

The nation of Israel was ready to emerge from the desert and inherit the land promised to the fathers. God had consistently proven Himself to them as their protection, and there should have been significant trust that whatsoever He asked them to do would be successful. Sadly, this was not to be the case.

Each tribe was to select a ruler, a person of reputation and experience who would take on the responsibility to scout out the land. This was not to provide the details to enable Moses to take a decision, it was to reconnoitre the land for an invasion force to plot its course carefully. God would deliver them the land, but they would need to participate in that capture, it would not happen without their involvement. God often works like this. Sometimes we even think we have achieved something without Him, but how shortsighted is such a view! There are those who just do not understand and demand the God does it all. It would be like praying for God to effect change in our lives and then do nothing but to sit back and wait! Are we really so surprised when after having done so, nothing is different?

Who were these men, these princes? Their names are given in the first column, their tribe the next and the meaning of their names in the third column.

Shammua	Reuben	Renown
Shaphat	Simeon	Judge
Caleb	Judah	Dog
Igal	Issachar	Avenger
Oshea	Ephraim	Deliverer
Palti	Bejamin	Delivered
Gaddiel	Zebulun	Fortune of God
Gaddi	Manasseh	Fortunate
Ammiel	Dan	People of God
Sethur	Asher	Conceal
Nahbi	Naphtali	Secret
Geuel	Gad	Majesty

It seems that the purpose of what was taking place is contained in the meaning of their names. Men of renown were to judge the land of the unbelievers, the uncircumcised dogs, God would avenge their crimes and be the deliverer, and the delivered nation of Israel, would share in the fortune of God, they were indeed fortunate to be the people of God, and although presently conceal, this secret would be manifest and the majesty of God would be revealed through the hosts of YHWH! These words pictures are often found in such lists of names as we have often seen before.

The time was the harvest of first right grapes, verse 20, about early summer. If they conquered the land then, they would be able to reap the full harvest which they had not

sown! This was the second year after they had departed out of Egypt, and they were to leave the wilderness of Sin and take up their divine inheritance.

The enemies of Israel are highlighted during this expedition. From the Amalekites in the south, verse 29, who are later to be totally destroyed by YHWH, to the sons of Anak which have a genetic height advantage and causing great fear in the minds of the spies, so that they produce an evil report. The majority of the spies give a negative report so that these ten influence the nation against trusting in the divine plan, only the two faithful spies Caleb and Oshea (Joshua) spoke out against this. Caleb had faith and reassured the people that *"we are well able to overcome it"*. He stilled the people before Moses from their anxiety, but that was only temporary. However, people are often very quick to find reasons not to do something, and this incident is a sad illustration of such truths. They were not interested in the Truth which God presented to them, and instead they were overcome with doubt and anxiety, something which acts against the manifestation of faith.

The spies seemed to have conversed with the sons of Anak as the report says, *"And we were in our own sight as grasshoppers and so we were in their sight"*. This stipulates an interaction with the adversary which would best have been prevented. Checking on the morale of an enemy can be useful, but this was no ordinary reconnoitre. They gave more weight to the testimony of their opponents than to the clear statement of intent from the Eternal.

The land was very blessed and contained an old civilisation. There is an interesting statement in verse 22, *"Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt"* which should remind the reader where the oldest nations were found, Egypt was not one of them. There were accurate records of such matters available in older times, something which is not now present. Hebron is first mentioned in Genesis 13v18 in the days of Abram. Zoan was to become the capital of Egypt at one time and was a great city on the east delta. It should be remembered that Abram was born only 350 years after the flood, so the earth was still very much being repopulated by the expanding nations of the descendants of Noah. Shem only died 25 years before Abraham died.

These lands in the Levant were rich and populous and were a prize worth the attention of the Mesopotamian kings which they received on many occasions over a period of many centuries, Genesis 14v1, Judges 3v10, Isaiah 10v5, Daniel 1v1.

The fruit of the land was bountiful with a famous depiction of one cluster of grapes being large enough to be carried by two men on a branch between them as well as many figs and pomegranates. It was a blessed land for a blessed people and the natural order as it appeared to natural eyes and natural ears interfered with the eye of faith.

Forty days they took to survey the land. Time to walk it in the length and the breadth of it but to most this only reinforced their anxieties. The exceptions were Caleb and Joshua who saw the same things but from a different perspective, how important that is then when we survey any evidence to start from an appropriate stance, based around belief.