

# Numbers 13-14

Bible Study

## Review

### Chapter 10: 11-36

Israel left Mt. Sinai where they had been almost 14 months since leaving Egypt

It was an organized march and they were led by the cloud, and ark which went ahead of them

### Chapter 11

After only three days march from Sinai, they complain of not having meat

God struck the outskirts of the camp which was apparently the source of complaining

God gave them meat in an abundance of quail, which they gorged themselves... and in the hot desert environment soon rotted—leading to nausea and food poisoning

### Chapter 12

Miriam and Aaron rebel against Moses leadership

Miriam, apparently the ringleader, is struck with leprosy

Moses intercedes and asks God for her healing

### **Numbers 12:16**

<sup>16</sup>And afterward the people moved from Hazeroth and camped **in the Wilderness of Paran.**

## Numbers 13

Chapters 13-14 center on the area in and around Kadesh-Barnea in the (Wilderness of Paran)

<sup>1</sup>And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

<sup>2</sup>“Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel; from each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a leader among them.”

<sup>3</sup>So Moses sent them from the Wilderness of Paran according to the command of the Lord, all of them men who *were* heads of the children of Israel.

v. 2 “send out men to spy out the land”

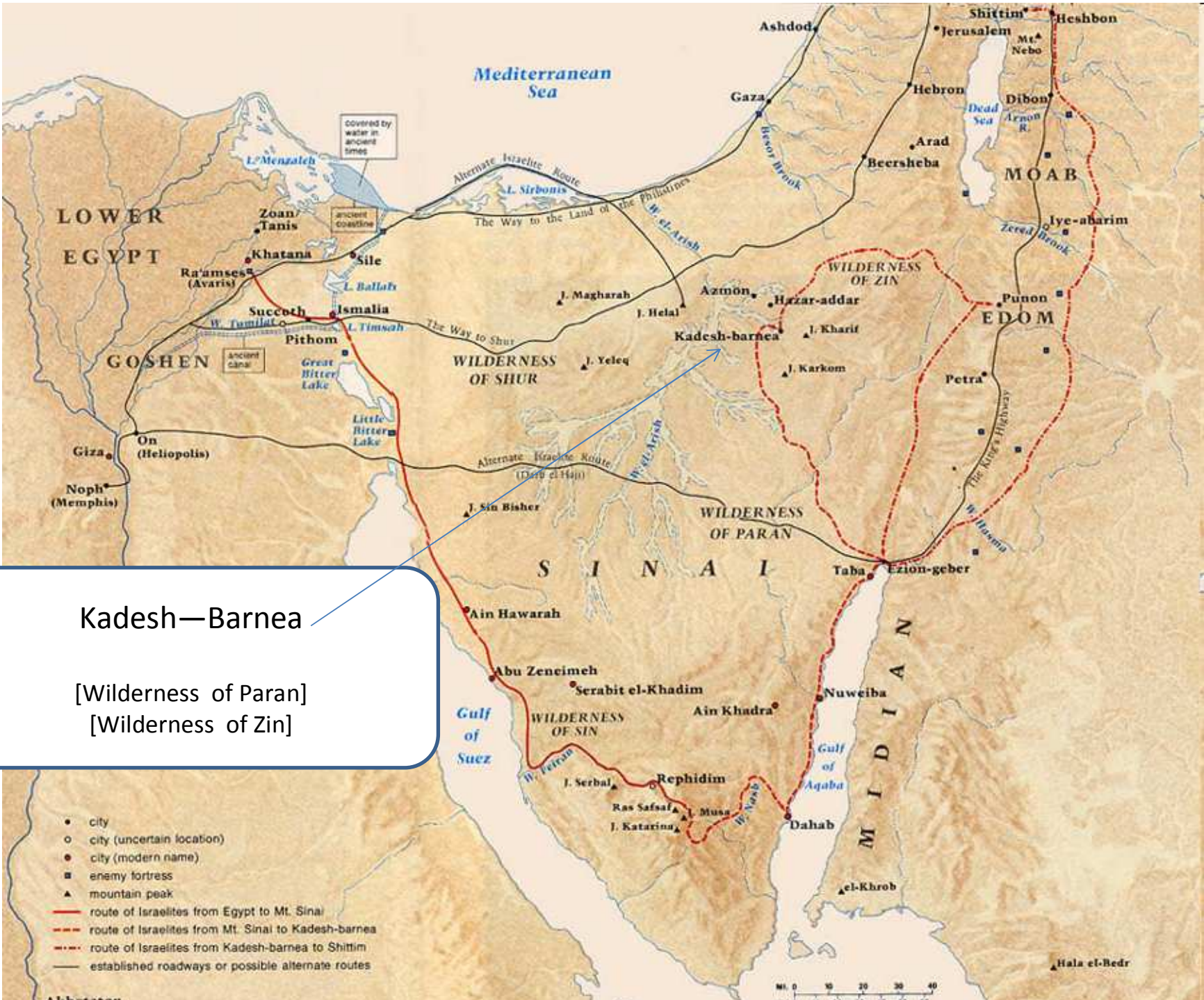
Deuteronomy 1: 22-23 tells us that the people had asked for the spies/scouts.

- It was not Moses’ nor God’s idea...but Moses and God did approve it

v. 2 “from each tribe...you shall send a man”

These are not the same leaders from the tribes that were recorded in chapter one to conduct the census, nor chapter seven who brought gifts to the tabernacle

- Probably these men had skills appropriate for scouting the land that the leaders who conducted the census did not



Kadesh—Barnea  
 [Wilderness of Paran]  
 [Wilderness of Zin]

<sup>4</sup>Now these *were* their names: from the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur;  
<sup>5</sup>from the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori;  
<sup>6</sup>from the tribe of Judah, **Caleb** the son of Jephunneh;  
<sup>7</sup>from the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph;  
<sup>8</sup>from the tribe of Ephraim, <sup>£</sup>**Hoshea** the son of Nun;  
<sup>9</sup>from the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu;  
<sup>10</sup>from the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi;  
<sup>11</sup>from the tribe of Joseph, *that is*, from the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of Susi;  
<sup>12</sup>from the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli;  
<sup>13</sup>from the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael;  
<sup>14</sup>from the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi;  
<sup>15</sup>from the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi.

Ten of these men would die for an unfaithful report...only Caleb [v. 6] and Joshua [v.8] would bring a favorable report—showing their faith in God

<sup>16</sup>These *are* the names of the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Hoshea<sup>£</sup> the son of Nun, **Joshua**.

<sup>17</sup>Then Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said to them, “Go up this way into the South, and go up to the mountains,  
<sup>18</sup>and see what the land is like: whether the people who dwell in it *are* strong or weak, few or many;  
<sup>19</sup>whether the land they dwell in *is* good or bad; whether the cities they inhabit *are* like camps or strongholds;  
<sup>20</sup>whether the land *is* rich or poor; and whether there are forests there or not. Be of good courage. And bring some of the fruit of the land.” Now the time *was* the season of the first ripe grapes.

Mid-summer; mid to late July (NICOT)

v. 17 “Go up this way into the south, and go up to the mountains”  
(Parallel Com.) “This description seemed to cover the entire area of Palestine, from Mount Hermon in the north to Beersheba in the south”

v. 18-19 “strong or weak” ..... “cities...like camps or strongholds”

➤ Moses asks for precise information that would be important for conquering the land

v. 20 “Be of good courage”

By saying these words Moses almost seems to anticipate the doubts and fears which later arise from the hearts and mouths of ten of the scouts



<sup>21</sup>So they went up and spied out the land from the Wilderness of Zin as far as Rehob, near the entrance of Hamath.

<sup>22</sup>And they went up through the South and came to Hebron; Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the descendants of Anak, *were* there. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)

v. 21 This description covers the entire extent of the land that the people of Israel will live in as a kingdom—from the south to the north

(New Int. Com. OT) “Wilderness of Zin”— “According to 13:26 Kadesh-Barnea was located in the Wilderness of Paran, and according to 20: 1 it was in the Wilderness of Zin; it is likely that the border between the two areas was fluid and that Kadesh-Barnea was near this border”

v.22 “Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai”

(NICOT) “These names probably designate three clans that live in the area. Later, Caleb and the Judahites would defeat these groups and take Hebron from them. (Jos.15:14)

(Und. Bible Com. Series) “The descendants of Anak are understood to be giant warriors, like Goliath in Israelite tradition”

(NICOT) “That Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt makes it very ancient indeed...first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC”





<sup>23</sup>Then they came to the Valley of Eshcol, and there cut down a branch with one cluster of grapes; they carried it between two of them on a pole. *They also brought* some of the pomegranates and figs.

<sup>24</sup>The place was called the Valley of <sup>ƒ</sup>Eshcol, because of the cluster which the men of Israel cut down there.

<sup>25</sup>And they returned from spying out the land after forty days.

(Und. Bible Com. Series) “Eschol means ‘cluster’....the size of the fruit is sign of the fertility of the land”

v. 25 “forty days”—a days journey about 12-15 miles

Forty days by foot= about 500 miles

<sup>26</sup>Now they departed and came back to Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; they brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land.

<sup>27</sup>Then they told him, and said: “We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this *is* its fruit.

<sup>28</sup>Nevertheless the people who dwell in the land *are* strong; the cities *are* fortified *and* very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there.

<sup>29</sup>The Amalekites dwell in the land of the South; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan

v. 26 The context makes it clear that the report was given to all the congregation

v. 28 “Nevertheless”—the report on the land was very good...but the cities are fortified, the people are strong and the Anakim [tall people] live there

v. 29 Amalakites are mentioned first—cousins of Israel who attacked them shortly after leaving Egypt...always considered among the foremost enemies of Israel

v. 29 [last part] “the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan”

The Hittites occupied part of Canaan in the time of Abraham, who bought the cave at Machpelah from a Hittite [Gen. 15: 23]

The Jebusites were known for occupying the area of Jerusalem, which did not fall until the time of David [II Sam. 5: 6-7]

Amorites were sometimes generally referred to as the people who lived in Canaan  
➤ A dominant tribe

Canaanites by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan—perhaps the peoples who were later called Phoenicians (Tyre)

<sup>30</sup>Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, “Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it.”

<sup>31</sup>But the men who had gone up with him said, “We are not able to go up against the people, for they *are* stronger than we.”

<sup>32</sup>And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, “The land through which we have gone as spies *is* a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it *are* men of *great* stature.

<sup>33</sup>There we saw the <sup>£</sup>giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.”

v. 30 after an uproar by the people... Caleb hushed the people—they could march in and overtake the land

v. 33 “we saw the giants”

(NICOT) “although the Israelites would not have known who the Anakim were, since Numbers 13: 22 is the first mention of them in the Bible, they would be familiar with the story of the Nephilim.

Connecting the men of great stature with the Nephilim is an exaggeration for rhetorical effect.

It should be noted that nowhere in chapter 13 does the name of God or his promise of the land figure as a prominent theme” [they left God out of the picture]

## Numbers 14

<sup>1</sup>So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night.

<sup>2</sup>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!

<sup>3</sup>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?”

<sup>4</sup>So they said to one another, “Let us select a leader and return to Egypt.”

v. 1-2 “all the congregation”; “the people”; “all the children of Israel”; “the whole congregation”

▪Emphasizes that all of the people were involved in the rebellion that will now take place

v.1 “lifted up their voices”—led to crying all night

v. 2 “complained”= murmuring—led to wishing they would have died and a lack of faith

v. 3 Implied that God was against them

v. 4 Rejected God and God’s leader and wanted a new one to take them back to Egypt

Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel term ‘returning to Egypt’ as rebellion against God [Isa.30: 1-7; Isa. 31: 1-3; Jer. 2: 17-18; Ezek. 17:15]

<sup>5</sup>Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.

**“before** all the people”

(NICOT) “The preposition *lipne* here, then, expresses the positions of Moses and Aaron **in front** of the people. The two leaders were aware of the great sin of the people before God and hence prostrated themselves before his imminent presence”

<sup>6</sup>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;

<sup>7</sup>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.

<sup>8</sup>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.’<sup>£</sup>

<sup>9</sup>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.”

v. 6 “tore their clothes”= a sign of grief

v. 9 “they are our bread”= ‘we will swallow them up’  
If they would trust in God, there would be no need to fear the Canaanites

The reaction of the people:

God's reaction:

<sup>10</sup>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.

<sup>11</sup>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?"

<sup>12</sup>I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they."

v. 10 "stoning" —was used in the ancient times for capital punishment but also was often an expression of public anger, as all of Israel was angry here

v. 12 "with pestilence and disinherit them"

Knowing that He has been rejected, God threatens to destroy the people with a plague and start a new nation with Moses...as he did in Ex. 32: 9-10 [golden calf]



<sup>13</sup>And Moses said to the Lord: “Then the Egyptians will hear *it*, for by Your might You brought these people up from among them,

<sup>14</sup>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.

<sup>15</sup>Now *if* You kill these people as one man, then the nations which have heard of Your fame will speak, saying,

<sup>16</sup>‘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.’

<sup>17</sup>And now, I pray, let the power of my Lord be great, just as You have spoken, saying,

<sup>18</sup>‘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*.’<sup>ε</sup>

<sup>19</sup>Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray, according to the greatness of Your mercy, just as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.”

Moses makes two arguments to God’s statement to eradicate all Israel:

1)His reputation among the nations

2)The mercy that he can show

<sup>20</sup>Then the Lord said: “I have pardoned, according to your word;  
<sup>21</sup>but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord—

<sup>22</sup>because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice,  
<sup>23</sup>they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it.

v. 22-23 God reduces the punishment—all Israel will not die, just the generation that came out of Egypt

v.22 “ten times”  
(NICOT) “Most commentators take this to be a round number, or an idiomatic expression for ‘over and over,’ much as ‘a dozen’ is used in English”

<sup>24</sup>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.

<sup>25</sup>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.”

v. 25

(BKC) “As part of the judgment, the Lord instructed Moses and Israel to resume the journey from Kadesh but not toward the valley where the Amalekites and Canaanites lived. They now had to take the long and circuitous route toward the red sea...”

<sup>26</sup>And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying,  
<sup>27</sup>“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.

<sup>28</sup>Say to them, ‘As I live,’ says the Lord, ‘just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you:

<sup>29</sup>The carcasses 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.

<sup>30</sup>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.

v. 28-29 God elaborates further on his judgment—He would grant the Israelites what they had wished for, to die in the desert

v. 29 [last part]—v. 30  
The children under 20 years of the generation who came out of Egypt would be spared along with Caleb and Joshua

<sup>31</sup>But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised.

<sup>32</sup>But *as for you*, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness.

<sup>33</sup>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.

<sup>34</sup>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.

<sup>35</sup>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.”

v. 33 “your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years”

The children under 20 years of age had to endure and suffer for the sins of their parents

v. 34 Prophetic principle—each day for a year [forty days= forty years]

<sup>36</sup>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,  
<sup>37</sup>those very men who brought the evil report about the land, died by the plague before the Lord.

<sup>38</sup>But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive, of the men who went to spy out the land.

v. 36-37 The ten spies (scouts) who brought back the bad report and incited the rebellion die immediately by a plague

This apparently impressed the people so much they would try to take Canaan [v.40]

<sup>39</sup>Then Moses told these words to all the children of Israel, and the people mourned greatly.

<sup>40</sup>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!”

Whether they truly repented is suspect....most likely they hoped that God would reverse his decree

<sup>41</sup>And Moses said, “Now why do you transgress the command of the Lord? For this will not succeed.

<sup>42</sup>Do not go up, lest you be defeated by your enemies, for the Lord *is* not among you.

<sup>43</sup>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.”

v. 42 “for the Lord is not among you”

Without the blessing from God and his presence (the accompanying of the ark) their conquest of Canaan would be impossible

<sup>44</sup>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.

<sup>45</sup>Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who dwelt in that mountain came down and attacked them, and drove them back as far as Hormah.

v. 44 “presumed to go up to the mountaintop”  
(NIV) “toward the high hill country”

v. 45 (Expositors)

“Their subsequent defeat was another judgment the rebellious people brought on their own heads. In fact, any soldiers who died in this abortive warfare only hastened their own punishment for the rebellion at Kadesh”

v. 45 (last part) “Hormah”—means destruction...the name of the site





## Lessons

### 1 Corinthians 10:11-12

<sup>11</sup>Now <sup>£</sup>all these things happened to them as examples, and they were **written for our admonition**, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

<sup>12</sup>Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

Even if the report from the spies was absolutely true—giants, fortified cities, strongholds

➤ God was able to completely take care of these obstacles

We must not take our eyes and minds off of the goal and have the faith that God can deliver us from all trials and obstacles