

Lecture Nine

Numbers 13:25-33 “Journey of Faith”

By

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1. Tragedy of Exodus generation

1) Experiential knowledge of God did not result in lasting faith.

NRS Numbers 14:22 none of the people who have seen my glory and the signs that I did in Egypt [**10 plagues; Crossing of the Red Sea**]

and in the wilderness [**Encountering God on Mt. Sinai: Covenant, 70 elders, Judgment, Earthquake, Fire; Miracles in the wilderness: pillars of fire and cloud, Manna, meats, water...**], and yet have tested me these ten times and have not obeyed my voice, 23 shall see the land that I swore to give to their ancestors; none of those who despised me shall see it.

2) Rebellion against God: Sin of complaining/murmuring. Numbers = the Book of Murmuring.

NRS Numbers 14:27 How long shall this wicked congregation complain against me? I have heard the complaints of the Israelites, which they complain against me.

3) Result

They had to wonder in the wilderness for forty years without hope, and all perished in the wilderness.

A. God's way of punishment: as people complained. They ate what they said!

NRS Numbers 14:26 And the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying: 27 How long shall this wicked congregation complain against me? I have heard the complaints of the Israelites, which they complain against me. 28 Say to them, "As I live," says the LORD, "**I will do to you the very things I heard you say**: 29 your dead bodies shall fall in this very wilderness; and of all your number, included in the census, from twenty years old and upward, who have complained against me,

B. Loss of the promised land → Life without meaning/goal/vision!

30 **not one of you shall come into the land** in which I swore to settle you, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun. 31 But your little ones, who you said would become booty, I will bring in, and they shall know the land that you have despised. 32 But as for you, **your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness.**

C. Suffering of innocent generation

33 And your children shall be shepherds in the wilderness for forty years, and shall suffer for your faithlessness, until the last of your dead bodies lies in the wilderness. 34 According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for every day a

year, you shall bear your iniquity, forty years, and you shall know my displeasure." 35 **I the LORD have spoken**; surely I will do thus to all this wicked congregation gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall come to a full end, and there they shall die.

D. Immediate execution of the spies

36 And the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned and made all the congregation complain against him by bringing a bad report about the land-- 37 the men who brought an unfavorable report about the land **died by a plague before the LORD**. 38 But Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh alone remained alive, of those men who went to spy out the land.

4) Why did it happen to the people of God?

A. Problem of heart: Unbelief → Tested/despised God → Wicked generation (Num 14:27)

They did not believe that God is with them.

B. Problem of eyes: Lack of determination for vision → Fear → Defeatism.

a. Walked by sight → Problem of "yet"

NRS Numbers 13:27 And they told him, "We came to the land to which you sent us; **it flows with milk and honey**, and this is its fruit. 28 **Yet** the people who live in the land are strong, and the towns are fortified and very large; and besides, we saw the **descendants of Anak** there.

b. Eventually cursed the promised land [Sour-Grape Syndrome].

NRS Numbers 13:32 So they brought to the Israelites an unfavorable report of the land that they had spied out, saying, "The land that we have gone through as spies is **a land that devours its inhabitants**; and all the people that we saw in it are of great size.

C. Problem of thought → No discernment → Wrong evaluation of enemies.

a. Negative self-identity: Inferiority complex. Remember: you are what you think you are.

NRS Numbers 13:33 There we saw the Nephilim (the Anakites come from the Nephilim); and to ourselves **we seemed like grasshoppers**, and so we seemed to them."

b. Wrong evaluation of enemies

NRS Numbers 13:28 Yet the people who live in the land are **strong**, and the towns are **fortified and very large**; and besides, we saw the **descendants of Anak** there.

NRS Numbers 13:31 Then the men who had gone up with him said, "**We are not able to go up against this people, for they are stronger than we.**"

D. Problem of ears

Crowd did not care for the positive report of Caleb and Joshua, but listened to the negative report only.

3. How shall we live then?

1) Know

- A. Christian journey is not a piece of cake.
- B. God demands us to live lives worthy of our calling. It takes a challenging vision and attitude.
- C. There is no other option: win or lose? No in-between.

2) Don't forget

- A. **Our identity is in God.**
- B. There is our portion in the battle
Circumcision of heart: Faith
Listen to Caleb's word: NRS Numbers 14:9 Only, do not rebel against the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they are **no more than bread for us**; their protection is removed from them, and **the LORD is with us; do not fear** them."

3) Focus your vision on what God points to!

- A. What is your vision in your Christian journey?
- B. Positive mindset → Positive attitude (challenging goal)
NRS Numbers 14:6 And Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes 7 and said to all the congregation of the Israelites, "The land that we went through as spies is an **exceedingly good land**. 8 If the LORD is pleased with us, **he will bring us into this land and give it to us**, a land that flows with milk and honey.

4) Speak out

NRS Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through him who strengthens me.