

No Turning Back Numbers 13 – 14

No Turning Back Introduction

- *“The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult; and left untried.”* G.K. Chesterton, *What’s Wrong with the World*
- A life of faith includes difficulties – have you noticed?

- The problem is not new.
- It has plagued the people of God for as long as anyone has been keeping track.
- People begin in the faith but don’t finish.

- Today’s passage gives us the classic example.
- Twelve spies see the land of promise.
- They see difficulties – and unbelief takes hold.
- Ten convince the people that they cannot possibly go in.
- Two will later go in themselves and be victorious.

- We’ll read Numbers 13 – 14 one section at a time.

Appointing the Spies 13:1-16

- Two important names:
 - Caleb in v.6
 - Hoshea in v.8 (Moses renames him Joshua in v.16)

- What’s in a name?
 - Caleb means “dog,” which *might* be a positive description.
 - He is extremely loyal.
 - It can also mean “whole heart”.
 - That describes him perfectly.

- What’s in a name?
 - Hoshea means “salvation” and is the same name as Hosea of the Minor Prophets.
 - Joshua blends Hoshea with the name of God.
 - “Yahweh is salvation”
 - This is the earliest form of “Jesus.”

Their Assignment 13:17-24

- Take note of the city of Hebron in v.22

The Grapes of Canaan by James Tissot (1836 – 1902)



The Spies Report 13:25-33

- 13:28 However Whatever comes after this word is usually the main point.
- 13:30 Caleb was not merely optimistic.
- God promised this land to Abraham.
- He miraculously brought the Israelites out of Egypt.
- God's word and past experience both said Caleb was right.

The Congregation Responds 14:1-10

- Joshua and Caleb see things correctly.
- Notice these phrases – indicating a complete rebellion:
 - All the congregation (v.1)
 - All the people, the whole congregation (v.2)
 - All the assembly (v.5)
 - All the congregation (v.7)
 - All the congregation (v.10)

Huge Lesson. Don't Miss It.

- They made it to the edge of the promised land.
- They wanted the final step to be easy and it wasn't.
- They stupidly decided it was better not to go there at all.
- They ignored the fact that the land was good.
- It was fruitful and joyful – a land of blessing.
- There were certainly going to be battles
- But they would certainly be victorious in the end.

Moses Intercedes 14:11-19

- If this sounds familiar see Exodus 32.

God's Final Decision 14:20-38

- God fulfilled his promise to Abraham.
- God was faithful to the nation of Israel.
- He rejected this generation.
- Joshua and Caleb led their children into the Promised Land.

Second Thoughts 14:39-45

- This is not a response of faith.
- It is a fearful reaction to God's judgment.
- On that final day, a lot of people will wish they had responded earlier.

No Turning Back Lessons

1. Unbelief
2. Battles
3. Caleb's Reward

No Turning Back 1. Unbelief

- The unbelieving spies framed their unbelief as weakness.
- “We aren’t strong enough to take the land.”
- That can sound like modesty or humility.
- In reality it was unbelief and disobedience.
- We have to beware of a similar self-deception.

- Charles Spurgeon comes down hard on this attitude:
 - *“Our trembling is not humility, but unbelief. We may mask it how we please, but that is the state of the case as God sees it, and He sees it in truth. Mistrust towards God is not a mere weakness, it is a wickedness of the gravest order.”*

- Consider the following:
 - Matthew 13:58
 - Hebrews 3:12-19

No Turning Back 2. Battles

- Battles from the outside – Acts 14:19-22
- Battles on the inside – Galatians 5:17

No Turning Back 3. Caleb’s Reward

- Caleb’s reward was the chance to fight more battles.
- He and Joshua led Israel into the Promised Land.
- Caleb got to choose what part of it would belong to him.
- He chose Hebron, the city that belonged to giants.
- See Joshua 14:6-15.

No Turning Back Conclusion

- The Israelites made it to the edge of the Promised Land.
- They wanted the final step to be easy and it wasn’t.
- They stupidly decided it was better not to go there at all.

- Please do not think the Christian life is going to be easy.
- The Word of God requires us to expect it will be difficult.

- But the place the Lord will lead us will be good.
- It will be fruitful and joyful – a place of blessing.
- There are certainly going to be battles.
- But we will certainly be victorious in the end.
- No turning back – right?