

Having reached to southern border of the Promised Land the leaders of the Israelites asked Moses if men could be sent before the congregation to search out the land for them, and this request pleased Moses. (Deut. 1:22,23) and Yahweh instructed Moses to select ruling men, responsible men who were heads of the children of Israel. From every tribe to search out the land of Canaan to see what it was like, how fruitful it was, how many cities there were and how the people lived, whether in tents or strongholds. Above all Moses exhorted those who had been appointed to spy out the land to be of good courage and to bring back samples of the fruit of the land. At this point Moses also informs the readers of this account that this was the time of the first ripe grapes. So Moses by Yahweh's commandment sent these spies out from the wilderness of Paran from a place called Kadesh-barnea. See the attached map.



The names of these spies proclaimed aspects off the glory of God (Yahweh) but the majority of them did not live up to their names. In the Acts of the Apostles we are reminded of our own calling when the apostle Peter according to the Apostle James, testified that God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. (Act 15:14)

This is interesting because only two people lived up to their name, Oshea of the tribe of Ephraim whose name was changed to Joshua and Caleb the son of Jephunneh. Caleb was of Gentile extraction, perhaps from among the mixed multitude that came

out of Egypt. However In Joshua 14:14 we find he inherited Hebron which “became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh because that he had wholly followed the LORD God of Israel (Jos 14:14 &15:13)and was adopted into the tribe of Judah. Although a gentile by birth he became ‘an Israelite’ indeed (John1:47). Oshea in Hebrew means ‘salvation’ But Yahoshua means ‘Yah’s salvation’

So Moses urged the twelve chosen spies to be observant and of good courage and faithful to their commitment. So the expedition began and the company journeyed from the wilderness of Zin, travelling northwards to Hamath in Lebanon. The journey from Kadesh Barnea to Hamath is approximately two hundred fifty miles. Forty days would have been a reasonable amount of time for the spies to travel through the area and accomplish the tasks they were given. Travelling north they came to Hebron where at that time the descendants of Anak lived, these were men of exceptional stature. Hebron is also significant in that its meaning can be translated as, Union, Confederate of Fellowship. It commemorates the oath between Abraham and the Amorite leaders, Mamre, Eschol and Aner on the basis of their acceptance of the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen.14:13) Hebron stood for fellowship or union between God and Man on the basis of His covenant. It was probably the discovery of these descendants of the giants that thoroughly discouraged ten of the spies. But it seems that they did not recall Abraham’s victory over the forces of Chedorlaomar.

The spies then came to the valley of Eschol which is adjacent to Hebron, it is very close to the place of Abraham’s victory, which should have been remembered by all the spies, that the victory was achieved through Yahweh’s assistance. Doubtless they were overwhelmed by the fruitfulness of this valley, the size of the clusters of grapes which were carried by two between a staff or pole. They also collected pomegranates, a fruit which is purple in colour when ripe and is filled with seeds which became a symbol of the multiplication of promised seed, and which adorned the garments of the High Priest and points to the Lord Jesus Christ. Grapes, pomegranates and figs are described as the fruits of the land but they also remind us of the fruits of the Spirit, that all true believers must strive to produce.

After 40 days the spies returned from their searching of the land and they gave their report to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, in which

they concurred that the land was indeed a land which flowed with milk and honey and they presented the samples of the fruits they had collected. But then they reported on the people that inhabited the land of promise, emphasizing the warlike nature and strength of the people of the land. The people of Anak, the Amalekites, the Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites and Canaanites, indicating that the whole land was swarming with powerful enemies all of whom were too powerful for the Israelites to overcome.

Caleb tried to assure the people, he stilled the people and assured them that the opposite was true and that they should go up at once and possess the land, because with Yahweh on their side they would be well able to overcome the land. This was the voice of faith in Yahweh of armies, but the psalmist records the situation (Psa 78:40-41) “How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, *and* grieve him in the desert! Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.” But the ten spies brought up an evil report stating that the land was one that eat up the inhabitants, and to drive their evil message home they stated that there were giants in the land and in comparison with them the spies were like grasshoppers in their sight.

The Israelites forgotten, that as this tussle between the ten and the two and the overwhelming doubt on the part of the many, Yahweh their God was listening and he heard, as we shall learn in our next class that the while this ungrateful congregation would have preferred to die in the land of Egypt than to have been brought into this situation. Very well that is what they wanted and that is exactly what Yahweh decided to give them, he would save their children, but that generation would perish in the wilderness for forty years.

So the apostle Paul instructing the Corinthians reminded them in his first letter **1 Corinthians 10:1** Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as *were* some of them; as it is written, ‘The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play’. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.

⁹ Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. ¹⁰ Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. ¹¹ Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. ¹² Wherefore let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*. (1Co 10:1-13)