



In the previous episode of the journeyings of the nation through the desert on the way to the promised land, there had been a challenge from those who should have known better about the leadership invested in Moses. God Himself through miraculous intervention showed who He had selected to lead His people. The matter established, the next part of the nation's history is seen when they were sent to search out the land. God instructed Moses to select men to go search out the land. The instruction was that each man selected should be one of a tribe and someone who was already established as a leader and ruler. This proves of course that Moses was not a leader by his own right but chosen by God to be His representative. People who got over excited about self-importance –

like Aaron and Miriam did, forgot that it was not Moses who was leading the people, but it was God all along. Now it was the turn for others to be representatives, and to lead. This time it was not Moses who was to be a leader or ruler, but it was the opportunity for those from the next generation to shine.

Those selected were:

of the tribe of Reuben, Shammua meaning Renowned or Famous

of the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat meaning to Judge or Vindicate

of the tribe of Judah, Caleb meaning a dog or Bold & Impetuous

of the tribe of Issachar, Igal meaning to Redeem

of the tribe of Ephraim, Oshea meaning Saviour

of the tribe of Benjamin, Palti meaning to escape or Deliverer.

of the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel meaning God is fortune bringer.

of the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi meaning Fortunate.

of the tribe of Dan, Ammiel meaning My people is strong

of the tribe of Asher, Sethur meaning to hide to Conceal.

of the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi meaning Yah is consolation.

of the tribe of Gad, Geuel meaning glory or Majesty of God.

The meanings of the name would have been known to all. Whether any could see the mind of God working with these men, it is not known, but a message was in their names:

The Famous Judge will Boldly Redeem, and be the Saviour to Deliver by the Fortune of God. The Fortunate Strong People of God will be Concealed, their Consolation the Majesty of God.

This is relevant to the time then present, Moses was but a type of one to come, and those who in humility carried out their work without pushing themselves forward, will be elevated to be kings and

priests in the Kingdom of God. See Luke 14:10. These men were told to go and spy out the land to see if the people there were weak or strong, and what the land itself was like.

Why was this necessary? God knew what the land was like, He made it. Why was it necessary to find out what the people were like weak or strong - *for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few*. See 1 Samuel 14:6. It was the mind of God...*that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no*. see Exodus 16:4.

Going to spy out the land was of no benefit to God. But God who knows all things from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10) knew the outcome. The reaction to the excursion into the land and its effect on people would identify who believed in faith and who did not. The wilderness journey was a proving ground, a probationary period. Just like our lives now. Events happen, and whether our outlook and disposition is sunny and positive due the presence of God in our lives, or miserable and downcast and negative, due to lack of faith those episodes bring such attitudes to the fore, that we can attend to them and improve. God did not set such testing events to trip Israel or trick them, but to help them grow as individuals and as a nation.

In fact in Deuteronomy 1, we discover that it was actually the request of the people to go spy out the land. What were they unsure about? Anything would be better than Egypt surely? It is funny that with the passage of time, the human memory goes dim, and a new narrative sometimes can deceive our minds, and distort our memories. Like Israel, they looked back when times got hard in the wilderness and remembered the melons cucumbers fish and garlic, but forgot the whips, the murder of their sons, the unrelenting forced labour under the *Obersturmbannführer* of Pharaoh.

Surely anything was better than that. Not only that but God had rescued them from that concentration camp, and set them free to worship the God of their Fathers, to be altogether as a nation, He gave them sweet water in the desert - always available – the Rock

that followed them. He fed them with bread of heaven and meat to satisfy their lust. He gave them priests and a tabernacle, He gave them laws and structure. He gave them hope of a better future. But still this was not good enough for human nature. Many of the nation were never going to be happy. They just liked to moan and complain. They now wanted to test the hope that God had given to them. What exactly is this Promised land lets inspect it and see if it is good enough for our fancy. That was really the attitude, - it reeked of ingratitude, and entitlement.

God gave them their request. Just 6 verses are dedicated to their espionage. Their total findings are so disregarded, that there is no detailed analysis of what they discovered, no history of what they discovered or in-depth descriptions. They were in the land – 12 of them , for 40 days. The report which has been preserved for history stands out for just one, thing – how little it actually describes. It is if the episode was so shameful, do harmful to the wellbeing of the nation, that it is if even the Spirit of God, does not want to rest for too long upon it. It basically says that they went in all directions, but only two things really impressed them, the land of the so called giants, and a large bunch of grapes.

They may well have presented a detailed geographical survey of the land, but everything they presented was forgotten, and paled in significance after they got really excited over just one thing. The sheer number and military power of the peoples living in the land.

To 10 of the spies – who were supposed to be leaders, this obstacle proved to them, that going into the land was a bad idea. Not worth the effort. The example they were supposed to be setting to all the folks at home, didn't even cross their mind. The fact that God had opened the way through the Red Sea, and destroyed the military might of Egypt in the process, was also forgotten. They had stood together with so much promise. Even their names declaring the purpose of God, and was their Mission Statement. But like as we read

in Revelation 3:1 they had a name that they lived – but were dead. Spiritually that is. Psalm 106:24 *Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word:*

Caleb and Joshua, two of the men selected to go, could not believe their ears, and one can only imagine their frustration, as they listened to the woeful story of their fellows. They did not see the land like that at all. *Let us go up and once and possess, we are well able to overcome it.* Romans 8: 31 *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?* Philippians 4:13: *I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.* It also makes us think of the words of the Psalmist: Psalms 118: 9 -11: *It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes. All nations compassed me about: but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them. They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about: but in the name of the Lord I will destroy them.*

However, the voice of the unbelieving 10 was louder than the voice of the faithful 2. *We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.* They brought an evil report. They described their view that the land was too hostile to overcome, with fierce warriors of enormous size, and they felt like grasshoppers in their eyes. That was probably the closet to the truth of all that they said. They were behaving like grasshoppers, overexcited and animated fearful, and jumpy and nervous without direction and purposeless. They were supposed to be leaders. Jeremiah 10:23 *the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*

Joshua in his protest foreshadowed the great one to come Jesus:

Matthew 23:13 *But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.*

Brother Terry