

# The City, Seduction and Fear

Dominic Steele, Numbers 13-14

<sup>1</sup>The LORD said to Moses, <sup>2</sup>“Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders.”

<sup>3</sup> So at the LORD's command Moses sent them out from the Desert of Paran. All of them were leaders of the Israelites....

<sup>17</sup> When Moses sent them to explore Canaan, he said, “Go up through the Negev and on into the hill country.”

<sup>18</sup> See what the land is like and whether the people who live there are strong or weak, few or many. <sup>19</sup> What kind of land do they live in? Is it good or bad? What kind of towns do they live in? Are they unwalled or fortified? <sup>20</sup> How is the soil? Is it fertile or poor? Are there trees on it or not? Do your best to bring back some of the fruit of the land.” (It was the season for the first ripe grapes.)

<sup>21</sup> So they went up and explored the land from the Desert of Zin as far as Rehob, toward Lebo Hamath.

<sup>22</sup> They went up through the Negev and came to Hebron, where Ahiman, Sheshai and Talmi, the descendants of Anak, lived. (Hebron had been built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) <sup>23</sup> When they reached the Valley of Eshcol, they cut off a branch bearing a single cluster of grapes. Two of them carried it on a pole between them, along with some pomegranates and figs. <sup>24</sup> That place was called the Valley of Eshcol because of the cluster of grapes the Israelites cut off there. <sup>25</sup> At the end of forty days they returned from exploring the land.

<sup>26</sup> They came back to Moses and Aaron and the whole Israelite community at Kadesh in the Desert of Paran. There they reported to them and to the whole assembly and showed them the fruit of the land. <sup>27</sup> They gave Moses this account: “We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. <sup>28</sup> But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there. <sup>29</sup> The Amalekites live in the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live near the sea and along the Jordan.”

<sup>30</sup> Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, “We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.”

<sup>31</sup> But the men who had gone up with him said, “We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are.”

<sup>32</sup> And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, “The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. <sup>33</sup> We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.”

Numbers 14

<sup>1</sup> That night all the people of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. <sup>2</sup> All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, “If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert! <sup>3</sup> Why is the LORD bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?” <sup>4</sup> And they said to each other, “We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt.”

<sup>5</sup> Then Moses and Aaron fell facedown in front of the whole Israelite assembly gathered there. <sup>6</sup> Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes <sup>7</sup> and said to the entire Israelite assembly, “The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. <sup>8</sup> If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. <sup>9</sup> Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them.”

<sup>10</sup> But the whole assembly talked about stoning them. Then the glory of the LORD appeared at the Tent of Meeting to all the Israelites. <sup>11</sup> The LORD said to Moses, “How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the miraculous signs I have performed among them? <sup>12</sup> I will strike them down with a plague and destroy them, but I will make you into a nation greater and stronger than they.”

<sup>13</sup> Moses said to the LORD, “Then the Egyptians will hear about it! By your power you brought these people up from among them. <sup>14</sup> And they will tell the inhabitants of this land about it. They have already heard that you, O LORD, are with these people and that you, O LORD, have been seen face to face, that your cloud stays over them,

1 Fear and the City

2 Arrival and spying

a Directions 13:1-3, 17-20

b Description 13:21-25

3 Seduced by fear

a Objective report 13:26-27

b Majority analysis 13:28-29, 31-33

c Minority analysis 13:30

d Seduced 14:1-4

4 Moses' reaction & the people's response 14:5-10

a Moses 14:5-9

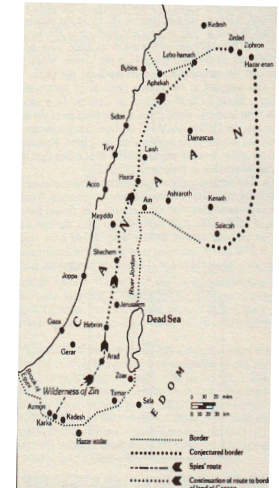
b The people 14:10

5 God's reaction & the people's response 14:11-45

a God 14:11-35

b The people 36-45

6 Fear and the City



and that you go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.<sup>15</sup> If you put these people to death all at one time, the nations who have heard this report about you will say,<sup>16</sup> 'The LORD was not able to bring these people into the land he promised them on oath; so he slaughtered them in the desert.'

<sup>17</sup> "Now may the Lord's strength be displayed, just as you have declared:<sup>18</sup> 'The LORD is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.'<sup>19</sup> In accordance with your great love, forgive the sin of these people, just as you have pardoned them from the time they left Egypt until now."

<sup>20</sup> The LORD replied, "I have forgiven them, as you asked.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, as surely as I live and as surely as the glory of the LORD fills the whole earth,<sup>22</sup> not one of the men who saw my glory and the miraculous signs I performed in Egypt and in the desert but who disobeyed me and tested me ten times—<sup>23</sup> not one of them will ever see the land I promised on oath to their forefathers. No one who has treated me with contempt will ever see it.<sup>24</sup> But because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it.<sup>25</sup> Since the Amalekites and Canaanites are living in the valleys, turn back tomorrow and set out toward the desert along the route to the Red Sea. "

<sup>26</sup> The LORD said to Moses and Aaron:<sup>27</sup> "How long will this wicked community grumble against me? I have heard the complaints of these grumbling Israelites.<sup>28</sup> So tell them, 'As surely as I live, declares the LORD, I will do to you the very things I heard you say.'<sup>29</sup> In this desert your bodies will fall—every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me.<sup>30</sup> Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your

home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.<sup>31</sup> As for your children that you said would be taken as plunder, I will bring them in to enjoy the land you have rejected.<sup>32</sup> But you—your bodies will fall in this desert.<sup>33</sup> Your children will be shepherds here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness, until the last of your bodies lies in the desert.<sup>34</sup> For forty years—one year for each of the forty days you explored the land—you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you.'<sup>35</sup> I, the LORD, have spoken, and I will surely do these things to this whole wicked community, which has banded together against me. They will meet their end in this desert; here they will die."

<sup>36</sup> So the men Moses had sent to explore the land, who returned and made the whole community grumble against him by spreading a bad report about it—<sup>37</sup> these men responsible for spreading the bad report about the land were struck down and died of a plague before the LORD.<sup>38</sup> Of the men who went to explore the land, only Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh survived.

<sup>39</sup> When Moses reported this to all the Israelites, they mourned bitterly.<sup>40</sup> Early the next morning they went up toward the high hill country, "We have sinned," they said. "We will go up to the place the LORD promised."

<sup>41</sup> But Moses said, "Why are you disobeying the LORD's command? This will not succeed!<sup>42</sup> Do not go up, because the LORD is not with you. You will be defeated by your enemies,<sup>43</sup> for the Amalekites and Canaanites will face you there. Because you have turned away from the LORD, he will not be with you and you will fall by the sword."

<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, in their presumption they went up toward the high hill country, though neither Moses nor the ark of the LORD's covenant moved from the camp.<sup>45</sup> Then the Amalekites and Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down and attacked them and beat them down all the way to Hormah.

