

## AN EVIL REPORT

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### XIII

***1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,***

***2 Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them.***

~ Our Spiritual Safari has reached Kadesh; where the children of Israel will not trust the Lord, they'll turn away from Him and, as a result, suffer a bitter defeat. They are seemingly told to send spies in to scout the land - but if we put a composite together on this picture, we find out that God's intent is not really for them to spy or survey or even form a plan. God gives us accounts that cover many facets in many different ways in Scripture. It's important that we understand all perspectives of a subject or doctrine. That's why we have four very different Gospels, for example. It takes all four to give the total spectrum of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, let's look at what God says about the spies when we revisit this account in forty more years:

*Deuteronomy 1:22 And ye came near unto me, saith the Lord, every one of you, and said, We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come ~*

Spying was their idea - not God's. Sending in spies to search the land out denotes fear and weakness on the part of these people. They were afraid that they might not be able to overtake the land after all. It seemed more difficult than they had originally imagined. I'm sure it was easy to rationalize doing nothing by saying, "... let's be smart about this campaign." They are losing sight of being led by God. This is a total lack of

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faith and an example of not trusting God to prepare our ways. God had already spied out the land and He knew all about it. He wouldn't have sent them in to die – He just brought them out of certain death in Egypt! God isn't going to direct us into failure, friends. Later, when they finally do enter the land, the same problems are still there - and the giants are still there. Nothing will have changed except their trust and obedience. Are you really walking by faith today?

Taking precautions is prudent, has a value and is a responsible thing to do; but the Lord says for us to NOT lean on our own understanding. We are to commit all our ways to Him and acknowledge Him and He will direct our steps. When we can do that, we will have arrived at the place in our lives where we can honestly say we trust Christ totally and completely. In this section of Scripture, Israel has reached that same decision point; but they are NOT trusting God. When they decided to send in spies, they were signaling to God that they could figure out how to do it their own way. Well, God graciously yields to them and permits this to happen; and for those of you who do not believe in the “permissive will” of God – here it is – again! Remember, the Psalmist said, God granted their request but sent leanness to their souls. This is just one more blunder in repeated acts of faithlessness and mistrust of God by the children of Israel.

So, the command of God to Israel is really a response to their request for assurance and, of course, it is to be done orderly. Naturally, God yielded not for the purpose of having them discover the task of taking the land to be impossible; no, God permitted their frightened will to be done to show them they could take it. What happens after they lose faith and mistrust is: they pervert the Word of God and change what God intends for them to do and – then - they stop believing Him altogether! So, next, we have the names of the spies who were chosen and commissioned, but the only ones we are interested in is Caleb in verse six and “Osheah” – Joshua, the son of Nun in verse eight. Caleb will publish the minority report....

***3 And Moses by the commandment of the LORD sent them from the wilderness of Paran: all those men were heads of the children of Israel.***

**4 And these were their names: of the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur.**

**5 Of the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori.**

**6 Of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh.**

**7 Of the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph.**

**8 Of the tribe of Ephraim, Oshea the son of Nun.**

**9 Of the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu.**

**10 Of the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi.**

**11 Of the tribe of Joseph, namely, of the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of Susi.**

**12 Of the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli.**

**13 Of the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael.**

**14 Of the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi.**

**15 Of the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi.**

**16 These are the names of the men which Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Oshea the son of Nun Jehoshua.**

**17 And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this way southward, and go up into the mountain:**

**18 And see the land, what it is; and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many;**

**19 And what the land is that they dwell in, whether it be good or bad; and what cities they be that they dwell in, whether in tents, or in strong holds;**

**20 And what the land is, whether it be fat or lean, whether there be wood therein, or not. And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land. Now the time was the time of the firstripe grapes.**

**21 So they went up, and searched the land from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath.**

~ Verses seventeen through twenty constitute the commission the spies were given by Moses to go into the land. Hamath is in the extreme north. The spies sure did a thorough and completely exhaustive job. They could have published a book entitled "Palestinian Insider" or "Inside the Promised Land!" They bring back the grapes and pomegranates here in verse twenty-three – and that is not one tiny little bunch of grapes – it took two people to carry them all. But by the time they returned from all the places they went, and saw all the giants in the land, they were not willing to challenge them. So, the spies come back to camp and issue their report to Moses and Aaron....

**22 And they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron; where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the children of Anak, were. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)**

**23 And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs.**

**24 The place was called the brook Eshcol, because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence.**

**25 And they returned from searching of the land after forty days.**

**26 And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to**

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***Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land.***

***27 And they told him, and said, we came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it.***

***28 Nevertheless the people are strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there.***

***29 The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan.***

***30 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.***

~ So, the spies return and present the facts and the fruit of the land. Their entire report is true, completely. It is their interpretation of the facts that is in question. That's where they went horribly wrong. Caleb presents the minority report. Caleb says they can go up and overtake them immediately; but the majority does not agree. When we have not trusted God, and we are losing faith, our problems and circumstances become magnified to a much larger proportion than they really are. To these men, the giants were bigger than they actually were; if the giants were nine feet tall, they seemed like eighteen feet tall. Of course, these men are afraid....

***31 But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.***

***32 And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature.***

***33 And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.***

~ We leave this chapter talking giants and grasshoppers. The only thing that is left out is God. When they saw the giants in the land, they felt like grasshoppers to the giants - but they didn't think to trust God at His Word. If they had factored Him in, everything would have been completely different. So, the report is in and the facts are correct, and the interpretations are two that could not be more divergent. Caleb says they are able to take the land on demand, but the majority does not trust God. They do not trust God because of a lack of faith - and their senseless lack of faith is going to return them to the wilderness march....

#### **XIV**

***1 And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night.***

~ Israel comes now to the place of decision: are they going to obey God or not? They lift up their voice and have a good old-fashioned cry, but it isn't a crying out to God for mercy and forgiveness. Oh, no; they have more complaining to do. See, they're going to refuse to enter the land because of unbelief. Hebrews chapter three gives the entire incident, and it concludes by saying, "... so, we see they could not enter in because of their unbelief!" That unbelief is the only thing that kept them out of the land. I cannot overemphasize that fact....

***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!***

~ I wonder if Moses and Aaron wished they HAD died out there in the wilderness. That would have prevented the complaining and murmuring. Notice next how, in their bad frame of mind, they say their wives and

children would be the ones in danger. They put up the front that they were only thinking of others, but it was a reflection on God, and it concludes incorrectly that He was not thinking of them. The funny thing is the only ones that will enter the land are the children of the old generation. God is not mocked, friends – He laughs while we waste forty, fifty, sixty years sometimes. God was, in fact, thinking of them; the children of Israel were not thinking about God, though, and they were alleging that God was not thinking about them. This is a mixed-up, confused, psychologically unstable group of people. All of this could have been avoided by simply trusting God....

***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?***

***4 And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.***

~ So, the murmuring has turned into a full-scale mutiny decision of rebellion and returning to slavery. Now, they are leaving God out altogether. When you are in the presence of giants, and you can only see yourself as a grasshopper – that’s when you need God the most, friends. This is the time that these people needed God on the scene the most and this is the time He is the furthest away from them - because of their unbelief. Well, Moses, at this time, delivers an ultimatum that they are either going to have to accept or reject Joshua and Caleb’s report. They desired God to delight in them, but God cannot delight in anyone who is in willful unbelief. Until we trust Him by faith, we cannot please Him....

***5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.***

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

**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.**

**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.**

**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.**

~ Joshua and Caleb insist that taking the land would be like shooting fish in a barrel. This is the difference between taking counsel from those who have faith in God and those who do not. Well, thank Him that, every time there is murmuring and complaining, the glory of the Lord appears, because these people want to kill them. Naturally, God is highly displeased with their rebellion against Him. What God says next to Moses in verse twelve is startling. God says He will wipe them out and make a great nation from Moses. The promises of God to Abraham would have still been fulfilled if God had done it that way. Moses will tell the Lord that if He did that, the people would start a rumor about God saying God wasn't able to fully deliver them. If God had destroyed Israel, then people would say God was unable to complete that which He had begun. When Moses calls the Lord's attention to that, then God agrees to go ahead and allow them to enter the land....

**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.**

**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?**

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

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***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;)***

***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.***

***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,***

***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.***

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

***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.***

***19 Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.***

***20 And the LORD said, I have pardoned according to thy word:***

***21 But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD.***

~ Verse twenty-one is the first time this prophecy is given; and it occurs many times throughout Scripture. God brought the children of Israel out of the Promised Land – and God has saved you – and me! God has a plan and a purpose He is working on. All of this is being done in light of the fact that one day the earth will be filled with the light of the glory of the Lord Jesus

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Christ. Verse twenty-four finds the Lord singling out Caleb, and, as it turns out, it's going to happen exactly this way, too....

***22 Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice;***

***23 Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it:***

***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.***

***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.***

***26 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,***

***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.***

***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:***

***29 Your carcasses 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,***

***30 Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.***

**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.**

**32 But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness.**

**33 And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness.**

**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.**

**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.**

**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,**

**37 Even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the LORD.**

**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.**

**39 And Moses told these sayings unto all the children of Israel: and the people mourned greatly.**

~ Well, they're back in mourning, but they are more afraid of the wilderness than they were of entering the land. This is a confused and unsure bunch of people. They have lost an opportunity because they wouldn't go in when the Lord commanded them to. So, they decide they will go to God their own way. Moses tells them don't go up to the Lord in unbelief because their enemies will smite them but, they didn't listen to that advice. They go up presumptuously – and faith is NEVER that, my

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friends. They went up but God didn't go with them – the ark stayed behind. The children of Israel wanted to do things their way instead of Gods way and that will never bring blessing....

***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.***

***41 And Moses said, Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of the LORD? but it shall not prosper.***

***42 Go not up, for the LORD is not among you; that ye be not smitten before your enemies.***

***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.***

***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.***

***45 Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah.***

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