

week three

NUMBERS 13-14

MISPLACED FEAR

SCOUTING OUT CANAAN

¹The LORD spoke to Moses: ²“Send men to scout out the land of Canaan I am giving to the Israelites. Send one man who is a leader among them from each of their ancestral tribes.” ³Moses sent them from the Wilderness of Paran at the LORD’s command. All the men were leaders in Israel. ⁴These were their names:

- Shammua son of Zaccur from the tribe of Reuben;
- ⁵ Shaphat son of Hori from the tribe of Simeon;
- ⁶ Caleb son of Jephunneh from the tribe of Judah;
- ⁷ Igal son of Joseph from the tribe of Issachar;
- ⁸ Hoshea son of Nun from the tribe of Ephraim;
- ⁹ Palti son of Raphu from the tribe of Benjamin;
- ¹⁰ Gaddiel son of Sodi from the tribe of Zebulun;
- ¹¹ Gaddi son of Susi from the tribe of Manasseh (from the tribe of Joseph);
- ¹² Ammiel son of Gemalli from the tribe of Dan;
- ¹³ Sethur son of Michael from the tribe of Asher;
- ¹⁴ Nahbi son of Vophsi from the tribe of Naphtali;
- ¹⁵ Geuel son of Machi from the tribe of Gad.

¹⁶These were the names of the men Moses sent to scout out the land, and Moses renamed Hoshea son of Nun, Joshua.

¹⁷When Moses sent them to scout out the land of Canaan, he told them, “Go up this way to the Negev, then go up into the hill country.

¹⁸See what the land is like, and whether the people who live there are strong or weak, few or many. ¹⁹Is the land they live in good or bad? Are the cities they live in encampments or fortifications? ²⁰Is the land fertile or unproductive? Are there trees in it or not? Be courageous. Bring back some fruit from the land.” It was the season for the first ripe grapes.

²¹So they went up and scouted out the land from the Wilderness of Zin as far as Rehob near the entrance to Hamath. ²²They went up through the Negev and came to Hebron, where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the descendants of Anak, were living. Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt. ²³When they came to Eshcol Valley, they cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes, which was carried on a pole by two men. They also took some pomegranates and figs.

²⁴That place was called Eshcol Valley because of the cluster of grapes the

Israelites cut there. ²⁵At the end of forty days they returned from scouting out the land.

REPORT ABOUT CANAAN

²⁶The men went back to Moses, Aaron, and the entire Israelite community in the Wilderness of Paran at Kadesh. They brought back a report for them and the whole community, and they showed them the fruit of the land. ²⁷They reported to Moses, “We went into the land where you sent us. Indeed it is flowing with milk and honey, and here is some of its fruit. ²⁸However, the people living in the land are strong, and the cities are large and fortified. We also saw the descendants of Anak there. ²⁹The Amalekites are living in the land of the Negev; the Hethites, Jebusites, and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live by the sea and along the Jordan.”

³⁰Then Caleb quieted the people in the presence of Moses and said, “Let’s go up now and take possession of the land because we can certainly conquer it!”

³¹But the men who had gone up with him responded, “We can’t attack the people because they are stronger than we are!” ³²So they gave a negative report to the Israelites about the land they had scouted: “The land we passed through to explore is one that devours its inhabitants, and all the people we saw in it are men of great size. ³³We even saw the Nephilim there—the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim! To ourselves we seemed like grasshoppers, and we must have seemed the same to them.”

14 ISRAEL’S REFUSAL TO ENTER CANAAN

Then the whole community broke into loud cries, and the people wept that night.

²All 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!

³Why is the LORD bringing us into this land to die by the sword? Our wives and children will become plunder. Wouldn’t it be better for us to go back to Egypt?” ⁴So they said to one another, “Let’s appoint a leader and go back to Egypt.”

⁵Then Moses and Aaron fell facedown in front of the whole assembly of the Israelite community. ⁶Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who scouted out the land, tore their clothes ⁷and said to the entire Israelite community, “The land we passed through and explored is an extremely good land. ⁸If 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. ⁹Only 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!”

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

GOD'S JUDGMENT OF ISRAEL'S REBELLION

¹¹The 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? ¹²I will strike them with a plague and destroy them. Then I will make you into a greater and mightier nation than they are."

¹³But Moses replied to the LORD, "The Egyptians will hear about it, for by your strength you brought up this people from them. ¹⁴They 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. ¹⁵If you kill this people with a single blow, the nations that have heard of your fame will declare, 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.'

¹⁷"So now, may my LORD's power be magnified just as you have spoken: ¹⁸The LORD is slow to anger and abounding in faithful love, forgiving iniquity and rebellion. But he will not leave the guilty unpunished, bringing the consequences of the fathers' iniquity on the children to the third and fourth generation. ¹⁹Please pardon the iniquity of this people, in keeping with the greatness of your faithful love, just as you have forgiven them from Egypt until now."

²⁰The LORD responded, "I have pardoned them as you requested. ²¹Yet as I live and as the whole earth is filled with the LORD's glory, ²²none of the men who have seen my glory and the signs I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tested me these ten times and did not obey me, ²³will ever see the land I swore to give their ancestors. None of those who have despised me will see it. ²⁴But since my servant Caleb has a different spirit and has remained loyal to me, I will bring him into the land where he has gone, and his descendants will inherit it. ²⁵Since the Amalekites and Canaanites are living in the lowlands, turn back tomorrow and head for the wilderness in the direction of the Red Sea."

²⁶Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron: 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. ²⁸Tell them: As I live—this is the LORD's declaration—I will do to you exactly as I heard you say. ²⁹Your corpses will fall in this wilderness—all of you who were registered in the census, the entire number of you twenty years old or more—because you have complained about me. ³⁰I 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. ³¹I will bring your children whom you said would become plunder into the land you rejected, and they will enjoy it. ³²But as for you, your corpses will fall in this wilderness. ³³Your children will be shepherds in the wilderness for forty years and bear the penalty for your acts of unfaithfulness until all your corpses lie scattered in the wilderness. ³⁴You will bear the consequences of your iniquities forty years based on the number of the forty days that you scouted the land, a year for each day. You will know my displeasure. ³⁵I, 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."

³⁶So 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—³⁷those men who spread the negative report about the land were struck down by the Lord. ³⁸Only Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh remained alive of those men who went to scout out the land.

ISRAEL ROUTED

³⁹When Moses reported these words to all the Israelites, the people were overcome with grief. ⁴⁰They 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."

⁴¹But Moses responded, "Why are you going against the LORD's command? It won't succeed. ⁴²Don't go, because the LORD is not among you and you will be defeated by your enemies. ⁴³The 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."

⁴⁴But 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. ⁴⁵Then the Amalekites and Canaanites who lived in that part of the hill country came down, attacked them, and routed them as far as Hormah.

Life Group Discussion Guide

RHYTHM REMINDER  **Worship**

LEAN IN

What is a fear or “phobia” you have that feels silly, but when you think about it, could actually be considered a legitimate fear?

LOOK DOWN

After hearing the fearful report in Numbers 14:1-10, how do the Israelites respond to Moses and Aaron? What do they want to do next, and how do Caleb and Joshua challenge their reaction in light of God’s promise? _____

LOOK OUT

What are the long-term effects of groups repeatedly choosing to give in to fear over courage or faith? _____

LOOK IN

What fears currently shape your decisions more than trust in God’s promises? _____



CHRIST CONNECTION

By Tiffany Lyons | College Pastor

God brought His people to the land He had promised and sent twelve spies to scout it. All twelve encountered the same land, yet their perceptions of it were very different. Ten spies returned, filled with fear, and painted a picture of an enemy far greater and more powerful than they could ever hope to conquer. Two spies, who encountered the exact same land, came back with different reports. When they saw the land, they weren’t filled with fear, but with joy that the land was good and awe that it would be the home God had promised them—a place of rest for His people.

The fear of the ten led the Israelites to respond in disobedience, and they refused to enter the Promised Land. Those who chose fear missed the land God had for them, though their children were able to inherit it. However, Joshua and Caleb had a “different spirit” and were able to enjoy this place of rest that God had promised.

Hebrews reminds us that we miss rest when we resist God. Jesus offers us eternal rest, but He won’t force it on us. He knows that we all long for rest—a place where we feel a sense of wellbeing, protection, and hope. Choosing disobedience and fear can prevent us from experiencing the rest Christ has for us. Christ doesn’t withhold rest; often, we resist it, like the children of Israel. What if we embraced a different spirit, like Joshua and Caleb? What if we were not overwhelmed by fear, but instead overwhelmed by the goodness and awe of God? Just like they did, you can enter His promised rest today.

THROUGH THE WILDERNESS

By Erica Kim

I know this desert.

Not the one with sand underfoot,
but the one that lives within my ribs,
the dry place where fear beats in echoes,
and anxiety churns like a dust storm.

I've walked its long, looping miles.

Called it exhaustion.
Called it distraction.
Called it anything but what it was:
a heart wandering,
a belief unraveling,
a refusal to rest
in the God who rescues.

I know these circles.

Invisible rings worn into my spirit,
from every time I thought, "I've got it,"
and stepped into another loop
of trying, striving, burning, falling.

I've seen some giants too:

Perfectionism,
Control,
Not-Enough,
I've made them bigger than God,
let them shrink my obedience.

I've struck the rock in frustration
when He asked me to trust.

I've called doubt "wisdom."
I've called fear "preparation."
I've called control "responsibility."

But *still*, the pillar of mercy
rose each morning.
Still, the God of wilderness
walked my circles with me.
Still, He waited for my heart
to soften to the rhythm of His leading.

And then, in the middle
of my self-made maze,
light broke through—
sharp, shattering, undeniable.
Grace didn't unwind my knots;
it cut through them.
His sacrifice tore open my darkness
and named me free.

Now, when I look at the wilderness,
I see the steps of my wandering
and the God who walked beside me.

And when I lose my way again,
draw me back into Your light.
You lead me out
not by my planning,
but by Your mercy.
Not by my effort,
but by Your presence.
Not by my wandering,
but by Your grace.



Today

Original Artwork by Sophia Kim Reeves



Land of Abundance
Original Artwork by Bill Lee

TRUSTING GOD'S PROMISES IN UNCERTAINTY

By Sam Davidson

"Thank you for applying," and "We can't wait to view your application" are not explicitly menacing messages, but they invite a sort of drastic fear that has the potential to unravel any high school senior. It is a terrible thing to attempt to summarize your entire life into a singular application and a 650-word essay, but it is even worse to hand over the sum of your identity to someone when you have no control over how you are perceived. There is a certain fear in holding a written summary of your character, and a more profound and crippling fear in having it replaced with a simple "thank you!"

The knowledge that there is an anonymous figure judging your activities and honors and awards is perhaps less frightening than the powerful people and fortified cities of Canaan that the Israelites faced in the book of Numbers—but the fear that exists in uncertainty and pervades human nature from then until now, remains misplaced. With God in our midst and our lives, there is no true uncertainty. The mistake in fearing the inhabitants of Canaan in the Promised Land was not because they were not frightening, but because the land was promised to them by God. Perhaps the Israelite explorers were correct that the people of Canaan viewed them as grasshoppers. However, they forgot that the God who fought for them could never be diminished nor looked down upon (Numbers 13:33).



The mysterious application portal and admission officers are naturally frightening, but this fear is misplaced, as the suitability of my future college decision does not rest in my ability to overcome the judgments of someone I will never meet, but in the promises of God. While the status of my applications is uncertain, the status of my future is not, as God promises His presence, His strength, His provision, and His love, regardless of where I go following my graduation. The fact that I cannot control the opinion of my admissions officer is mortifying until I realize that such an opinion pales in comparison to the favor of God Almighty.

Times that are naturally frightening do not naturally call for rest and assurance, but the providence of God's presence inspires a peace so profound that every uncertainty is overshadowed by the God who provides

certain hope and a certain future. While I am not entirely confident of my admission into any specific university, I am confident in God's ability to provide for me in every season and place me where I am most equipped to utilize my gifts and work for His Kingdom. My battle against fear is a constant one, but I have chosen to place my faith in God and His promises rather than relying on my own competence in writing a summary of my life and character. While this release was initially a difficult one, I have found immense peace in the fact that my future rests not in the hands of my own qualifications or a stranger who does not know me, but in my God, who knows my innermost being and sacrificed His Son so that I might spend eternity with Him.

▼
Promised Land
Original Artwork by Susie Sprinkel Hudson

SEEK

By John Yeo

"...may the LORD make his face shine on you..."

Numbers 6:25

Seek My face.
Seek My face with all your heart.
Look into My eyes and tell Me what you see.
Closer now. Closer, until we are face to face.
See your reflection in the apple of My eye,
If only you would see yourself
the way I see you.

You would be standing tall and walking forward.
You would be pressing on and forgetting what is behind.
You would be bold in prayer and strong in faith.
You would be joyful always and filled with peace.
You would be still in the storms and calm in the waves.
You would be strong and courageous and never terrified.
You would be steadfast and unshaken.
You would be provided for and protected.
You would say, "Not my way but Your way."
You would love Me and My people.
You would love Me.
You would love.

Love

Love Me.
Love Me with all your heart.
Look into My heart and tell Me what you see.
Closer now. Closer, until you feel My heartbeat.
Feel your reflection in the center of My heart.
If you are after My own heart.

I will be your shepherd and your guide.
I will be your counselor and your healer.
I will be your intercessor and mountain-mover.
I will be your joy and strength.
I will be your Prince of Peace.
I will be your comforter, and be with you always.
I will be your firm foundation.
I will be your daily bread and everlasting portion.
I will say, "Seek and you will find."
I will love you and My people.
I will love you.
I will love.

Love



I am Love

If you will draw near to Me,
I will draw My love in your heart,
I will allow yours to break for what breaks Mine.
I will show you through My son.
You will know how much I love you.

If you will come so close to Me,
I will fill you with My vision.
I will allow you to see what I see in you.
I will see you through My Son.
You will see that I love you.
I love you, My child.

I love you.