

# The Israelites Rebel

**Key Verse:** *"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."*

—**Numbers 14:8**,  
*New International Version*

**Selected Scriptures:**  
**Numbers 13:25-33;**  
**14:1-10**

few or many. What kind of land do they live in? Is it good or bad? What kind of towns do they live in? Are they unwallled or fortified? How is the soil? Is it fertile or poor?" He also asked them to bring back some of the fruit of the land.—Num. 13:18-20, *NIV*

The spies went through the land for forty days. In the Bible, a period of forty days is often regarded as a period of testing from the Lord. (Gen. 7:12; I Sam. 17:16; Matt. 4:1,2) After returning from their exploration, all twelve spies reported that the land "does flow with milk and honey!" They also presented Moses with some of the ripe fruit they had gathered.—Num. 13:25-27, *NIV*

However, ten of the spies said, "The people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very

## **WHEN ISRAEL APPROACHED**

the land which God had promised to their forefathers, the people came to Moses and said, "Let us send men ahead to spy out the land for us and bring back a report." Moses agreed and selected twelve men, "one man from each tribe" of Israel, to look over and explore the land.—Deut. 1:22,23, *NIV*

Moses instructed the twelve spies, "See what the land is like and whether the people who live there are strong or weak,

large.” This negative report created fear and murmuring amongst the Israelites. The ten spies exaggerated their report, saying, “We can’t attack those people; they are stronger than we are. ... The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. ... We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes.”—Num. 13:28,31-33; 14:1-3, *NIV*

The ten spies even resorted to lying to make it appear that there were insurmountable difficulties to possess the land. One false statement was, “the cities are large, with walls up to the sky.” (Deut. 1:28, *NIV*) Another was, “We saw the Nephilim.” (Num. 13:33) They said this even though Genesis 7:21-23 makes it clear that “all flesh” and “every living substance,” including the Nephilim, were destroyed in the flood.

The report of the ten spies caused the people of Israel to rebel against God. Moses then said to all who believed the evil report, “You did not trust in the LORD your God, who went ahead of you on your journey, in fire by night and in a cloud by day, ... and to show you the way you should go.”—Deut. 1:26,32,33

Caleb and Joshua, the only spies who gave a good report, received wrath from the children of Israel, for having given positive testimony about the land. In a similar way, the prospective church class during the Gospel Age may, from time to time, receive wrath from some for having given a good and true report from the Scriptures concerning God’s plans and promises. They may even receive unmerited criticism, persecution or slander from their own brethren.—Luke 21:16,17; John 15:18-20; II Tim. 3:12; I Pet. 3:14-17

God could have miraculously given the Israelites all the courage needed in order to enter the land of promise, but he did not do so. Instead, God wanted Israel to develop faith and trust in him. The Heavenly Father deals in much the same way with us, and desires that we develop full faith and trust in him, under all circumstances.—Prov. 3:5,6; Isa. 26:4; I Tim. 4:10; Heb. 11:6 ■