

Introduction:

- Numbers 12,13,14. Numbers 13 and 14 is a beautiful and yet tragic picture of when faith and fear collide. Faith always gets its promise and fear always gets its torment. One is a 'giver' and one is a 'taker'. These chapter mark a small point in time that huge ramifications of the future. Most do not think about how criticizing and complain affect the future. Again, "Life and death are in the power of the tongue."
 - All of chapters 1-10 in Numbers are preparation for the moment of entrance into the promise. Or as some say, The Promised Land. What is your promised land? And how are you getting ready to enter?
 - The tragedy of this section is the failure of the people to trust God and the consequent punishment for their rebellion. The very phrase used to number the tribes in chapter 1 is used to punish them in 14:29, ('those twenty years and up.)
- The first 10 chapters are positive and they reveal God's plan for Israel to inhabit the land promised to them. The human response to that revelation was rebellion.
 - It went so far as to charge God with bringing them into the wilderness to die. 14:3.
 - This charge reveals how shallow Israel was in understanding who God is, what His nature is like and how He acts.
 - What is important to us? Bill Johnson said it well, "I can't afford to have a thought in my head about me that He does not have in head about me."

I. They Criticized Moses - An issue of the heart.

A. The Hebrew word is translated to speak against. Numbers 12:1

1. Jesus in Mt 12:32 puts out very serious word.
 - a) Speak against me and I will forgive you but speak against the Holy Spirit and you are in trouble.
 - b) The Holy Spirit is the work of God at work in our lives. Before, during and after salvation.
2. I have not found anywhere in scripture where speaking against God worked out good for someone.
 - a) The devil: Is 14:12-15 "I will..." arise, ascend, sit. Describes a process that did not work for him and will not work for humanity.
 - b) Eph 2:1-5 a spirit at work in the Sons of disobedience.

II. They Complained - an issue of the heart.

A. The contrary thinking.

1. "But" used in 13:28 and 31 exists to change the flow of thought and opinion.
2. The very fact that it is there means they are speaking against what has already been spoken.

B. Heb. *anan* - To be angry Numbers 11:1. To flare and breath through the nostrils.

- C. Heb *baka* - To weep numbers 11:4 they were in mixed company and those spoke of having no meat. So Israel began to complain of having no meat. le. Have you ever been around a child who is doing this. They are crying to get their way - a form of manipulation.
- D. The Hebrew word (*lun*) means to murmur or to speak against. The word complain always carries the understanding of 'to be against.'
1. "In the final analysis their murmuring was always against God who commissioned the leaders of the people. The murmuring, of course was not without reason, namely, hunger or thirst in the desert, or an apparently unattainable goal.
 2. The root of the murmuring is doubt.
 - a) But they sinned because they doubted God and cast aspersion on his justice, goodness, and power. Harris, R. L., Archer, G. L., Jr., & Waltke, B. K. (Eds.). (1999). *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed., p. 475). Chicago: Moody Press.
 - b) "The true nature of this murmuring is seen in the fact that it is an open act of rebellion against the Lord (Num 14:9) and a stubborn refusal to believe God's word and God's miraculous works (Num 14:11, 22, 23)." Harris, R. L., Archer, G. L., Jr., & Waltke, B. K. (Eds.). (1999). *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed., p. 475). Chicago: Moody Press.
 - c) Numbers 14:26 wicked community and complaints.

III. They Held God and Moses in Contempt - an issue of the heart.

- A. Numbers 14:11, 23.
1. Hebrew - *na as* - contempt - lack of respect or reverence for something. Willful disobedience or disrespect.
 2. The root signifies the action or attitude whereby the former recipient of favorable disposition and/or service is consciously viewed and/or treated with disdain. Coppes, L. J. (1999). 1274 YN. R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer Jr., & B. K. Waltke (Eds.), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed., p. 543). Chicago: Moody Press.
 3. See also Deut. 31:20-ff. The rejection of the covenant results in the reversal of divine favor.
- B. complain - to express grief, pain, or discontent. To make a formal accusation or charge. (as in a threat.) Israel was married to God in covenant. Now they say they are leaving and going back to Egypt. Sounds like some household fights.

IV. They Should Have...

- A. Had connection with God. Heb. 11:6
- B. Focused on what He said. Luke 1:38 "*Let it be to me according to your word.*"
- C. Made a commitment to live by it and for it. John 6:63 and Luke 4:4
- D. And confessed it over their lives. Heb 10:23