And to whom did He **swear** that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient?

Numbers 32:10; 11 "So the LORD'S anger burned in that day, and He swore, saying, (11) 'None of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob; for they **did not follow Me fully**,

**just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will surely do to you**- NLT = " I will do to you the very things I heard you say." What did they say? In Nu 14:2 they had foolishly declared "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness!" In God's ears these functioned as their "prayers," and now He will fulfill their desire to die in this wilderness! As the **NET Note** puts it "They had expressed the longing to have died in the wilderness, and not in war. God will now give them that. They would not say to God "your will be done," so he says to them, "your will be done" (to borrow from C. S. Lewis)."

**Bush on just as you have spoken** - The Lord is here pleased to take them at their word; their wish was that "they might die in the wilderness," . Nu 14:2<sup>+</sup>. Here their own imprecation comes upon them, as it did upon their descendants afterwards when they wished that Christ's blood might be upon their own and their children's heads, Mt. 27:25.

**Numbers 14:29 your corpses will fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me.**

BGT Numbers 14:29 ν τ ρ μ τ α τ π ε σ ε τ α ι τ κ λ α μ ν κ α π σ α π ι σ κ ο τ μ ν κ α ο κ α τ η ρ ι θ μ η μ ν ο ι μ ν π ε κ ο σ α ε τ ο ς κ α π ν ω σ ο ι γ γ υ σ α ν π μ ο

NET Numbers 14:29 Your dead bodies will fall in this wilderness-- all those of you who were numbered, according to your full number, from twenty years old and upward, who have murmured against me.

NLT Numbers 14:29 You will all drop dead in this wilderness! Because you complained against me, every one of you who is twenty years old or older and was included in the registration will die.

ESV Numbers 14:29 your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness, and of all your number, listed in the census from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against me,

NIV Numbers 14:29 In this desert your bodies will fall--every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me.

KJV Numbers 14:29 Your carcases shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me,

YLT Numbers 14:29 in this wilderness do your carcases fall, even all your numbered ones, to all your number, from a son of twenty years and upward, who have murmured against Me;

LXE Numbers 14:29 Your carcases shall fall in this wilderness; and all those of you that were reviewed, and those of you that were numbered from twenty years old and upward, all that murmured against me,

ASV Numbers 14:29 your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, that have murmured against me,

CSB Numbers 14:29 Your corpses will fall in this wilderness-- all of you who were registered in the census, the entire number of you 20 years old or more-- because you have complained about Me.

NKJ Numbers 14:29 `The carcases 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.

NRS Numbers 14:29 your dead bodies shall fall in this very wilderness; and of all your number, included in the census, from twenty years old and upward, who have complained against me,

- **corpses:** Nu 14:32,33 1Co 10:5 Heb 3:17 Jude 1:5
- **all:** Nu 1:45 Nu 26:64

## **A DESERT DEATH DECREE**

**your corpses will fall in this wilderness** - KJV says "Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness." NLT has "You will all drop dead in this wilderness!" This is a key phrase or thought in this last section of Numbers 14 for this judgment is issued three times (Nu 14:29, Nu 14:32, Nu 14:33). The irony is that Israel had feared falling dead at the hands of their enemies, but now will fall dead at the hand of God, Who in a sense is now their "Enemy," for they have repeatedly spurned and rejected His kindnesses and covenant promises.

**Even all your numbered men** (ESV = listed in the census), **according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward** - This refers back to the list in Numbers 1:45+ (cf Nu 1:3) "So all the **numbered men** of the sons of Israel by their fathers' households, from twenty years old and upward, whoever was able to go out to war in Israel." Since they spurned God and refused to go to war, they would go to the grave in the wilderness!

**who have grumbled against Me** - Notice the clear implication of this qualifying statement. All except for 2 (Caleb, Joshua) would die, because they ALL grumbled against Jehovah.

**Wiersbe** - The Jews had lamented that they wanted to die in the wilderness (v. 2), and they had complained that their children would die in Canaan (v. 3); but God declared that their children would live in Canaan and the adults would die in the wilderness! Out of their own mouths, God passed judgment. Be careful what you say to God when you complain, because He may take you up on it! After all, God's greatest judgment is to let people have their own way.

**Grumble** (murmur) ([03885](#)) see note on [lun](#) (Key word in Numbers 14 - Nu 14:2, Nu 14:27; Nu 14:29; Nu 14:36)

---

**Norman Geisler - When Critics Ask** NUMBERS 14:29—If nearly all the men from twenty years up died in the wilderness, why have none of their graves been discovered?

**PROBLEM:** According to Numbers 14:29, the corpses of all the men older than 20 years would fall in the wilderness. The total was over 600,000. But, if so many died in the wilderness, why do their grave sites not litter the landscape?

**SOLUTION:** Because the people were condemned to wander in the wilderness, the conditions were such that they were not able to construct graves that could withstand the weather conditions or even the ravages of wild beasts. The graves were probably shallow burial places just beneath the sand or gravel. Consequently, neither the grave sites nor the skeletons of those who were buried could be preserved for any length of time.

**Numbers 14:30 'Surely you shall not come into the land in which I swore to settle you, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.**

BGT Numbers 14:30 ε με ς ε σε λε σε σθε ε ς τ ν γ ν φ ν ξ τει να τ ν χε ρ μου κατα σκη ν σαι μ ς π α τ ς λ λ  
Χα λε β υ ς λε φ ο ν ν η κα η σο ς το Να υ η

NET Numbers 14:30 You will by no means enter into the land where I swore to settle you. The only exceptions are Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

NLT Numbers 14:30 You will not enter and occupy the land I swore to give you. The only exceptions will be Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

ESV Numbers 14:30 not one shall come into the land where I swore that I would make you dwell, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.

NIV Numbers 14:30 Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

KJV Numbers 14:30 Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.

YLT Numbers 14:30 ye -- ye come not in unto the land which I have lifted up My hand to cause you to tabernacle in it, except Caleb son of Jephunneh, and Joshua son of Nun.

LXE Numbers 14:30 ye shall not enter into the land for which I stretched out my hand to establish you upon it; except only Chaleb the son of Jephonne, and Joshua the son of Naue.

ASV Numbers 14:30 surely ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware that I would make you

dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.

CSB Numbers 14:30 I swear that none of you will enter the land I promised to settle you in, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

NKJ Numbers 14:30 `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.

NRS Numbers 14:30 not one of you shall come into the land in which I swore to settle you, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

- **swore:** Heb. lifted up my hand, Ge 14:22
- **except Caleb:** Nu 14:38 26:65 32:12 Dt 1:35-38
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Deuteronomy 1:35-38 'Not one of these men, this evil generation, shall see the good land which I swore to give your fathers, 36 except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him and to his sons I will give the land on which he has set foot, **because he has followed the LORD fully.**' 37 "The LORD was angry with me also on your account, saying, 'Not even you shall enter there. 38' Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall enter there; encourage him, for he will cause Israel to inherit it.

## THE TWO EXCEPTIONS

**Surely you shall not come into the land in which I swore** (Heb. "Lifted my hand.") **to settle you, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun** - It is interesting that He does not mention Moses here. One wonders what went through Moses' mind.

**NET Note on swore** - The Hebrew text uses the anthropomorphic expression "I raised my hand" in taking an oath. On **settle** - "to cause you to dwell; to cause you to settle." (Heb. leshakkan, the root word from whence is derived "shekinah,")

**Wiersbe** - Caleb and Joshua would be encouraged by God's promise that both of them would enter the land and enjoy their inheritance. This assurance alone would sustain them during the trying days of the nation's march, a discipline that wasn't the fault of either Caleb or Joshua. So the blessed hope of Christ's return (Titus 2:13+) encourages God's people today in spite of the trials we experience on our pilgrim walk. (Be Counted)

**Numbers 14:31 'Your children, however, whom you said would become a prey--I will bring them in, and they will know the land which you have rejected.**

BGT Numbers 14:31 κα τ παιδ α ε πατε ν διαρπαγ σεσθαι ε σ ξω α το ς ε ς τ ν γ ν κα κληρονομ σουσιν τ ν γ ν ν με ς π σπητε π α τ ς

NET Numbers 14:31 But I will bring in your little ones, whom you said would become victims of war, and they will enjoy the land that you have despised.

NLT Numbers 14:31 " 'You said your children would be carried off as plunder. Well, I will bring them safely into the land, and they will enjoy what you have despised.

ESV Numbers 14:31 But your little ones, who you said would become a prey, I will bring in, and they shall know the land that you have rejected.

NIV Numbers 14:31 As for your children that you said would be taken as plunder, I will bring them in to enjoy the land you have rejected.

KJV Numbers 14:31 But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised.

YLT Numbers 14:31 'As to your infants -- of whom ye have said, A spoil they are become -- I have even brought them in, and they have known the land which ye have kicked against;

LXE Numbers 14:31 And your little ones, who ye said should be a prey, them will I bring into the land; and they shall inherit the land, which ye rejected.

ASV Numbers 14:31 But your little ones, that ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have rejected.

CSB Numbers 14:31 I will bring your children whom you said would become plunder into the land you rejected, and they will enjoy it.

NKJ Numbers 14:31 `But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised.

NRS Numbers 14:31 But your little ones, who you said would become booty, I will bring in, and they shall know the land that you have despised.

- **children:** Nu 26:6,64 De 1:39
- **you said:** Nu 14:3
- **the land:** Ge 25:34 Ps 106:24 Pr 1:25,30 Mt 22:5 Ac 13:41 Heb 12:16,17
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Numbers 14:3 "Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become **plunder**; would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"

Deuteronomy 1:39 'Moreover, **your little ones** who you said would become **aprey** (same word [baz](#)), and your sons, who this day have no knowledge of good or evil, shall **enter** there, and I will **give** it to them and they shall **possess** it.

**Your children, however, whom you said would become a prey** (plunder) - NET = "whom you said would become victims of war," God quotes the people again and this time corrects their erroneous belief "Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? **Our wives and our little ones will become plunder**; would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" (Nu 14:3) Notice he does not say the wives would not become plunder.

**Prey (plunder)** ([0957](#)) see note above on [baz](#)

**Bush** - The very children about whose safety they had shown so much distrust and manifested such irreligious solicitude, should be the persons that should certainly inherit the promised land, though a long and trying period should first intervene.

**I will bring them in** - This is the very thing He had promised He would have done for the first generation, had they only believed His promises.

**And they will know the land which you have rejected** - NET = "they will enjoy the land that you have despised." Their children, by possessing Canaan, would come to know knew what a good land their fathers had despised.

Earlier God had mentioned their rejection (using the same verb [ma'as](#))

Nu 11:19-20+ 'You shall eat, not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days, but a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you; because you **have rejected** ([ma'as](#)) the LORD who is among you and have wept before Him, saying, "Why did we ever leave Egypt?"

**Rejected** (cast off, despised) ([03988](#)) ([ma'as](#)) means to reject, to despise, to abhor, to refuse. The primary idea is to treat as loathsome (that which is repulsive, detestable, causing disgust).

**Numbers 14:32 'But as for you, your corpses will fall in this wilderness.**

BGT Numbers 14:32 κα τ κ λα μ ν πεσε ται ν τ ρ μ τα τ

NET Numbers 14:32 But as for you, your dead bodies will fall in this wilderness,

NLT Numbers 14:32 But as for you, you will drop dead in this wilderness.

ESV Numbers 14:32 But as for you, your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness.

NIV Numbers 14:32 But you--your bodies will fall in this desert.

KJV Numbers 14:32 But as for you, your carcases, they shall fall in this wilderness.

YLT Numbers 14:32 as to you -- your carcases do fall in this wilderness,

LXE Numbers 14:32 And your carcases shall fall in this wilderness.

ASV Numbers 14:32 But as for you, your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness.

CSB Numbers 14:32 But as for you, your corpses will fall in this wilderness.

NKJ Numbers 14:32 `But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness.

NRS Numbers 14:32 But as for you, your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness.

- Nu 14:29 1Co 10:5 Heb 3:17
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Hebrews 3:16-19+ For who provoked Him when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses? 17 And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were **disobedient**? 19 So we see that they were not able to enter because of **unbelief** (NOTE - UNBELIEF HERE = DISOBEDIENT IN V18).

**Comment** - The argument is pursued with a series of rhetorical questions. The important truths are that the people who failed to enter Canaan were the ones who had heard God's promise concerning the land and that they refused to believe and to act on what God had promised—an action described as rebellion (v. 16), sin (v. 17), disobedience (v. 18) and unbelief (v. 19). Consequently, God in his anger closed the doors of Canaan in the face of that whole generation of Israelites (Nu 14:21–35). (NIVSB)

**But as for you, your corpses will fall in this wilderness** - God repeats their fate (Nu 14:29). It would not be by the sword they feared in Nu 14:3 but (in effect) by the hand of the LORD as their bodies wore out and died. Paul gives us the NT commentary in 1 Corinthians 10:5 writing "**Nevertheless** (INTERESTING - SAME WORD THAT MARKED TURNING POINT IN Nu 13:28+), with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness."

**Numbers 14:33 'Your sons shall be shepherds for forty years in the wilderness, and they will suffer for your unfaithfulness, until your corpses lie in the wilderness.**

BGT Numbers 14:33 ο δ υ ο μ ν σονται νεμ μενοι ν τ ρ μ τεσσαρ κοντα τη κα νο σουσιν τ ν πορνε αν μ ν ως ν ν αλωθ τ κ λα μ ν ν τ ρ μ

NET Numbers 14:33 and your children will wander in the wilderness forty years and suffer for your unfaithfulness, until your dead bodies lie finished in the wilderness.

NLT Numbers 14:33 And your children will be like shepherds, wandering in the wilderness for forty years. In this way, they will pay for your faithlessness, until the last of you lies dead in the wilderness.

ESV Numbers 14:33 And your children shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years and shall suffer for your faithlessness, until the last of your dead bodies lies in the wilderness.

NIV Numbers 14:33 Your children will be shepherds here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness, until the last of your bodies lies in the desert.

KJV Numbers 14:33 And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcases be wasted in the wilderness.

YLT Numbers 14:33 and your sons are evil in the wilderness forty years, and have borne your whoredoms till your carcases are consumed in the wilderness;

LXE Numbers 14:33 And your sons shall be fed in the wilderness forty years, and they shall bear your fornication, until your carcases be consumed in the wilderness.



ASV Numbers 14:33 And your children shall be wanderers in the wilderness forty years, and shall bear your whoredoms, until your dead bodies be consumed in the wilderness.

CSB Numbers 14:33 Your children will be shepherds in the wilderness for 40 years and bear the penalty for your acts of unfaithfulness until all your corpses lie scattered in the wilderness.

NKJ Numbers 14:33 `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.

NRS Numbers 14:33 And your children shall be shepherds in the wilderness for forty years, and shall suffer for your faithlessness, until the last of your dead bodies lies in the wilderness.

- **shall be shepherds** - wander in the wilderness: or, feed, This implies, that they should move from place to place in the deserts, as the Bedounin Arabs, who have no certain dwelling, but rove about seeking pasture for their flocks. Nu 32:13 Jos 14:10 Ps 107:4,40
- **forty years:** Nu 33:38 De 1:3 2:14
- **suffer:** Nu 5:31 Jer 3:1,2 Eze 23:35,45-49 Ho 9:1
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Your sons shall be shepherds for forty years in the wilderness-** "That is, reckoning from the time of their coming out of Egypt; of which period one year and a half had already elapsed. Deut. 2:14, "And the space in which we came from Kadesh-barnea, until we were come over the brook Zered, was thirty and eight years." Comp. Nu 10:11." (Bush)

**NET Note on shepherds** - It means that the people would be wilderness nomads, grazing their flock on available land.

**Bush on shall be shepherds** - The original term is not the appropriate term for wandering, but is still related to it, as sheep obtain their food by wandering from place to place over their pasture grounds. This was especially the case with the flocks of the Arabian shepherds, who inhabited a region so wild, rocky, and barren, that they could not long remain in one place, but were obliged to strike their tents and seek new grazing places, as one after another would be speedily exhausted. Chazkuni explains it:—"As sheep feed sometimes here and sometimes there, so your sons shall remove hither and thither, till their carcasses be consumed."

**FSB - shepherds** That is, nomads, an unsettled people who dwell in desert tents rather than in the fortified walls of a prosperous land such as the spies saw in Canaan.

**And they will suffer for your unfaithfulness** - KJV = "bear your whoredoms." LXE = " they shall bear your fornication ([porneia](#))."  
Here is a prime example of the sins of the fathers affecting the next generation!

**THOUGHT** - And we are seeing this dynamic unfold in America, for our leaders and courts are progressively throwing God's Word and God's righteous standards "out the window" and God is giving us over as summarized in Romans 1:28-32+ "And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, **God gave them over to a depraved mind**, to do those things which are not proper, 29 being filled with (CONTROLLED BY) all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; 32 and although **they know the ordinance of God** (WOE!!!), that those who practice such things are worthy of death (Ro 6:23+), they not only **do** the same, but also **give hearty approval** to those who practice them." Believers and their children and grandchildren (if the Lord tarries) will suffer for our unfaithfulness as a nation to the Most High God! Dear brother or sister, may God's Spirit continually prompt in us a prayer for national revival in the line of 2 Chr 7:13-14 while we still have time. In Jesus' Name. Amen

**NET Note on unfaithfulness** - Heb "you shall bear your whoredoms." The imagery of prostitution is used throughout the Bible to reflect spiritual unfaithfulness, leaving the covenant relationship and following after false gods. Here it is used generally for their rebellion in the wilderness, but not for following other gods.

**FSB - unfaithfulness** God removes any ambiguity as to the cause of the nomadic lifestyle forced upon the Israelites. Any suffering experienced during this time is attributed to the people's choice in refusing to believe the promises of Yahweh.

**Unfaithfulness (02184)(zenuth)** fornication. Gilbrant writes "It is used primarily in a figurative sense of spiritual adultery, although it has one literal use in Hos. 4:11, which says that "fornication, wine and new wine take away the heart." Used figuratively, this noun always refers to adultery with false gods. The children of God's people wandered in the wilderness and bore the guilt of their parents' spiritual fornication (Num. 14:33). God's people "polluted the land with their fornication," referring to the prostitution in the high places (Jer. 3:2),

prostitution with stones and stocks (Jer. 3:9), and the abominations on the hills in the fields (Jer. 13:27). Some see the occurrence of this word in Ezek. 23:27 used figuratively, speaking of adulterous relations with other nations. In reality, rather than speaking of prostitution with Egypt, the text speaks of Israel's whoredoms in their own land. Through the prophet, God tells his people that if they put away their whoredom, He will dwell in their midst forever (Ezek. 43:9). In Hosea, the Lord says He has "seen a horrible thing in the house of Israel, that is, the whoredom of Ephraim, and Israel is defiled" (Hos. 6:10). In the allegory of Ezek. 23, both Israel and Judah are charged with fornication in regard to their relationships with other nations. This accusation conveys a double entendre. In the course of constructing alliances, one is forced to swear by the power of the deities of all parties involved. Further, a more serious violation of the relationship of the leaders with Yahweh is that the leaders were to trust in the power of Yahweh alone, rather than rely upon their own strength or that of alliances. (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary)

**Zenuth** - 8x in 8v - harlotry(6), prostitution(1), unfaithfulness(1). Num. 14:33; Jer. 3:9; Jer. 13:27; Ezek. 23:27; Ezek. 43:7; Ezek. 43:9; Hos. 4:11; Hos. 6:10

The **Lxx** translates **zenuth** here with **porneia** originally referred to any excessive behavior or lack of restraint, but eventually became associated with sexual excess and indulgence, of every kind of extramarital, unlawful, or unnatural sexual intercourse.

**Until your corpses lie in the wilderness** - So when the last soul of the first generation dies, it marks the time to enter into the Promised land.

**NET Note** on the word "lie" - The infinitive is from תָּמַם (tamam), which means "to be complete." The word is often used to express completeness in a good sense—whole, blameless, or the like. Here and in Nu 14:35 it seems to mean "**until your deaths have been completed.**" See also Ge47:15; Dt 2:15.

---

**Question:** [Why was Israel cursed with forty years of wilderness wandering?](#)

**Answer:** "Wilderness wandering" refers to the plight of the Israelites due to their disobedience and unbelief. Nearly 3,500 years ago, the Lord delivered His people from Egyptian bondage as described in Exodus, chapters 1–12. They were to take possession of the land God had promised their forefathers, a land "flowing with milk and honey" (Exodus 3:8). Prior to entry, however, they became convinced they could not oust the current inhabitants of the land, even though God told them they could. Their lack of belief in God's word and promises brought forth the wrath of God. He cursed them with forty years of wilderness wandering until the unbelieving generation died off, never stepping foot in the Promised Land.

A seven-year famine was responsible for God's chosen people ending up in Egypt. Initially, they flourished under the leadership of Joseph, number two in charge of the country after Pharaoh. "Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt" (Exodus 1:8), and soon, "the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites" (Exodus 1:12). For the next several centuries the Israelites were enslaved by the Egyptians who "worked them ruthlessly" (Exodus 1:13). Eventually, God heard their cries (Exodus 2:23-25) and sent Moses and Aaron to rescue them. After enduring the last of the ten plagues—the death of the firstborn males—Pharaoh finally agreed to release the Israelites.

Upon their arrival at [Kadesh Barnea](#), which bordered the Promised Land of Canaan, they sent out [twelve spies](#) to survey the land and its people (Numbers 13:18-25). They returned after forty days of exploration. Ten of the spies had a bad report: "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are...All the people we saw were of great size...We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes" (Numbers 13:31-33). Only Joshua and Caleb dissented (Numbers 14:6-7). Believing the report of the ten doubters, the people lost heart and rebelled. They "raised their voices and wept aloud," grumbling against Moses and Aaron, saying, "If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert! Why is the LORD bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword" (Numbers 14:1-2, emphasis added).

Then the Lord said to Moses, "How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the miraculous signs I have performed among them? I will strike them down with a plague and destroy them" (Numbers 14:11). However, Moses once again interceded for his people and turned away the wrath of God (Numbers 14:13-20). Although God did forgive them, He decided that "not one of them will ever see the land I promised on oath to their forefathers. No one who has treated me with contempt will ever see it" (Numbers 14:23). Rather, they would suffer by wandering in the wilderness for forty years, one year for each of the forty days they explored the land (Numbers 14:34). Furthermore, God would give them what they asked for: "I will do the very things I heard you say: In this desert your bodies will fall, every one of you twenty years old or more" (Numbers 14:28-29). Additionally, the ten men who had given the bad report were struck down and died of a plague before the Lord (Numbers 14:37). Only Joshua and Caleb survived, the two faithful spies who believed God's promise to give the land over to them.

God had promised them victory. The land He commanded them to go in and take was already theirs; they simply had to trust and obey, but this they did not do. God will never lead us where His grace cannot provide for us or His power cannot protect us. Indeed, the Israelites had seen the powerful hand of God at work during the plagues and miracles of the Exodus. Yet, like many people, they walked by sight and not by faith, and their unbelief displeased God. "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6). Their failure to believe in God's word kept them from entering the Promised Land. This truth has never changed. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**Numbers 14:34 'According to the number of days which you spied out the land, forty days, for every day you shall bear your guilt a year, even forty years, and you will know My opposition.'**

BGT Numbers 14:34 κατ τ ν ριθμ ν τ ν μερ ν σας κατεσκηψασθε τ ν γ ν τεσσαρ κοντα μ ρας μ ραν το νιαυτο λ μψεσθε τ ς μαρτ ρας μ ν τεσσαρ κοντα τη κα γν σεσθε τ ν θυμ ν τ ς ργ ς μου

NET Numbers 14:34 According to the number of the days you have investigated this land, forty days-- one day for a year-- you will suffer for your iniquities, forty years, and you will know what it means to thwart me.

NLT Numbers 14:34 " 'Because your men explored the land for forty days, you must wander in the wilderness for forty years-- a year for each day, suffering the consequences of your sins. Then you will discover what it is like to have me for an enemy.'

ESV Numbers 14:34 According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, a year for each day, you shall bear your iniquity forty years, and you shall know my displeasure.'

NIV Numbers 14:34 For forty years--one year for each of the forty days you explored the land--you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you.'

KJV Numbers 14:34 After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise.

YLT Numbers 14:34 by the number of the days in which ye spied the land, forty days, -- a day for a year, a day for a year -- ye do bear your iniquities, forty years, and ye have known my breaking off;

LXE Numbers 14:34 According to the number of the days during which ye spied the land, forty days, a day for a year, ye shall bear your sins forty years, and ye shall know my fierce anger.

ASV Numbers 14:34 After the number of the days in which ye spied out the land, even forty days, for every day a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my alienation.

CSB Numbers 14:34 You will bear the consequences of your sins 40 years based on the number of the 40 days that you scouted the land, a year for each day. You will know My displeasure.

NKJ Numbers 14:34 `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.

NRS Numbers 14:34 According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for every day a year, you shall bear your iniquity, forty years, and you shall know my displeasure."

- **According:** Nu 13:25 2Ch 36:21
- **the number:** Ps 95:10 Eze 4:6 Da 9:24 Rev 11:3
- **bear:** Nu 18:23 Lev 20:19 Ps 38:4 Eze 14:10
- **shall:** 1Ki 8:56 Ps 77:8 105:42 Jer 18:9,10 La 3:31-33 Heb 4:1
- De 31:16,17 1Sa 2:30 Zec 11:10
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **A FORTY YEAR REMINDER OF SIN!**

**According to the number of days which you spied out the land, forty days, for every day you shall bear your guilt a year, even forty years** - This reminds me that sin is always more costly than we are led to believe before we commit the sin. Hosea 8:7a says "For they sow the wind And they reap the whirlwind." Note that (1) it will come, (2) it may be delayed and (3) it is more that the original sowing!

**FSB - Forty** is often a number associated with purging and purification. This length of time allows for the old rebellious generation to pass away, and a new generation to emerge. This 40 years is an approximation, as Deut 2:14 makes clear. The Israelites actually wander for 38 years, in addition to the two years that passed before this episode (see Exod 12:2; 40:17; Num 1:1; 10:11).

**And you will know My opposition** - They would know by experience! The Hebrew word for **opposition** ([tenuah](#)) is only here and Job 33:10. Here in Numbers 14:34 the Septuagint translates it with two words, both of which mean **wrath** (*gnosethe ton thumon tes orges mou*), [thumos](#) and [orge](#)! In other words clearly Yahweh's **opposition** is manifest against the unfaithful first generation by His wrath (in a sense "in duplicate!")

**NET** - "The phrase refers to the consequences of open hostility to God, or perhaps abandonment of God. The noun תְּנוּאָה (tenu'ah) occurs in Job 33:10 (perhaps). The related verb occurs in Num 30:6 HT (30:5 ET) and 32:7 with the sense of "disallow, discourage." (NET)

One year in the wilderness for each day the spies were on their mission. This verse provides essentially the only Biblical argument for the "year/day" school of prophetic interpretation, which converts prophetic "days" into years, especially in the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. But this verse was spoken explicitly as a judgment on the faithless generation of Israelites, not as a key to future prophecy. All males 20 years old or above would die during their 40 years in the desert. Thus only Joshua and Caleb, who were excepted because of their faith, were more than 60 years old when the Israelites finally crossed the Jordan, even though God through Moses had indicated the normal life span at the time to be 70 or 80 years (Psalm 90:10). Joshua actually lived to age 110, and Caleb was still in full strength at age 85 (Joshua 14:10-11; 24:29).

---

**Gleason Archer** - If nearly the whole adult generation of Israel died during the forty years' wandering, why is not that whole region full of their graves (Nu 14:34–35)?

Under the nomadic conditions of the wilderness journey, with a constant shifting from one site to another, there is no way that sturdy or well constructed graves could have been made as the adult generation passed away. Shallow burials beneath the surface of the sand or gravel would have failed to preserve any of the skeletons for a very long period, even though they might have escaped disturbance by carrion-eating wild animals (which is doubtful). No excavations conducted anywhere in the world have ever exhumed identifiable burials of this type, and in the nature of the case it would be very surprising if they did. The failure to uncover shallow, unprotected burials of this sort therefore constitutes no evidence whatever against the historical accuracy of the account that all the adults involved in the rebellion at Kadesh Barnea passed away before the crossing of the Jordan under Joshua—except, of course, for Caleb and Joshua himself. (NIEBD)

---

**Question:** [What is the significance of 40 days in the Bible?](#)

**Answer:** The number 40 shows up often in the Bible. Because 40 appears so often in contexts dealing with judgment or testing, many scholars understand it to be the number of "probation" or "trial." This doesn't mean that 40 is entirely symbolic; it still has a literal meaning in Scripture. "Forty days" means "forty days," but it does seem that God has chosen this number to help emphasize times of trouble and hardship.



[Click Here to Watch the Video](#)

Here are some examples of the Bible's use of the number 40 that stress the theme of testing or judgment:

In the Old Testament, when God destroyed the earth with water, He caused it to rain 40 days and 40 nights (Genesis 7:12). After Moses killed the Egyptian, he fled to Midian, where he spent 40 years in the desert tending flocks (Acts 7:30). Moses was on Mount Sinai for 40 days and 40 nights (Exodus 24:18). Moses interceded on Israel's behalf for 40 days and 40 nights (Deuteronomy 9:18, 25). The Law specified a maximum number of lashes a man could receive for a crime, setting the limit at 40 (Deuteronomy 25:3). The Israelite spies took 40 days to spy out Canaan (Numbers 13:25). The Israelites wandered for 40 years (Deuteronomy 8:2-5). Before Samson's deliverance, Israel served the Philistines for 40 years (Judges 13:1). Goliath taunted Saul's army for 40 days before David arrived to slay him (1 Samuel 17:16). When Elijah fled from Jezebel, he traveled 40 days and 40 nights to Mt. Horeb (1 Kings 19:8).

In the New Testament, Jesus was tempted for 40 days and 40 nights (Matthew 4:2). There were 40 days between Jesus' resurrection and ascension (Acts 1:3).

Some people place too much significance on [numerology](#), trying to find a special meaning behind every number in the Bible. Often, a number in the Bible is simply a number, including the number 40. God does not call us to search for secret meanings, hidden messages, or codes in the Bible. There is more than enough truth in the plain words of Scripture to meet all our needs and make us “complete and thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:17). [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Numbers 14:35 'I, the LORD, have spoken, surely this I will do to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be destroyed, and there they will die.'"**

NET Numbers 14:35 I, the LORD, have said, "I will surely do so to all this evil congregation that has gathered together against me. In this wilderness they will be finished, and there they will die!"

ESV Numbers 14:35 I, the LORD, have spoken. Surely this will I do to all this wicked congregation who are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall come to a full end, and there they shall die."

NIV Numbers 14:35 I, the LORD, have spoken, and I will surely do these things to this whole wicked community, which has banded together against me. They will meet their end in this desert: here they will die."

KJV Numbers 14:35 I the LORD have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.

YLT Numbers 14:35 I am Jehovah, I have spoken; if I do not this to all this evil company who are meeting against me; -- in this wilderness they are consumed, and there they die.'

LXE Numbers 14:35 I the Lord have spoken, Surely will I do thus to this evil congregation that has risen up together against me: in this wilderness they shall be utterly consumed, and there they shall die.

ASV Numbers 14:35 I, Jehovah, have spoken, surely this will I do unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.

CSB Numbers 14:35 I, the LORD, have spoken. I swear that I will do this to the entire evil community that has conspired against Me. They will come to an end in the wilderness, and there they will die."

NKJ Numbers 14:35 "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."

NRS Numbers 14:35 I the LORD have spoken; surely I will do thus to all this wicked congregation gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall come to a full end, and there they shall die.

- **surely:** Nu 23:19
- **this evil:** Nu 14:27-29 26:65 1Co 10:5,11 Heb 3:19
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**I, the LORD, have spoken surely this I will do** - Moses emphasizes the attribute of God later writing God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"

**Bush on surely this I will do** - Heb. "If I do not this," which has the force of an affirmative, as the Gr. renders it, "I will surely do." That is, I will surely do or execute what I have threatened.

**To all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me** - "That is, gathered in a mutinous and seditious manner. The gathering was ostensibly against Moses and Aaron, but in reality against Jehovah himself who had commissioned his servants to lead and govern the people in his name." (Bush)

**In this wilderness they shall be destroyed, and there they will die** - Bush says "This sentence or decree is so frequently repeated that they might know that it was peremptory and irreversible. "Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience." (Heb 4:11+)

The writer of Hebrews gives us a good summary of this writing

And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were **disobedient**? 19 So we see that they were not able to enter because of **unbelief**. (Hebrews 3:18-19+)

**Numbers 14:36 As for the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land and who returned and made all the congregation grumble against him by bringing out a bad report concerning the land,**

BGT Numbers 14:36 κα ο νθρωποι ο ς π στειλεν Μωυς ς κατασκ ψασθαι τ ν γ ν κα παραγενηθ ντες διεγ γγυσαν κατ α τ ς πρ ς τ ν συναγωγ ν ξεν γκαι ματα πονηρ περ τ ς γ ς

NET Numbers 14:36 The men whom Moses sent to investigate the land, who returned and made the whole community murmur against him by producing an evil report about the land,

NLT Numbers 14:36 The ten men Moses had sent to explore the land-- the ones who incited rebellion against the LORD with their bad report--

ESV Numbers 14:36 And the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned and made all the congregation grumble against him by bringing up a bad report about the land--

NIV Numbers 14:36 So the men Moses had sent to explore the land, who returned and made the whole community grumble against him by spreading a bad report about it--

KJV Numbers 14:36 And the men, which Moses sent to search the land, who returned, and made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up a slander upon the land,

YLT Numbers 14:36 And the men whom Moses hath sent to spy the land, and they turn back and cause all the company to murmur against him, by bringing out an evil account concerning the land,

LXE Numbers 14:36 And the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land, and who came and murmured against it to the assembly so as to bring out evil words concerning the land,--

ASV Numbers 14:36 And the men, whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned, and made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up an evil report against the land,

CSB Numbers 14:36 So the men Moses sent to scout out the land, and who returned and incited the entire community to complain about him by spreading a negative report about the land--

NKJ Numbers 14:36 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,

NRS Numbers 14:36 And 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 about the land--

- Nu 13:31-33
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**THE FATE OF THE**



## TEN SPIES

**As for the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land** (see list Nu 13:4-16) **and who returned**

**and made all the congregation grumble against him** - Their grumbling spread like gangrene and poisoned the hearts of almost 2 million people. Watch out when you begin to grumble, because it may "rumble" further than you ever thought or wished it would!

**Grumble** (murmur) ([03885](#)) see note on [lun](#) (Key word in Numbers 14 - Nu 14:2, Nu 14:27; Nu 14:29; Nu 14:36)

**by bringing out a bad report concerning the land** - The **bad report** about the good land landed the 10 in a bad place!

**NET Note on bringing out a bad report** - The verb is the Hiphil infinitive construct with a lamed (ל) preposition from the root יצא (yatsa', "to bring out"). The use of the infinitive here is exegetical, that is, explaining how they caused the people to murmur.

**Numbers 14:37 even those men who brought out the very bad report of the land died by a plague before the LORD.**

BGT Numbers 14:37 καὶ πᾶν τὸν ὄχλον οἱ ἄνθρωποι οἱ κατὰ πάντας κατὰ τὴν ἔσχατον πλῆγην ἀντί κυρίου

NET Numbers 14:37 those men who produced the evil report about the land, died by the plague before the LORD.

NLT Numbers 14:37 were struck dead with a plague before the LORD.

ESV Numbers 14:37 the men who brought up a bad report of the land-- died by plague before the LORD.

NIV Numbers 14:37 these men responsible for spreading the bad report about the land were struck down and died of a plague before the LORD.

KJV Numbers 14:37 Even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the LORD.

YLT Numbers 14:37 even the men bringing out an evil account of the land die by the plague before Jehovah;

LXE Numbers 14:37 the men that spoke evil reports against the land, even died of the plague before the Lord.

ASV Numbers 14:37 even those men that did bring up an evil report of the land, died by the plague before Jehovah.

CSB Numbers 14:37 those men who spread the negative report about the land were struck down by the LORD.

NKJ Numbers 14:37 those very men who brought the evil report about the land, died by the plague before the LORD.

NRS Numbers 14:37 the men who brought an unfavorable report about the land died by a plague before the LORD.

- **died:** Nu 14:12 16:49 25:9 Jer 28:16,17 29:32 1Co 10:10 Heb 3:17 Jude 1:5
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE TEN ARE TAKEN BY A PLAGUE

**even those men who brought out the very bad report of the land died by a plague before the LORD**- The congregation's seeing these 10 men killed by plague who leave no doubt that their bodies would also lie as corpses in the desert over the next 40 years!

**Bush** - So in the present case, it is stated that the ten unfaithful emissaries perished by some special visitation or stroke of the divine displeasure. Having fomented and ripened the mutiny, they became the first sacrifice to the avenging justice of heaven.

**Bush on before the LORD** - That is, **before** the Tabernacle, where the glory of the Lord appeared. So it is said of Uzzah, 1 Chron. 13:14, that "he died there before the Lord," whereas in the parallel narrative 2 Sam. 6:7, it is said that "he died there before the ark of God."



**Numbers 14:38 But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive out of those men who went to spy out the land.**

BGT Numbers 14:38 κα ἡσο ς υ ς Ναυη κα Χαλεβ υ ς Ιεφοννη ζησαν π τ ν νθρ πων κενων τ ν πεπορευμ νων κατασκ ψασθαι τ ν γ ν

NET Numbers 14:38 But Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among the men who went to investigate the land, lived.

NLT Numbers 14:38 Of the twelve who had explored the land, only Joshua and Caleb remained alive.

ESV Numbers 14:38 Of those men who went to spy out the land, only Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive.

NIV Numbers 14:38 Of the men who went to explore the land, only Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh survived.

KJV Numbers 14:38 But Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of the men that went to search the land, lived still.

YLT Numbers 14:38 and Joshua son of Nun, and Caleb son of Jephunneh, have lived of those men who go to spy out the land.

LXE Numbers 14:38 And Joshua the son of Naue and Chaleb the son of Jephonne still lived of those men that went to spy out the land.

ASV Numbers 14:38 But Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, remained alive of those men that went to spy out the land.

CSB Numbers 14:38 Only Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh remained alive of those men who went to scout out the land.

NKJ Numbers 14:38 But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive, of the men who went to spy out the land.

NRS Numbers 14:38 But Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh alone remained alive, of those men who went to spy out the land.

- Nu 26:65 Jos 14:6-10
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GRACE TO THE FAITHFUL DUO

**But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive out of those men who went to spy out the land-**

Brian Bell writes "Faith leads to obedience and glorifies God; unbelief leads to rebellion and death. Why wander in unbelief when we can walk in victory! Did you ever think grumbling could have such drastic results? Why did God take their grumbling so personally? (grumbling stemmed from unbelief)"

**Numbers 14:39 When Moses spoke these words to all the sons of Israel, the people mourned greatly.**

BGT Numbers 14:39 κα ἠλησεν Μωυς ς τ ματα τα τα πρ ς π ντας υ ο ς Ισραηλ κα π νθησεν λα ς σφ ὄρα

NET Numbers 14:39 When Moses told these things to all the Israelites, the people mourned greatly.

NLT Numbers 14:39 When Moses reported the LORD's words to all the Israelites, the people were filled with grief.

ESV Numbers 14:39 When Moses told these words to all the people of Israel, the people mourned greatly.

NIV Numbers 14:39 When Moses reported this to all the Israelites, they mourned bitterly.

KJV Numbers 14:39 And Moses told these sayings unto all the children of Israel: and the people mourned greatly.

YLT Numbers 14:39 And Moses speaketh these words unto all the sons of Israel, and the people mourn exceedingly,

LXE Numbers 14:39 And Moses spoke these words to all the children of Israel; and the people mourned exceedingly.

ASV Numbers 14:39 And Moses told these words unto all the children of Israel: and the people mourned greatly.

CSB Numbers 14:39 When Moses reported these words to all the Israelites, the people were overcome with grief.

NKJ Numbers 14:39 Then Moses told these words to all the children of Israel, and the people mourned greatly.

NRS Numbers 14:39 When Moses told these words to all the Israelites, the people mourned greatly.

- **mourned greatly:** Ex 33:4 Pr 19:3 Isa 26:16 Mt 8:12 Heb 12:17
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **GRUMBLERS NOW MORPH TO MOURNERS!**

**When Moses spoke these words to all the sons of Israel,** Pardon led to presumption (v39-45). The people had acted stubbornly like the mule, and now they acted impetuously like the horse (Ps 32:9). God forgives us that we might fear Him (Ps130:4), not that we might tempt Him. The flesh can never accomplish what only faith can do. (Dt 1:41-44.) (Wiersbe)

**Bush on Moses spoke** - That is, made known to the multitude the calamity that had happened and the reasons of it; communicating to all quarters of the camp the sentence which had now gone forth from the Lord's lips, and which had probably as yet been but partially circulated among the immense host consisting of two or three millions of people.

**The people mourned greatly** - **Bush** comments "Being overwhelmed with anguish in view of the doom which they had so foolishly brought upon themselves, and which they were assured was irreversible. Knowing this to be the fact, they did not sue to Moses to pray for them, as they had done on other occasions, Nu 11:2+. They had now abundant and just cause for weeping, whereas before, Nu 14:1+, their weeping was causeless."

**NET Note on mourned** - The word אָבַל ('aval) is rare, used mostly for mourning over deaths, but it is used here of mourning over bad news (see also Exod 33:4; 1 Sam 15:35; 16:1; etc.). (ED:

---

### **James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - THE SIN OF PRESUMPTION Numbers 14:39–45**

"Deep is the sea, and deep is Hell, but pride mineth deeper;  
It is coiled as a poisonous worm about the foundations of the soul.  
If thou expose it in thy motives, and track in thy springs of thought,  
Complacent in its own detection, it will seem indignant virtue."

It has been said that "Wise men presume nothing, but hope for the best; presumption is hope out of her wits." In this portion of Scripture we have a solemn example of the foolhardiness of attempting to do work for the Lord without His presence with us.

1. Who they were.

1. PILGRIMS from Egypt who had been saved by the power of God.
2. FOLLOWERS of the Divine pillar, who had again and again witnessed the wonder working of Him who dwelt therein.
3. MURMURERS who had refused to accept the report of the two faithful spies, and who desired to make themselves a captain and return to Egypt (v. 4).

2. What they did. When they heard that the Lord had, because of their unbelief, sentenced them to forty years wanderings in the wilderness (v. 34), they said, "Lo, we be here, and we will go up." In doing so they went—

1. AGAINST THE WORD OF GOD. "Wherefore do ye now trespass? It shall not prosper" (v. 41). What was their duty and privilege yesterday becomes disobedience to-day. God had said, "In this wilderness they shall die." They said, "We will go up." But now it was in their own strength. Vain effort.

2. PRESUMING ON THE PAST MERCIES OF GOD. "Lo, we be here." We have been preserved and brought through to this point. "We will go up." It is in vain we lean on past favours and experiences when by our sin we have grieved the Holy Ghost. Murmuring is sure to lead to failure.

3. WITHOUT THE PRESENCE OF GOD. "They presumed to go up, nevertheless the ark of the Lord departed not out of the camp" (v. 44). If we go contrary to God's Word we must go without His presence. Without Me ye can do nothing. The Lord is with you while you be with Him in His will and purposes (2 Chron. 15:2). Except Thy presence go with us, carry us not up hence.

4. THINKING THAT A FORMAL CONFESSION WOULD SATISFY GOD. "We will go up, for we have sinned" (v. 40). Confession without the submission of the will to the mind of God is ardent hypocrisy. Sin may be felt, yet not forsaken. Unless the moth has been hopelessly scorched with the flame at its first contact it will seek it again.

3. What they experienced. "The Amalekites came down and smote them, and discomfited them" (v. 45). In their self-confident effort they only gained for themselves—

1. DISAPPOINTMENT. They did not reach the place which the Lord had promised. They had built their hopes on a foundation of sand.

2. DEFEAT. The enemy overcame them. The foes of the soul are numerous and powerful. He that trusteth his own heart is a fool. Without the armour of God we cannot withstand the wiles of the devil.

3. DISGRACE. I use this word advisedly, "Out of favour." Conscious of having lost the favour and presence of God. This is a most alarming discovery to a true child of God. Out of favour with God means also dishonoured among men. Miserable backslider.

4. DEATH. Many were smitten. In a spiritual sense presumption is always accompanied by the smiting blight of death. Pride goeth before a fall. "Uzziah was marvellously helped till he was strong"—strong in self-confidence. The wages of the sin of self-trust is death to all fruitfulness for Christ.

4. What they teach us. These things which happened to them are ensamples to us (1 Cor. 10:11). There is here a solemn warning to the—

1. CHRISTIAN WORKER. Beware of godless effort, of hoping to succeed in Christ's work without the presence and power of the Holy Spirit with you and in you. Except the Lord build the city they labour in vain who build it.

2. SELF-RIGHTEOUS. Beware of seeking the heavenly inheritance, the land of promise, without first making sure that God is with you by His Word and promise.

3. FORMALIST. Beware of trusting formal prayers and confessions while the revealed will of God stands opposed to your character and purposes (vs. 41, 42).

4. PROCRASTINATING. Beware of depending on a late repentance. Those Israelites found that the eleventh hour for them was too late. Their last effort was a fatal one. The ark did not always rest in Jordan. If one thief was saved at the eleventh hour, the other perished. Here again, "Beware of the sin of presumption." For this sin there was no sacrifice appointed (Heb. 6:4–6).

---

## Go Fever

Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him. Psalm 37:7

Today's Scripture & Insight: Numbers 14:39-45

On January 28, 1986, after five weather-related delays, the space shuttle Challenger lumbered heavenward amid a thunderous overture of noise and flame. A mere 73 seconds later, system failure tore the shuttle apart, and all seven crewmembers perished.

The disaster was attributed to an O-ring seal known to have vulnerabilities. Insiders referred to the fatal mistake as "go fever"—the tendency to ignore vital precautions in the rush to a grand goal.

Our ambitious human nature relentlessly tempts us to make ill-advised choices. Yet we are also prone to a fear that can make us overly cautious. The ancient Israelites demonstrated both traits. When the 12 scouts returned from spying out the Promised Land, 10 of the 12 saw only the obstacles (Num. 13:26-33). "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are," they said (v. 31). After a fearful rebellion against the Lord that led to the death of the 10 spies, the people suddenly developed a case of "go fever." They said, "Now we are ready to go up to the land the Lord promised" (14:40). Without God, the ill-timed invasion failed miserably (vv. 41-45).

When we take our eyes off the Lord, we'll slide into one of two extremes. We'll impatiently rush ahead without Him, or we'll cower and complain in fear. Focusing on Him brings courage tempered with His wisdom. By: Tim Gustafson ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Before making a quick decision, consider why you want to make it quickly. Consider if it will honor God and what it might cost others. If you are afraid to make a decision, think about why that might be. Most of all, pray!

A moment of patience can prevent a great disaster.

**Numbers 14:40 In the morning, however, they rose up early and went up to the ridge of the hill country, saying, "Here we are; we have indeed sinned, but we will go up to the place which the LORD has promised."**

BGT Numbers 14:40 κα ρθρ σαντες τ πρω ν βησαν ες τ ν κορυφ ν το ρους λ γοντες δο ο δε μες ν αβησ μεθα ες τ ν τ πον ν ε πεν κ ριος τι μ ρομεν

NET Numbers 14:40 And early in the morning they went up to the crest of the hill country, saying, "Here we are, and we will go up to the place that the LORD commanded, for we have sinned."

NLT Numbers 14:40 Then they got up early the next morning and went to the top of the range of hills. "Let's go," they said. "We realize that we have sinned, but now we are ready to enter the land the LORD has promised us."

ESV Numbers 14:40 And they rose early in the morning and went up to the heights of the hill country, saying, "Here we are. We will go up to the place that the LORD has promised, for we have sinned."

NIV Numbers 14:40 Early the next morning they went up toward the high hill country. "We have sinned," they said. "We will go up to the place the LORD promised."

KJV Numbers 14:40 And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we be here, and will go up unto the place which the LORD hath promised: for we have sinned.

YLT Numbers 14:40 and they rise early in the morning, and go up unto the top of the mountain, saying, 'Here we are, and we have come up unto the place which Jehovah hath spoken of, for we have sinned.'

LXE Numbers 14:40 And they rose early in the morning and went up to the top of the mountain, saying, Behold, we that are here will go up to the place of which the Lord has spoken, because we have sinned.

ASV Numbers 14:40 And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up to the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we are here, and will go up unto the place which Jehovah hath promised: for we have sinned.

CSB Numbers 14:40 They got up early the next morning and went up the ridge of the hill country, saying, "Let's go to the place the LORD promised, for we were wrong."

NKJ Numbers 14:40 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!"

NRS Numbers 14:40 They rose early in the morning and went up to the heights of the hill country, saying, "Here we are. We will go up to the place that the LORD has promised, for we have sinned."

- **rose up:** De 1:41 Ec 9:3 Mt 7:21-23 26:11,12 Lu 13:25
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**CONFESSION DOES NOT  
NEGATE CONSEQUENCES**

And regret does not equate with repentance!

**In the morning, however, they rose up early and went up to the ridge of the hill country-** They should have been getting early to have a time of devotion to the LORD. Here they get up early to get a good start on their foolish endeavor!

**NET NOTE on rose...went up** - The verb **וַיַּשְׁכִּמוּ** (vayyashkimu) is often found in a verbal hendiadys construction: "They rose early ... and they went up" means "they went up early." **Ridge of the hill** - The Hebrew text says literally "the top of the hill," but judging from the location and the terrain it probably means the heights of the hill country.

**Bush on rose up** Heb. "Went up;" i. e. set about it, made all their preparations for it, and actually proceeded a considerable distance towards the summit. Men are often said in Scripture to do what they intend and endeavor to do. See this illustrated in the Note on Gen. 37:21. Struck with a temporary panic, a transient fit of slavish fear, as the sequel clearly proves, the people now were as forward to advance as they had been backward before, and though dissuaded by Moses from their rash attempt, they obstinately ventured forth; with what results we are soon informed.

**Saying here we are** - To this statement, I would say "So what?"

**We have indeed sinned** - This sounds good. It is good to admit our sins, but God wants us to confess our sins. They admit they "missed the mark," and they are sorry but lack a broken spirit or repentant heart (see Ps 51:17). They should have been on their faces instead of going up to the place God promised! Notice they don't say what David said when he confessed his sin with Bathsheba in Psalm 51 declaring "**Against You, You only**, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge." (Ps 51:4)

**THOUGHT** - Some people say, "I have sinned," and really mean it, like Achan (Josh. 7:20), David (2 Sam. 12:13; Ps. 51:4; 1 Chron. 24:8, 17), and the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:18, 21); others are merely saying pious words, like Pharaoh (Ex. 9:27), Balaam (Num. 22:34), King Saul (1 Sam. 15:24, 30; 26:21), Shimei (2 Sam. 19:20), and Judas (Matt. 27:4). It takes more than words to exhibit true repentance. (Wiersbe)

Israel reminds me of another man name Judas Iscariot who made a tragic, costly decision and then felt remorse...

(Mt 27:3-4) Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, **he felt remorse** and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4 saying, **I have sinned** by betraying innocent blood." But they said, "What is that to us? See to that yourself!"

**But we will go up to the place which the LORD has promised-** They may have confessed sin, but their confession was shallow and short-lived and certainly not accompanied by repentance. In fact, they now seek to try to "make things right with God." Presumably they now foolishly think they can reverse the consequences, specifically the divine desert death decree! But it was too little, too late.

Pride goes before destruction,  
And a haughty spirit before stumbling.  
-- Proverbs 16:18

**Bush on we will go up** - That is, we are now prepared to do what the Lord commanded, and trust that he will make his promise good. We acknowledge that we have sinned in not at once complying with the divine mandates, and in murmuring and rebelling as we have done, but as we confess our guilt and folly now, and are disposed to make up for our past delinquencies by an exemplary obedience henceforth, we look for the divine favor. But alas, they were obedient and valiant too late! Having sinned against the clearest light and the most emphatic warnings, their transgressions could not be retrieved by the forced repentance and reformation which they now evinced.

**Matthew Henry** - "The decree was gone forth, the consumption determined; they did not seek the Lord while he might be found, and now he would not be found. Oh, if men would but be as earnest for heaven while their day of grace lasts, as they will be when it is over; would be as solicitous to provide themselves oil while the bridegroom tarries as they will be when the bridegroom comes, how well would it be for them!"

The Israelites were not like the ones described by Paul who were sorrowful to point of genuine repentance...

2 Cor 7:9 I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. 10 For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.

**NET NOTE on has promised** The verb is simply "said," but it means the place that the LORD said to go up to in order to fight.

**NET** - Their sin was unbelief. They could have gone and conquered the area if they had trusted the LORD for their victory. They did not, and so they were condemned to perish in the wilderness. Now, thinking that by going they can undo all that, they plan to go. But this is also disobedience, for the LORD said they would not now take the land, and yet they think they can. Here is their second sin, presumption.

---

## Extremes

Here we are, and we will go up to the place which the Lord has promised, for we have sinned. —Numbers 14:40

Today's Scripture: Numbers 14:39-45

The pendulum in our hall clock ticks off the seconds with dependable accuracy. Under the pull of gravity it swings freely from one extreme to the other. But the fixed point from which it hangs gives it the control to convert its motion into useful energy.

In today's Scripture, we read how Israel swung from one extreme to the other but without stability and control. They had lost connection with their fixed point, which was God Himself. After spying out the Promised Land, Joshua challenged the nation to obey God and invade. Instead, they listened to the fearful report of the 10 spies and held back (Num. 13:26-14:38). Then, after God judged them, they rushed ahead without His approval (14:40).

We often exhibit those same tendencies. Fear either keeps us from moving forward in faith, or self-reliance leads us to make rash decisions without seeking God's direction.

Jesus experienced a full range of emotions just as we do (Mk. 14:34; Jn. 2:13-17), but His responses were never out of control. He always held to the fixed point of His Father's will (Mk. 14:35-36; Jn. 6:38).

We must learn from Jesus' example to obey God's Word, trust His promises, and seek the Holy Spirit's guidance. Only then will we be kept from un-Christlike extremes. By: Dennis J. DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!  
What more can He say than to you He hath said—  
To you, who for refuge to Jesus have fled?  
—Anon.

To give your life stability, hold to God's Word.

**Numbers 14:41 But Moses said, "Why then are you transgressing the commandment of the LORD, when it will not succeed?"**

BGT Numbers 14:41 κα ε πεν Μωυς ς να τ με ς παραβα νετε τ μα κυρ ου ο κ ε οδα σται μ ν

NET Numbers 14:41 But Moses said, "Why are you now transgressing the commandment of the LORD? It will not succeed!

NLT Numbers 14:41 But Moses said, "Why are you now disobeying the LORD's orders to return to the wilderness? It won't work.

ESV Numbers 14:41 But Moses said, "Why now are you transgressing the command of the LORD, when that will not succeed?

NIV Numbers 14:41 But Moses said, "Why are you disobeying the LORD's command? This will not succeed!

KJV Numbers 14:41 And Moses said, Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of the LORD? but it shall not prosper.

YLT Numbers 14:41 And Moses saith, 'Why is this? -- ye are transgressing the command of Jehovah, and it doth not prosper;

LXE Numbers 14:41 And Moses said, Why do ye transgress the word of the Lord? ye shall not prosper.

ASV Numbers 14:41 And Moses said, Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of Jehovah, seeing

it shall not prosper?

CSB Numbers 14:41 But Moses responded, "Why are you going against the LORD's command? It won't succeed.

NKJ Numbers 14:41 And Moses said, "Now why do you transgress the command of the LORD? For this will not succeed.

NRS Numbers 14:41 But Moses said, "Why do you continue to transgress the command of the LORD? That will not succeed.

- **why are you:** Nu 14:25 2Ch 24:20
- **will not:** Job 4:9 Jer 2:37 32:5
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 1:41-43 "Then you said to me, 'We have sinned against the LORD; we will indeed go up and fight, just as the LORD our God commanded us.' And every man of you girded on his weapons of war, and regarded it as easy to go up into the hill country. 42 "And the LORD said to me, 'Say to them, "Do not go up nor fight, for I am not among you; otherwise you will be defeated before your enemies.'" 43 "So I spoke to you, but you would not listen. Instead you rebelled against the command of the LORD, and acted presumptuously and went up into the hill country.

### ISRAEL MISSED THEIR CHANCE TO OBEY

**But Moses said, "Why then are you transgressing the commandment of the LORD** - Heb. "Wherefore (is) this (that) ye are now transgressing the mouth of the Lord?" Gr. "Why do ye transgress the word of the Lord?" Moses says you are sinning again!

Israel went from rebellion to presumption and tried to fight the enemy on their own.

-- Wiersbe

**Bush** - The **commandment** which they were here transgressing was that, v. 25, requiring them to turn back to the Red Sea and not think of entering Canaan at present. The use of "mouth" for "**commandment**" is very frequent.

**when it will not succeed** - The old saying is "too little, too late!" Moses warns the numbered men of war that their foolish plan would not work!

**Bush** - That is, the step on which you are now intent; the project of ascending the mountain and assaulting your enemies. Gr. "It shall not be auspicious to you."

**NET Note** - The line literally has, "Why is this [that] you are transgressing...." The demonstrative pronoun is enclitic; it brings the force of "why in the world are you doing this now?"

**Numbers 14:42 "Do not go up, or you will be struck down before your enemies, for the LORD is not among you.**

BGT Numbers 14:42 μὴ ἀβαίνετε ὁ γὰρ σὺν κριὸς μεθ' ὑμῶν καὶ πέσθε σθε πρὸ προσώπου τοῦ χθρὸν ὑμῶν

NET Numbers 14:42 Do not go up, for the LORD is not among you, and you will be defeated before your enemies.

NLT Numbers 14:42 Do not go up into the land now. You will only be crushed by your enemies because the LORD is not with you.

ESV Numbers 14:42 Do not go up, for the Lord is not among you, lest you be struck down before your enemies.

NIV Numbers 14:42 Do not go up, because the LORD is not with you. You will be defeated by your enemies,

KJV Numbers 14:42 Go not up, for the LORD is not among you; that ye be not smitten before your enemies.

YLT Numbers 14:42 go not up, for Jehovah is not in your midst, and ye are not smitten before your enemies;



LXE Numbers 14:42 Go not up, for the Lord is not with you; so shall ye fall before the face of your enemies.

ASV Numbers 14:42 Go not up, for Jehovah is not among you; that ye be not smitten down before your enemies.

CSB Numbers 14:42 Don't go, because the LORD is not among you and you will be defeated by your enemies.

NKJ Numbers 14:42 "Do not go up, lest you be defeated by your enemies, for the LORD is not among you.

NRS Numbers 14:42 Do not go up, for the LORD is not with you; do not let yourselves be struck down before your enemies.

- De 1:42 Jos 7:8,12 Ps 44:1,2-11
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Do not go up, or you will be struck down before your enemies-** Moses is trying to keep them from committing "suicide."

**for the LORD is not among you.** Moses' warning could not have been easier to comprehend. He says it every way he can and yet these obstinate people refuse to listen and suffer the consequences of disobedience. The fact that they refuse to listen to him accentuates how hard their hearts were! Can you imagine what is going through Moses' mind -- "I have 40 more years with these stubborn, stiff-necked rebels!"

Man's efforts without God's blessing do more harm than good,  
for Jesus said, "Without me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).  
-- Warren Wiersbe

**Bush** - Heb. "The Lord is not in your midst." Chald. "The Shekinah of the Lord is not among you." The cloudy pillar removed not, but remained stationary, which should have served to them as an indication that the divine presence was not with them, and that the attempt was presumptuous.

---

As supreme commander of the Allied invasion of Europe during World War II, Dwight D. Eisenhower was faced with a decision that held potentially overwhelming consequences. He had to decide whether to change the date of the D-Day invasion at the last minute or to let it proceed. Of the decision, Eisenhower later wrote: 'I knew I did not have the required wisdom... I asked God to give me the wisdom. I yielded myself to Him. I surrendered myself. And He gave me clear guidance. He gave me insight to see what was right, and He gave me courage to make my decision.' The Israelites could have benefited from a similar attitude of humility on the part of their military commander(s). Someone made the decision to go into battle in the hill country of southern Canaan in defiance of the Lord and the nation paid the price of defeat and humiliation.

**Numbers 14:43 "For the Amalekites and the Canaanites will be there in front of you, and you will fall by the sword, inasmuch as you have turned back from following the LORD. And the LORD will not be with you."**

BGT Numbers 14:43 τι Αμαληκ κα Χαναανος κε μπροσθεν μ ν κα πεσε σθε μαχα ρ ο ε νεκεν  
πειστρ φητε πειθο ντες κυρ κα ο κ σται κ ριος ν μ ν

NET Numbers 14:43 For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and you will fall by the sword. Because you have turned away from the LORD, the LORD will not be with you."

NLT Numbers 14:43 When you face the Amalekites and Canaanites in battle, you will be slaughtered. The LORD will abandon you because you have abandoned the LORD."

ESV Numbers 14:43 For there the Amalekites and the Canaanites are facing you, and you shall fall by the sword. Because you have turned back from following the LORD, the LORD will not be with you."

NIV Numbers 14:43 for the Amalekites and Canaanites will face you there. Because you have turned away from the LORD, he will not be with you and you will fall by the sword."

KJV Numbers 14:43 For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and ye shall fall by the sword: because ye are turned away from the LORD, therefore the LORD will not be with you.

YLT Numbers 14:43 for the Amalekite and the Canaanite are there before you, and ye have fallen by the sword, because that ye have turned back from after Jehovah, and Jehovah is not with you.'

LXE Numbers 14:43 For Amalec and the Chananite are there before you, and ye shall fall by the sword; because ye have disobeyed the Lord and turned aside, and the Lord will not be among you.

ASV Numbers 14:43 For there the Amalekite and the Canaanite are before you, and ye shall fall by the sword: because ye are turned back from following Jehovah, therefore Jehovah will not be with you.

CSB Numbers 14:43 The Amalekites and Canaanites are right in front of you, and you will fall by the sword. The LORD won't be with you, since you have turned from following Him."

NKJ Numbers 14:43 "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."

NRS Numbers 14:43 For the Amalekites and the Canaanites will confront you there, and you shall fall by the sword; because you have turned back from following the LORD, the LORD will not be with you."

- Nu 14:25 13:29 Lev 26:17 De 28:25
- because: Jdg 16:20 1Ch 28:9 2Ch 15:2 Isa 63:10 Ho 9:12
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**For the Amalekites and the Canaanites will be there in front of you and you will fall by the sword-** In Nu 14:25 Israel was instructed to avoid these two people groups! Incredibly Moses continues his prophetic word of warning, even telling Israel who would come against them and that they would hack them to bits! Good grief, what does he need to say for them to believe him!

**Matthew Henry** - "The Canaanites are before you to attack you, and the Lord is not among you to protect you and fight for you, and therefore look to yourselves that 'ye be not smitten before your enemies.' Those that are out of the way of their duty are from under God's protection, and go at their peril. It is dangerous going where we cannot expect God should go along with us."

**Bush on in front of you** - That is, have got the start of you, have preoccupied the post which you would seize; implying that their folly in expecting to dispossess a strong and warlike people who had got into their hands all the strongholds, was equal to their presumption in going counter to the express command of heaven.

**inasmuch as you have turned back from following the LORD** Sin robs us of God's presence. Greek has ""Because ye have turned away unbelievingly or disobediently from the Lord."

**And the LORD will not be with you** - Chald. "The Word of the Lord will not be for your help."

**Numbers 14:44 But they went up heedlessly to the ridge of the hill country; neither the ark of the covenant of the LORD nor Moses left the camp.**

BGT Numbers 14:44 κα διαβιασμενοι ν βησαν π τ ν κορυφ ν το ρους δ κιβωτ ς τ ς διαθ κης κυρ ου κα Μωυ ς ο κ κιν θησαν κ τ ς παρεμβολ ς

NET Numbers 14:44 But they dared to go up to the crest of the hill, although neither the ark of the covenant of the LORD nor Moses departed from the camp.

NLT Numbers 14:44 But the people defiantly pushed ahead toward the hill country, even though neither Moses nor the Ark of the LORD's Covenant left the camp.

ESV Numbers 14:44 But they presumed to go up to the heights of the hill country, although neither the ark of the covenant of the LORD nor Moses departed out of the camp.

NIV Numbers 14:44 Nevertheless, in their presumption they went up toward the high hill country, though neither Moses nor the ark of the LORD's covenant moved from the camp.

KJV Numbers 14:44 But they presumed to go up unto the hill top: nevertheless the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and Moses, departed not out of the camp.

YLT Numbers 14:44 And they presume to go up unto the top of the mountain, and the ark of the covenant of Jehovah and Moses have not departed out of the midst of the camp.

LXE Numbers 14:44 And having forced their passage, they went up to the top of the mountain; but the ark of the covenant of the Lord and Moses stirred not out of the camp.

ASV Numbers 14:44 But they presumed to go up to the top of the mountain: nevertheless the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, and Moses, departed not out of the camp.

CSB Numbers 14:44 But they dared to go up the ridge of the hill country, even though the ark of the LORD's covenant and Moses did not leave the camp.

NKJ Numbers 14:44 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.

NRS Numbers 14:44 But they presumed to go up to the heights of the hill country, even though the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and Moses, had not left the camp.

- **went up heedlessly:** Nu 15:30 De 1:43
- **the ark:** Nu 10:33 1Sa 4:3-11
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## JEHOVAH WENT NOT WITH THEM!

**But** - Term of contrast. Here is another terrible change of direction! Moses warned, but they went! Incredible!

**They went up heedlessly to the ridge of the hill country - Heedlessly** (aphal) has the basic meaning of "swelling, puffed up, or lifted up" figuratively picturing to be proud, to presume. It describes carrying on an act of presumption, arrogance, against the best advice. In the only other use it refers to a person who has become too audacious, proud (Hab. 2:4). The picture is of a person with their head held high or one having a swollen head, analogous to our modern idiom accusing someone of having "the big head". This is someone who is thinking higher of himself than he ought to think (cf Ro 12:3). In Nu14:44 Israel had "the big head" and so went up heedlessly (hif imperfect 3masc plural), with presumption, acting arrogantly and haughtily in complete disregard for Moses' clear warning not to do so

The foolish Israelites remind me of Samson whose hair had been cut off by Delilah in Judges 16

She said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" And he awoke from his sleep and said, "I will go out as at other times and shake myself free." **But he did not know that the LORD had departed from him** 21 Then the Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes; and they brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze chains, and he was a grinder in the prison. (Judges 16:20-21+)

**Neither the ark of the covenant of the LORD nor Moses left the camp-** "The ark moved only with the removal of the cloud, and Moses moved only with the ark; so that those who did advance did it on their own responsibility, and in direct opposition to the tokens of the divine will." (Bush) They were accompanied by NEITHER **Yahweh (Ark)** or their leader **Moses!** How foolish could they be! The ark in other texts led Israel into battle (cf 1Sa 4:1-22). Here it remains in the camp, as a witness to Yahweh's absence from their obstinance and stupidity! They must not have been listening with Moses "sang" his "song of the ark" in Numbers 10:35

Then it came about when the ark set out that Moses said, "Rise up, O LORD! And **let Your enemies be scattered**, And let those who hate You flee before You."

**FSB** - ark of the covenant of The ark, which served as the throne of Yahweh, was supposed to accompany the people in battle to ensure victory (10:35-36). This is why, later on, the Philistines will think it is a good idea to steal the ark, although they soon learn otherwise (1 Sam 5)

**Brian Bell** -How fickle is human nature! One day the nation was mourning because of their plight, and the next day they were recklessly trying to accomplish God's work apart from God's will and God's blessing. They thought that because they had confessed their sin, God would change His mind and give them victory. The people had acted stubbornly like the mule, & now they acted impetuously like the horse. (Ps.32:8 Do not be like the horse or the mule) The whole venture was presumption on their part; they were livin by chance not by faith. How many Christians today realize their failings and then try to make up for them in fleshly activities that only lead to discouragement and defeat? All the Israelites could do was, accept God's judgment & surrender to His will.. Far better to wander in the wilderness in the will of God than to fight a losing battle out of the will of God.. The carnal mind cannot serve God; it is timid when it should be bold, & bold when it should be timid. It advances when it should stand still; & it stands still when it should advance.

**TSK Note** - This miserable people a short time ago, thought that, though Omnipotence was with them, they could not conquer and possess the land! Now they imagine, that though God himself go not with them, yet they shall be sufficient to drive out the inhabitants, and take possession of their country! Man is ever supposing he can do all things, or do nothing: he is therefore sometimes presumptuous, and at other times in despair.

**Numbers 14:45 Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down, and struck them and beat them down as far as Hormah.**

BGT Numbers 14:45 κατὰ βῆ Ἀμαλῆκ καὶ Χαναναῖος γκαθμενος ντρεϊκεν κατὰ τρῶαντο αὐτοὺς κατὰ κοψαν αὐτοὺς ὡς Ἑρμῆαν καὶ πεστρφησαν εἰς τὴν παρεμβολήν

NET Numbers 14:45 So the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country swooped down and attacked them as far as Hormah.

NLT Numbers 14:45 Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in those hills came down and attacked them and chased them back as far as Hormah.

ESV Numbers 14:45 Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down and defeated them and pursued them, even to Hormah.

NIV Numbers 14:45 Then the Amalekites and Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down and attacked them and beat them down all the way to Hormah.

KJV Numbers 14:45 Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah.

YLT Numbers 14:45 And the Amalekite and the Canaanite who are dwelling in that mountain come down and smite them, and beat them down -- unto Hormah.

LXE Numbers 14:45 And Amalec and the Chananite that dwelt in that mountain came down, and routed them, and destroyed them unto Herman; and they returned to the camp.

ASV Numbers 14:45 Then the Amalekite came down, and the Canaanite who dwelt in that mountain, and smote them and beat them down, even unto Hormah.

CSB Numbers 14:45 Then the Amalekites and Canaanites who lived in that part of the hill country came down, attacked them, and routed them as far as Hormah.

NKJ Numbers 14:45 Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who dwelt in that mountain came down and attacked them, and drove them back as far as Hormah.

NRS Numbers 14:45 Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down and defeated them, pursuing them as far as Hormah.

- **the Amalekites:** Nu 14:43 Ex 17:16 De 1:44 32:30 Jos 7:5,11,12
- **Hormah:** Nu 21:3 Jdg 1:17
- [Numbers 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Deuteronomy 1:44 "The Amorites who lived in that hill country came out against you and chased you as bees do, and crushed you from Seir to Hormah.

### MOSES' PROPHECY OF DISASTER (HORMAH) FULFILLED

**Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down-** "Under the denomination of Canaanites are included also the Amorites, as we learn from Deut. 1:44, "And the Amorites, which dwelt in that mountain, came out against you and chased you, as bees do, and destroyed you in Seir, even unto Hormah." (Bush)

**NET Note on Beat them** - The verb used here means "crush by beating," or "pounded" them. The Greek text used "cut them in pieces."

**and struck them and beat them down as far as Hormah** - The pagan enemies chased the Jewish army over 100 miles north, as far as Hormah. (See parallel description in Dt 1:44) - **Hormah** is a fitting name for this location because **Hormah** means "destruction." It seems to be a bit of divine "poetic justice!" **Horman** is derived from [haram](#) which means to ban or destroy utterly which is sadly what happened to those who obstinately refused Moses' warning!

**Bush** - And smote them, and discomfited them. The latter term is peculiarly expressive, as it occurs in the following passage, Is. 30:14, "And he shall break it as the breaking of the potter's vessel, which is broken in pieces." Deut. 9:21, "And I took your sin, the calf which ye had made, and burnt it with fire, and stamped it, and ground it very small, even until it was as small as dust." It implies, therefore, a complete routing and breaking to pieces.

**Beat down** (03807)(**kathath**) means to beat, crush by beating This term is used in reference to the destruction of the golden calf (Deut. 9:21); and in the eschatological hope of hammering swords into plowshares (Isa. 2:4; Mic. 4:3). It can also be used figuratively for destroying an enemy (Dt. 1:44) and in this passage of the enemy destroying Israel!

**Gilbrant** - The verb is used in a number of contexts. Several occurrences have to do with the destruction of images, either idols (e.g., the golden calf, Deut. 9:21; pagan idols, 2 Chr. 34:7; Mic. 1:7) or things which function in the same fashion (e.g., the bronze serpent of Moses, 2 Ki. 18:4). Symbolically, the destruction of an image attests to the impotency of the deity who is supposed to indwell in the object. The supernatural quality of the serpent of Moses, personified and deified by the Judeans, was discredited by its pulverization in the course of a purge of idolatry during the reign of Hezekiah. In sacrificial contexts, this term is used once. Animals with crushed testicles are prohibited from being offered to Yahweh (Lev. 22:24f).

The beating of implements of war into implements of agriculture (Isa. 2:4; Mic. 4:3) and its obverse (Joel 3:10) assigns antithetical usages of the intended purposes of implements. War demands mustering of local people for duty; armies use fields for tactical purposes to gain position; and they destroy them as they move on. It is usually not possible to continually perform agricultural tasks during war. Peace is associated with prosperity, as not only is the land not ravaged, but the entirety of the workforce is present for labor.

The verb is also used in a number of contexts to express military defeat. Generally, this defeat is a direct result of judgment. Israel suffered defeat at the hands of the Canaanites (Num. 14:45; Deut. 1:44), and will do so in the face of Yahweh himself (2 Chr. 15:6; Zech. 11:6). The nations will fall before Yahweh's righteous servant, David (Ps. 89:23). Yahweh will avenge his people by breaking the gates of their oppressors, symbolic of a city without protection, at the mercy of its invaders (Isa. 24:12).

Job 4:20 employs the verb in the course of a metaphor for human frailty. Eliphaz declared that human righteousness is not possible, for it is not even accomplished by the messengers nor by the angels of Yahweh. Humans are composed of clay, "whose foundation is in the dust," and are temporal beings whose existence is inferior to the apparently eternal functionaries of Yahweh. Eliphaz charged that Job's claim of righteousness was an impossible one, given human limitations. (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary)

**Kathath** - 17x - battered(1), beat(2), beat them down(1), broke in pieces(1), broken in pieces(1), crush(1), crushed(4), defeated(1), hammer(2), shattered(1), smashed(1), strike(1). Lev. 22:24; Num. 14:45; Deut. 1:44; Deut. 9:21; 2 Ki. 18:4; 2 Chr. 15:6; 2 Chr. 34:7; Job 4:20; Ps. 89:23; Isa. 2:4; Isa. 24:12; Isa. 30:14; Jer. 46:5; Joel 3:10; Mic. 1:7; Mic. 4:3; Zech. 11:6

---

**Wise Words from Warren Wiersbe** in conclusion - The entire experience at Kadesh-Barnea teaches us that there is no substitute for faith in God's promises and obedience to His commandments. Faith is simply obeying God in spite of how we feel, what we see, or what we think might happen. When God's people trust and obey, the Lord delights in doing wonders for them, because they glorify His name. The agnostic American newspaper editor Henry L. Mencken defined faith as "an illogical belief in the occurrence of the impossible." Mark Twain wrote that faith was "believing what you know ain't so." Both were wrong. Evangelist D.L. Moody said that "real true faith is man's weakness leaning on God's strength." It's taking God at His Word and proving it by obeying what He tells us to do. That's where Israel failed. (Be Counted)

---

Let's not follow their example!

**Some Questions to Ponder** (adapted from Precept Upon Precept study of Numbers - lesson 2)

1. Are you quick to accept something simply because it is what the crowd thinks or feels, or do you have another standard
2. Are you quick to join the crowd in condemning a leader with whom others are suddenly uncomfortable even though he has

been an example of integrity?

3. Are you quick to believe something you hear and then grumble?
4. Have your children suffered because you spent years in rebellion against God and His Word?
5. Do you keep calm in the face of difficulty or distressful reports because you take God at His Word and rest in His promise that it will all work together for good and He will be your covenant defender?
6. Are you like Moses who cared more for God's glory than his own?
7. When you are in a trial, are you quick to groan "Why didn't I just die before all this happened?" or "Now what will become of us all?"
8. Do you think you can willfully disobey God, confess that you did sin, and then expect to have everything just the way it was before?