

SEND FORTH - NUMBERS 13

Torah Portion Shalach: He Sent Part 1: Numbers 13

There is so much in the story about the twelve spies it's almost overwhelming. A small book would have to be written to unpack it all! Let's take it one chapter at a time.



Read all of chapter 13

Now that you have an overview of what the chapter is about, let's go back through and highlight some of the things the Spirit wants us to see. There are no doubt other things that you might see

in this chapter. Feel free to ask the Spirit to reveal them to you. The following are just some of the things He showed me.

First of all, in the very first verse, Yahweh tells the Israelites that He is "giving" them this land. It's already going to happen. It's already theirs. So if He's already decided to give them the land, land that is their inheritance and the land they came from in the beginning, why does He send the band of twelve to spy it out? What was His original intent? What was the purpose of this exercise that ends with millions of people dying in the desert? (*Discuss*)

Before Yahweh gives anything to anyone, there is always a **"systems check."** He has a process and ingenious way of checking to make sure that all systems are going and that the people are going to be able to handle the new "upgrades" in their lives (the new blessings). In short, they have to qualify for the blessing. Rewards come after successfully making it through something and coming out on top. Did they really think they were just going to march out of Egypt, cross the Red Sea, grab the commandments at Mt. Sinai, and waltz right into the Promised Land without first being tested to see if they even deserved it? Not a chance. They were about to be tested in a major way.

Does Yahweh know everything? If He knew what the results were going to be of the spying out of the land and how many people were going to have to lose their inheritance because of it, why did He send them to begin with? What was the point? Everyone was ready to go into the Promised Land that their forefathers left over 400 years ago. So why this endeavor that looked like an exercise in futility? What was His original intent? (*Discuss*)

His intent was to test them to expose something deep in their hearts that they could not see. He saw the doubt and fear they were feeling but they did not. Although they just walked through water on dry land and saw the hand of God and heard His voice on the mountain, their fear of man was still alive and well and it would cripple their future if left unchecked. He instructed them to spy out the land so that THEY could see what HE saw.

Sometimes we believers simply cannot get to the deepest recesses of our hearts. We can't see the dark corners and creases where the enemy plants seeds of fear and doubt, the two big things that keep a person from inheriting what The Father has for them. He sets before us a test or a trial to reveal to us what is qualified and what is not. His desire is not to punish but to elevate us and bring us to our inheritance and make us into what we are truly meant to be.

Look at verse three. Who was chosen to be a spy? The "heads" of each tribe. These were the cream of the crop. They were elders and well-respected leaders.

Who sent them out? Moses. Who were they supposed to report back to? Moses. Read verse 26. Who did they end up coming back to and sharing their report with? Moses, Aaron AND the congregation. Their decision to get the congregation involved instead of going straight back to the commander-in-chief that sent them resulted in not only their deaths but also the deaths of others.

Have you ever received bad news or had fear about something and immediately shared it with whoever was around? We all have. This part of the story teaches us that we need to stop and think about how that news could affect those we share with and what the right thing to do is. Some people can handle bad news better than others. Some will embrace it with faith and others will collapse under the weight of it. Be careful what you share with who. It could end up coming back to bite you. In this story, ten people ended up causing over a million people's deaths, people who never received their inheritance.

They had great things to say about the land and said that Yahweh was right about it flowing with milk and honey...**BUT**...and that "*but*" is what got their "*butts*" in trouble. This was a covert mission designed to spy out the land to see if they would still believe the Promise in real-time in the face of real danger. They not only chose to not believe in God but to spread that fear throughout the congregation.

Fear is a powerful instrument in the hands of the enemy. It paralyzes people and keeps them from receiving their full inheritance. Fear is not of God and is, quite possibly, the number one tool in the enemy's toolbox. If he can make you afraid of something, he can control you. How is it possible that a thousand people can be controlled by one guy with a gun, even though all they have to do is attack him with their sheer numbers? Because of fear. Read Genesis 26:24. We are not to fear anything because He promises to be with us. And if He is with us, who can be against us? What is the only thing that we are told that we are supposed to fear? Read Deuteronomy 13:4. The only thing we are to fear is Him and that fear is always coupled with keeping His commandments. When we choose not to keep His commandments, we are telling Him that His instructions and words are not important and that we have our own way of serving Him. That is us putting our ways in front of His ways having no fear of what the consequences of our actions might be. Read 2 Timothy 1:7. This is what happens when we do not fear man but only fear God. We **RECEIVE** the power, love, and a sound mind. There is no divine assistance until we reject the spirit of fear and embrace the Promise through faith, all of which is proved by our actions.

Do you have anything in your life right now that you are afraid of? No? Let me ask it this way, then. Do you have anything you want to do, say, or be but your insecurities in those areas are preventing you from hitting your full potential in Him? Insecurities and fear hide in the dark and in secret places. They don't like to be found out. When you turn on a light, what happens to the dark? It disappears. With that in mind, list out your insecurities. If you are in a group, talk about them. The moment you confess them, the spirit of fear is exposed, and fear must leave. For some, the fear is talking itself!

Read verse 30. This is who we are commanded to be. Caleb's response is the response that Yahweh is looking for. Caleb understood that it doesn't matter that there are giants in the land when the one who MADE the giants is on their side! Caleb believed God. In his mind, there was no time to waste. They needed to go up now and take what was rightfully theirs and bring the Promise of Yahweh into reality **BY FAITH!**

Unfortunately, the other ten spies were not so anxious to take their inheritance. They gave an "evil" report. What's interesting here is the word for "evil" is not the usual word we see - Rah - but, instead, is "dibbah." Dibbah is the word for slander! Without realizing it, what they were

doing was slandering Yahweh's word! How? What is slander? (Discuss) Slander is sending out a false and evil report about someone that damages their reputation. When they came back and said that they cannot defeat the people of the land, they were saying that God's word was not true. They were saying that He was right about the blessings of the land but He was wrong about us actually being able to take it. Their words were slanderous to Yahweh. They were teaching the people that Yahweh's word was not important and could not be trusted. This is the epitome of slander. It always causes the hearer to not trust the one being slandered.



Can you think of any times in your life when you didn't believe Yahweh at His word? Did you realize that you were actually slandering Him to others? How does that feel? It brings a greater gravity to the issue, doesn't it?

For me, this issue hits close to home. Yahweh has given me a promise of the future of a ministry. He has shown me the Promised Land and has told me what He is going to do. But before we entered into that promised land to begin to take it, the giants showed up and looked mighty strong. How many people would trust the promise despite what they can see with their physical eyes and how many people would look past what seemed impossible of the present and simply believe the promise? How many would say, "We can't do it. The giants are too big. The enemy has all but defeated us already? Let's turn back and go another route. We can still get to the Promise but let's go around, etc., etc., etc...." And how many would say, "It doesn't matter the situation! No matter what it looks like and how bad it appears and what the rest of the world thinks about us, He promised us an inheritance, and let's keep pressing on as if we saw nothing and no giants were in front of us! Let's take the Land!"

What is interesting to note is that there is also another reason why He sent spies into the Land. He **WANTED** them to see the giants. Why? (Discuss) He wanted them to fully understand and **KNOW** that they could not do it on their own. They would need His divine assistance and help. He was showing them the obstacle so that they would rely fully on His bulldozer. He wanted to teach them the concept of faith, works, and grace. This concept would be flushed out in greater detail through Yeshua and Paul in the New Testament later, but here it is in Numbers 13.

Read Ephesians 2:8-9, 2 Corinthians 5:7

These are the verses that are connected to Numbers 13. Yahweh is trying to teach them the exact concepts that Paul is trying to teach his converts. They will not be saved from the giants by their works, good ideas, or new widgets. They will only be saved by His divine grace. Otherwise, they would boast that they were the ones that defeated the giants and they would have no need for God. They were not to evaluate the situation using logic and their own natural sight. They were to evaluate it based on **HIS PROMISE!**

What is grace? (Discuss) In Hebrew the word is "chen" (ken) and means the giving of favor. "Ken" is also the word for "yes." See the connection? When most Christians ask about "grace," the definition of "unmerited favor" is normally given. This is an accurate definition in one sense. In the same way, a parent loves all of their children just because they are their children, so God loves us and gives us His favor just for being His children. But just like in real life, there is "merited favor," as well. When a child is obedient, loves to please their parents, and does the right thing in their eyes, more favor (or grace) is given. They can be trusted because the parent knows the child's heart's desire is to please the parent by staying inside the instructions that have been set. As a matter of fact, the first time the word is used in scripture is in Genesis where the scriptures say that Noah found "chen" in the eyes of the Lord. But which type was it? Merited or unmerited? It was merited. He received grace because he chose to please the "Parent."

So, there is unmerited grace and merited grace. When the Father sent His Son Yeshua to die for our sins, was that unmerited favor or merited? Unmerited for sure. When the Lord chose to free the Israelites from Egypt, was that unmerited or merited favor? Unmerited. They were "saved" from Pharaoh. But when they stood before the Promised Land and God said that He was going to "give" them the land, would the "chen" to accomplish that be merited or unmerited favor? Merited. They were not going to receive the land by just standing there. They would have to fight for it and actually go get it. But that was not all. They would have to BELIEVE that He would go with them to do it. And right here in Numbers 13 we see the power of the gospel message written into this story. We see faith and works coming together in a beautiful marriage, showing us exactly what Yahweh is looking for in our lives. Read James 2:14-20 and James 1:22-25.

How can you apply these verses to the story of the twelve spies here in Numbers 13? (Discuss)

It was not enough for them to believe what Yahweh said about taking the land. They had to do what Caleb said. They had to actually go and do it! It was their works combined with their faith that would cause the victory. And it is this combination that brings us to the final and complete definition of what grace really is. Once you mix your faith with doing whatever He is requiring

of you, it is at **THAT** point that He assists you in accomplishing it and receiving the Promise. He does not give divine assistance **UNTIL** you begin to express the trusting faith. Turn to Joshua 3:14-17 and let's read that real quick.

By the way, if you haven't figured it out by now, I am not giving you the full scriptures here but only the references. The reason is that I want you to partner with me in the process. I want you to join in the study and see it for yourself. This is exactly how Yahweh teaches us. He doesn't want to give us all the answers. He wants us to partner with Him and it's in the partnering that the power (grace) is actualized!

So, in Joshua, when did the waters dry up? When the priests stepped into the muddy, flooded over the banks Jordan River. Can you imagine how nervous they must have been? They are holding the Ark of God and they must carry it into the Jordan River in the mud. If one of them falls, the Ark of the Covenant will end up being the Ark of Noah. But the moment their feet touched the water and their obedience (works) matched their faith in His Word, the waters began to separate and His divine assistance showed up. Not one of them fell in that uneven, muddy bank of a river. Listen to this my friends: **WHEN YOUR ACTIONS STEP OUT TO FACE YOUR FEARS, THE POWER OF GOD SHOWS UP!** Divine assistance is only given when we step out in faith and do the things that He has shown us to do.

It's like driving a bulldozer. Who's doing the work? The bulldozer or the one driving it? **BOTH!** Yahweh said that He would move that mountain if we have the faith of the smallest mustard seed. So we sit back and wait for Him to move it. But that is not how He works. We are only to wait long enough for Him to give us the instructions as to how we are to partner with Him. Once He gives us the keys to the bulldozer, we are to get in it, fire it up, and start moving the levers. He says that if we just move this little lever up at the right time, He'll make sure the dirt gets moved by the truckload. To someone from the jungles of Africa who has never seen such a thing, it would appear miraculous that a man can move a lever and this giant machine scoops up a truckload of dirt. But this is exactly how Yahweh works. He knows we can't defeat the fears and anxieties...the giants in our lives. But if we would just step out into the river, push or pull that lever, He'll do the rest. He will not only part the water, but He will also defeat the giants before our very eyes.

Lastly, I want to point out a subtle one-liner in the text that is highly significant and really underlines all that we are talking about here as far as **"divine assistance" is** concerned. Read Numbers 13:16. This might just be the only time in the entire bible that a person changes another person's name. And it's no small thing. In Hebrew culture, when someone was given a name, it had meaning and many times would be connected to their destiny. For instance, Abraham's name meant *"father of many nations"* and Moses' name meant *"drawn from water."* Moses was chosen out of all the Hebrew children who had been killed and was drawn straight out of the water of the very word of God. So there is something here and a reason why Moses was inspired to do this. Let's take a closer look. The reason for the name change is quite amazing.

In the Hebrew, Hoshea is spelled hey, vav, shin, ayin. It means "deliverer." But the root word that it comes from is "Yasha," which means "salvation." In the ancient pictograph Hebrew (from which the modern Hebrew scripts evolved), each letter was a picture and had a meaning of its

own. In the case of Hoshea's name, the Hey meant "to reveal or behold," the Vav was a nail that meant "to connect or bridge," the Shin was teeth that represented "the all-consuming fire of God, El Shaddai" that comes "to consume or destroy" His enemies, and Ayin was an eye that represents "vision, spiritual insight, sight." Together, Hoshea's name meant "Revealed is the nail that connects the all-consuming fire to spiritual insight." This is certainly deliverance! Hoshea came back with a report of the land and "revealed" that "El Shaddai" could "destroy" their enemies if they had the "spiritual insight" to "see" it! Prophetically, his name would also tell us that the future deliverer that would do all the connecting is the one who bore the Nail!

Hoshea's very name was a good report. But there was one problem. The good report was only the Promise. It was only the beginning of faith. They needed real help. They needed the hand of God to help them destroy their enemies and bring about the Promise from the heavenly realm to the earth realm. They needed "Divine Assistance." And under the inspiration of Yahweh Himself, Moses knew that and so God had him add a single letter to the front of Hoshea's name, which would change it from Hoshea to Yahoshua (the "J" would not come until the evolution of the English language). That single letter added to the front of his name was the letter Yud (yood). That "yud" in Hebrew actually means "hand" and in the Paleo pictograph language also meant the "hand" or "right-hand power of God." Hoshea would "reveal the nail that connects the all-consuming fire to spiritual insight," or, in other words, "reveal that the Promise of God could be easily realized through His great power if they would just have the spiritual insight to believe." But Yahoshua would actually bring the hand of God **INTO** the deliverance to **CAUSE** their deliverance! Moses added the **HAND OF YAH** into the meaning which was the very divine assistance they needed to bring about the Promise!

Yahweh would actually put His very name inside of Hoshea's name. By adding the yod, his name would now be spelled Yod, Hey, Vav, Shin, Ayin. The name of Yahweh is spelled Yod, Hey, Vav, Hey. Joshua's name would now have "Yah," the short form of God's name, built right into the front of his name! And as if that was not enough, it is from Yahoshua that we get the name of Yeshua, which means *"Yahweh is our salvation!"*

So as we close out this chapter, what are the things the Spirit has pointed out to you, encouraged you, or convicted you of? What changes do you need to make to receive divine assistance and real grace into your life so that you can truly be what you were called to be and realize your full inheritance? For all those that belong to the Joshua generation, you will receive the power to defeat the giants of fear and anxiety and take the land. For everyone else...well...they will be camping for a long time in the desert. Remember, we cannot please Yahweh on our own. We cannot accomplish the will of God on our own. **WE NEED HIS DIVINE ASSISTANCE!** And it starts when we believe Him at His word and start taking steps toward facing our fears.

Shalom,
Jim Staley