

IT'S TOO LATE !

Numbers 13: 1- 14: 45

August 3, 1997

Did you ever finally decide to do the right thing, but by then it was too late? That is what the nation of Israel did. They disobeyed and disobeyed the Lord. Then, when it was too late to receive the blessing, they finally decided to do what God had commanded them to do. But by the time that they decided to obey the Lord, it was too late! The Lord had taken away their chance to possess the promised land.

How foolish we often are, thinking that we know better than God, and going our own way, until the consequences of our wrong choices catch up to us, and the blessing that God wanted to give us has slipped away.

This is what it happened. The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Send men to search the land of Canaan, which I give to the children of Israel. From every one of the twelve tribes send one man. One ruler from each tribe of the children of Israel shall go."

Moses sent the twelve men that were chosen, one from each tribe, among them were Joshua of the tribe of Ephraim and Caleb of the tribe of Judah. Moses sent the men to spy out the land of Canaan from the wilderness of Zin to Rehob by way of Hamath. Moses commanded them to look at the land and see what it was like, and the people that lived in the land, what they were like. They were to see whether the inhabitants of the land were strong or weak, few or many. The men were to spy out the land whether it was good or bad, and the cities whether they were tents or fortified cities. Moses told them to search the land to see how good the crops were, and whether there were woods or not. Moses said, "Be of good courage and bring back some of the fruit of the land." It was about the time when the first grapes would be ready.

So the twelve men went into the land that the Lord had promised them. At a brook called Eschol, they cut down a branch with a cluster of grapes that was so heavy it took two men to carry it on a staff to bring back. They also brought back pomegranates and figs. After forty days of searching out the land the twelve men returned to the camp of Israel.

The men came before Moses and all the people of Israel and this is what they said, "We went into the land that you sent us to, and it really does flow with milk and honey (that is, it is a rich and prosperous land). But, the people are strong that live in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great, and besides that we saw the children of Anak there."

When Caleb heard his fellow spies giving this report he tried to calm the people, for they became filled with fear. He said, "Let us go in and possess this land, for we are able to conquer it." But the other ten said, "We can not go against them, for they are stronger than us."

Ten of the spies brought an evil report against the land that the Lord had promised to Israel. They said, "The land that we went to search is fought over by the many peoples in it, and it devours people. We saw giants there, the children of Anak. We seemed like grasshoppers in size compared to them."

Then all the congregation began to cry, They cried all the night long. They murmured against Moses and against Aaron. The whole congregation said, "We wish that we had died in Egypt, or in this wilderness! Why has the Lord brought us into this land to be destroyed by our enemies, our wives and children shall be taken as slaves by our enemy. Wouldn't it be better for us to return to Egypt?"

Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the people. Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who had been with the others that searched the land, tore their clothes. They spoke to the children of Israel telling them how good the land was and that God would keep his promise and give them the land.

But the people refused to listen, and wanted to stone Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb with stones. At just that moment the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle before all the people of Israel. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, He said, "How long will these people provoke me? How long will it be before they believe me? I will destroy them all and make a great nation of you, Moses!"

Moses answered the Lord, saying, "If you destroy all these people now while the whole world is watching, all the heathen people will believe that you killed your people because you did not have the power to give them the land that you promised to them. All the heathen know how you speak to your people face to face and care for them by going before them in the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night. Now I beseech you, let the power of the lord be great. Show us your long-suffering mercy and forgiveness. Pardon our sin I beg you, as you have done all the time since we left the land of Egypt."

This is the Lord's answer to Moses, "I will pardon the people as you ask. But, truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. Because those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and all along the way as they have traveled, yet they have tempted me these ten times and have not listened to my voice, surely they shall not see the land that I promised to their fathers. Only my servant Caleb and my servant Joshua will possess it because they trusted in me. Give this message to this evil congregation which murmurs against me. As you have spoken in my ears, so I will do to you. You will all die in these wilderness, all who are twenty years old or older. Only your little ones that you said would be a prey to the enemy shall see the land, along with Joshua and Caleb. As for you, you will spend the next forty years wondering in this wilderness until you are all dead. One year for each of the forty days that you searched the land, you will spend in this wilderness. Only Joshua and Caleb will see the land.'

Then those wicked men that brought the evil report of the land died by a plague before the Lord. But Joshua and Caleb did not die, for they obeyed and believed the Lord and brought a good report before the people.

When Moses brought the words of the Lord before the people, suddenly they realized the great wickedness that they had done. They were sorrowful because of what the Lord said, and they decided that now they would go in and possess the land as they should have done in the first place. But Moses said to them, "Why are you sinning even more against the Lord? It will not go well for you. Do not go into the land, for the Lord is not with you, and you will be destroyed before your enemies. You turned away from the Lord and he will not help you defeat your enemies, instead they will defeat you."

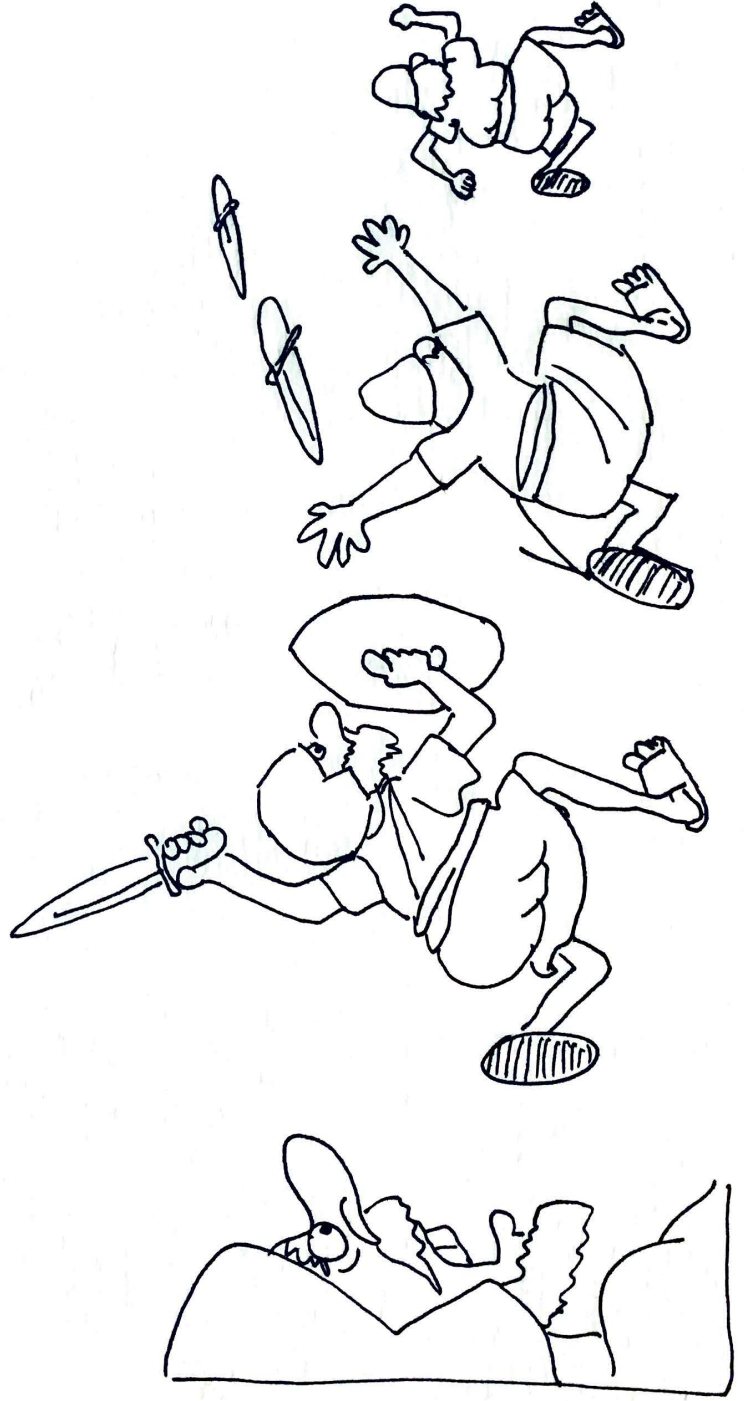
But the people defied the Lord again, and presumed to go into the land. They went to the top of the hill. However, Moses and the ark of the covenant did not leave the camp. Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites that lived on that hill. They defeated the men of Israel, and killed them, because they did not obey the word of the Lord.

Just as with the nation of Israel, there is a time for us to obey the Lord. When we know what is right, we must do it. If we choose to delay and disobey the Lord, he will not bring us the blessing, but rather than consequences of our disobedience.

LEARN: And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

I John 2:17

1. Color the scene.
2. Color the men and swords.
3. Cut them out and paste in appropriate spot to match dots.





When pride cometh, then cometh shame,
but with the lowly is wisdom. Proverbs 11:2
A man's pride shall bring him low; but honor
shall uphold the humble in spirit. Proverbs 29:23

