

# The Twelve Spies

Numbers 13:1-14:9

## **MEMORY VERSE**

NUMBERS 14:8

“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.”

## **WHAT YOU WILL NEED:**

A hardback book (old one that you don't mind dropping) and a piece of paper that is a little smaller than the book.

Pepper, toothpicks, liquid dish detergent and a few small mixing bowls or glasses.

As many 8" x 8" square pieces of coated freezer paper as the number of children in your class, paper cup instructions (included in curriculum) and water.

## **ATTENTION GRABBER!**

### **Same Time**

Bring a hardback book and a piece of paper that is a little smaller than the book. Give this challenge to your class: “I can make this piece of paper fall to the floor at the same speed as this book and make them hit the ground at the same time.” Let them try as many times as they want.

When they all give up you place the sheet of paper on top of the book with no edges sticking out and drop. Down they both go (practice this at home a few times to make sure it works OK). For scoffers who say that the book still hit the ground first, it should work if you put the paper on the bottom of the book. But to be safe you may want to rub it first to create a little bit of static electricity. If that doesn't work send the scoffers to your Children's Pastor or Director (just kidding).

## LESSON TIME!

Whenever you think of the word “spy” what do you think of? Maybe you think of someone who sneaks around in another country to get national security secrets. You might even imagine it to be very dangerous work. In our lesson today we are going to learn about twelve spies who secretly went into the land of Canaan to see what it was like. We’ll find out what happens as they go into the land and spot big, scary giants and how the people of Israel react to that news. The main thing we will learn is that **God wants us to trust Him in all things.**

### NUMBERS 13:1-3

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

"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."

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.

The Israelites were traveling through the desert after God had brought them out of Egypt. God had promised to give them a new land known as Canaan. So God had each of the twelve tribes of Israel send a leader to spy out the land and give a report.

Perhaps the Lord wanted the leaders of Israel to be able to go and see how wonderful the land was that God was about to give to them; then they could go back and give a good report to the people about all that God had in store for them. These leaders would be learning a very valuable lesson in trusting the Lord; but first, they had to trust Him and obey His command to go and spy out the land.

God has wonderful plans for our lives, but we also need to learn that we need to trust Him for everything. Sometimes that is hard as we will see in a few moments, but still if we trust in the Lord He will meet all of our needs. **God wants us to trust Him in all things.**

### NUMBERS 13:17-20

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,

"and see what the land is like: whether the people who dwell in it are strong or weak, few or many;

"whether the land they dwell in is good or bad; whether the cities they inhabit are like camps or strongholds;

"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.

So Moses sent the spies to survey the land and to come back and tell if there were many people and if they and their cities were strong. They were also to see how fruitful the land was. Their job was to report to all of the people about the status of God's gift to them. It was a great responsibility because misrepresenting the gift was misrepresenting God.

Can you think of a time when you were responsible to tell the truth about something? It is very important that we be accurate in what we say. The news that these spies were going to bring back was very important to the rest of the nation of Israel. If they didn't tell it right the rest of the nation would be affected as we will soon see in our story.

This information was also very important for God's people to know. First it would encourage them to know how good the land was that God wanted to give to them. Then it would also help them to know about the inhabitants so they could seek the Lord as to how He would give the land to them.

Notice something very important. Moses told the spies to be of good courage. He knew that they might come across some things that might tempt them to become discouraged. Maybe the people would be very strong, or they would see vast armies and then be discouraged. God had everything worked out. They needed to take courage in their God that He would be with them the entire way. We also need to be encouraged that God will lead us and we shouldn't be afraid when we follow Him. **God wants us to trust Him in all things.**

#### NUMBERS 13:21-27

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

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

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.

The place was called the Valley of Eshcol, because of the cluster which the men of Israel cut down there.

And they returned from spying out the land after forty days.

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.

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.

The spies went through the land for forty days. They saw abundant fruits and crops. They brought back a cluster of grapes so big it took two men to carry it. The fascinating thing about this was that the land was exactly as God described it, a land flowing with milk and honey. God always provides for His people the very best. God was going to give them a wonderful place to live. **God wants us to trust Him in all things**; but, there was only one problem.

### NUMBERS 13:28-33

"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.

"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."

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."

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."

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.

"There we saw the 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."

The spies reported that the people of Canaan were large; in fact they were big, scary giants. There were also a lot of them and they had very strong cities. Most of the spies looked at that and got very afraid. They felt that there was no way that they could go in and fight the people who lived there.

There were two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, who were confident in God and wanted to go in and claim the land immediately. Caleb spoke up and said, "Let's go for it!!" The other spies were very afraid and made the rest of the people afraid also. They gave a bad report to the people which also made them afraid.

God had already promised to give Canaan to the Israelites. Spying out the land was an opportunity to show the people the blessing the land would be but it also required faith in God that He would help them defeat the Canaanites.

Caleb saw the land, knew God's promise, and trusted God to do as He had said. The others did not believe God's promise and misrepresented God to the people by giving an evil report. **God wants us to trust Him in all things.**

## Pepper Chase

Just before class, coat a few toothpicks \_ of their length with liquid dish detergent and set them aside. Fill a container (small mixing bowl or large glass) most of the way with water, then sprinkle the top with ground pepper. Ask the children if they can get all of the pepper to go to the edges of the container with a toothpick and without sinking the pepper. Let those who want to give it a try. Make sure to give them a toothpick that is NOT coated with liquid dish detergent.

At this point you may want to add some pepper just to make it more challenging for yourself (of course try not to show off too much!). Say that you can do it easily. Then dip one of your “soapy” toothpicks right in the center. The pepper will run to the edge of the container. You cannot repeat this unless you thoroughly wash and rinse the container, so bring extra containers so you can do it more than once.

Explain to the children that some things that grownups are able to do may seem impossible to kids, but remind them that God is able to do the really impossible, and wants us to trust Him when He says He will. **God wants us to trust Him in all things.**

### NUMBERS 14:1-3

So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night.

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!

"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?"

All of the Israelites believed the evil report rather than listening to Caleb who trusted God. The Israelites feared that they would die and they blamed Moses, Aaron and even God. They wanted to return to Egypt where they had been slaves.

It is important that we believe God and properly represent Him. Because most of the spies did not believe, they caused all of the people to doubt. When we doubt and blame God, others will also. Also, whenever we speak to others we should be encouraging to them. If God has promised something to us He will always be faithful to give it to us. None of His promises will ever fail no matter how big the giants are. **God wants us to trust Him in all things.**

**NUMBERS 14:4-9**

So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt."

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

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;

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.

"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.

"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."

The Israelites decided to choose a new leader to lead them back to Egypt. Caleb and Joshua, two of the spies, were very disturbed and told the people how good the land was that God had given them. They trusted God to do as He said and encouraged the people to obey God and not fear the Canaanite people.

God had promised to protect the Israelites and help them defeat the Canaanites but no one would listen to Caleb and Joshua.

The Israelites allowed their fears to keep them from experiencing God's blessings. We need to listen to God and believe Him. Sometimes things may look hard but with God's help we will get through them and experience God's blessings.

We do not have to be afraid of anything if we trust in the Lord. Fear will come when we look all around us and see our problems as "giants." Then we will want to give up. What we need to do is to look up to our Heavenly Father who is greater than any "giant" in our lives and trust Him to take care of anything.

Let's pray that in our lives we can be a Joshua or a Caleb and not like one of the other spies. **God wants us to trust Him in all things.**

## Trust Cup

Pass out an 8" x 8" piece of paper (coated freezer or wax paper preferably) to each child. Tell them this is their drinking cup so get ready for a drink of water. Act like you are ready to pour the liquid onto the piece of paper. Ask them if they really thought that you would pour it onto their paper.

Next, instruct them on how to fold the paper to form a drinking cup. See the enclosed instruction sheet for direction on folding the paper cup. After the cup is folded pour the drinks into their cups (you will want to make sure to check the “foldmanship” of each cup before pouring).

Explain that before they folded the cup it was hard for them to believe that they would be able to drink out of the piece of paper. But the teacher had another way to change the paper to make it to where they could drink out of it. It is the same for us with the Lord. Circumstances may look impossible, but if we only trust in the Lord then He will work out His will in our lives. If He promises something to us He will make sure that it comes to pass.

## **PRAYER**

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to trust in the Lord no matter what the circumstances around them may look like. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.