BIG OUTLINE OF NUMBERS
First Generation Ordered by Covenant (1:1-9:14)
  Preparation for victory; saints called to be soldiers
First Generation Wanders in the Desert (9:15-25:18)
  Testing, failure and discipline
  Moses warns the second generation not to repeat the faithlessness of their fathers and mothers

KADESH-BARNEA: THE TIPPING POINT

THE NEGEV (THE “SOUTH”)

LESSON THEME: The greatest challenges God’s people face in following Him come from within

The Story Of Chapters 10-14
(1-9) God, Moses and Aaron have called and prepared the people to live “on mission”
  God leads them into, not around, the wilderness (just as He did with Jesus, Luke 4)
(9-10) They begin well – even very well – walking obediently and in an orderly fashion behind God's leadership represented by the pillar of cloud
  But things deteriorate quickly …
(11) They complain about their hardships
  Taberah (the place of “burning”)
(11) They crave meat from Egypt
  Kibroth-hattaavah (the “graves of craving”)
(12) They rebel against Moses' leadership
  Hazeroth; Miriam is made leperous
(13) Moses and the Lord send 12 spies into the Promised Land
  10 see only giants and walled cities; 2 say go!
(14) More rebellion the next morning
  They become resistant to following God’s will
  They refuse to trust God and obey His Word
  They rebel: we won’t go!
  God’s discipline falls: 40 years for 40 days
The Result
The first generation is set aside because of their faithlessness and disobedience
None of the first generation will possess God's promised inheritance (except Joshua & Caleb)
The first generation won't receive the full measure of God's blessing
They lose out on His best for them in their generation

WHAT HAPPENED?!

APPLICATION: The greatest challenges God's people face in following Him come from within

Faithlessness Infected Their Hearts
They had discontented hearts (11:1-3)
Their complaint
Their hardships and their circumstances
Their hearts
2nd time of complaining after 3 days (Ex 15:22)
They had a weak “fair weather” faith
Their complaining (therefore questioning God) revealed ungrateful, unsurrendered hearts

A Discontented Heart
In light of your current circumstances ...
  What are you complaining (to yourself) about?
  What are you focusing on ... your circumstances or God’s faithfulness and generosity?
  Are you finding fault with God’s leadership?
  Maybe like Job you should be asking “What can I get out of this?” rather than “How can I get out of this?”

Does your heart lack contentment right now?

Faithlessness Infected Their Hearts
They had divided hearts (11:4-35)
Their complaint
We're tired of manna! We want meat!
Their hearts
They were double-minded (Ex 16:3-4; Dt 8:3)
They took God's daily provision for granted
They had unsatisfied appetites for Egypt's food
Thought “not THY will but MY will be done”

A Divided Heart
What's your attitude towards God’s “manna?”
  Do you spend more of your time with substitutes or with the “real thing,” the Word of God?
  How would you rate your level of gratefulness for God's everyday provision from 1-5?
  Do you have an unsatisfied appetite and desire for the “meat” the world offers?
  According to James, is such a one a friend of God or a friend of the world? (Jam 4:1-10)

Faithlessness Infected Their Hearts
They had prideful hearts (12:1-16)
Their complaint
Is Moses God's only leader here? What about us?!
Their hearts
Filled with envy and/or selfish ambition
Their desire is to lead rather than to serve

A Prideful Heart
Are you critical of one ... or some ... of your spiritual leaders?
  Have you gone to them privately (Mt 18) or do you “shop it around” for agreement in public?
Are you discontent with your current role in God’s service?
Have you gone to God with it first?
Will you serve God 100% ... according to His appointment and will rather than your own?

**Faithlessness Infected Their Hearts**
They had discontented hearts
  - Unhappy with God’s leadership and/or His ways
They had divided hearts
  - Unhappy with God’s “diet” and provision
They had prideful hearts
  - Unhappy with God’s current role for them
Not only that, but their infected hearts dulled their spiritual eyesight ...

**Faithless Hearts Dulled Their Sight**
They second-guessed God (13:1-24)
  - They learned nothing new in 40 days ...
  - Their enemies were known (Gen 15:18-21)
  - The land was theirs (Gen 12:7; Ex 3:8, 17)
  - God promised to (and did) lead them (Num 10:33-36)
*Dulled eyesight revealed their yet unspoken doubt in God’s Word and God’s character*
They lost perspective (13:25-33)
  - 10 only saw ...
    - Enemies who appeared larger than life
    - Walled cities that couldn’t be overthrown
    - Personal weaknesses that loomed larger than God
*Dulled eyesight caused them to focus on obstacles and problems rather than focusing on God*
They followed their own counsel rather than God’s will (14:1-12)
  - Going back to Egypt seemed to be their only hope
  - Returning to a place of perceived security
  - Unbelief has turned into outright rebellion
*Dulled eyesight caused their discouragement to turn into fear – and they took matters into their own hands*
And so God disciplined them (14:13-38)
  - Moses interceded for the people (vv. 13-19)
  - God forgave His people at Moses’ request (vv. 20-22)
  - But although God has forgiven them, He still disciplines His people (vv. 23-38)
*Dulled eyesight eventually brought God’s corrective discipline upon them*
Which revealed more self-reliance (14:39-45)
  - They’d made up their minds concerning what they were going to do
  - They’d go against God’s revealed Word if needed
  - They even believed this would please God
  - They believed they could accomplish God’s work in their own strength (John 15:5c)
*Dulled eyesight tricked them into putting more trust in the power of their flesh than in the power of God*

**Faithlessness/Self-Reliance**
How’s your spiritual eyesight?
Do you second-guess God and/or His choices?
Do you focus more on obstacles and problems or God?
Does discouragement usually turn to fear which makes you take matters into your own hands?
Do you have spiritual cataracts that trick you into putting more confidence in your ability than in God’s?
The heart of the matter …
    Your heart may be flirting with faithlessness
    In reality your heart may be discontented, divided or even struggling with pride

**Striking Back At Faithlessness**

Acknowledge to God that your heart is infected and in need of His grace … daily

Settle (or resettle) four issues tonight …

Authority: Take God at His Word

Trust: Look up to your Father 1st in faith more than focusing on the facts and circumstances you see

Perspective: Remember that God leads us *through* hardships, not around them, for our *good*

Confidence: “God’s path will never lead you where God’s grace cannot sustain you.” (Wiersbe)

*The greatest challenges you and I face in following God come from within*

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**FOR NEXT TIME:**

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**LECTURE AUDIO & HANDOUTS ONLINE:**

ccbcfamily.org/sermons/old-testament-survey

“Even though the wilderness wanderings consumed the majority of the years that Numbers records, Moses passed over the events of this period of Israel’s history fairly quickly. No one knows for sure how much time the Israelites spent in transit during the 38 years between their first and last visits to Kadesh Barnea. God’s emphasis in Numbers is first on His preparation of the Israelites to enter the land from Kadesh (chs. 1-14), and lastly on His preparation of their entrance from the Plains of Moab (chs. 20-36). This indicates that the purpose of the book was primarily to show how God dealt with the Israelites as they anticipated entrance into the Promised Land. It was not to record all the events, or even most of the events, that took place in Israel’s “wilderness wandering” history. This selection of content, presented to teach spiritual lessons, is in harmony with the other books of the Pentateuch.”

–Dr. Thomas Constable

Notes on Numbers, www.soniclight.com
The spies traveled as far as the central highlands of Galilee ... the promised land.
And in Numbers, more complaining...

Wanderings of the Israelites

40 years wandering through the wilderness until they died in the wilderness will their children inherit.


Compiled text from The Life Application Study Bible and Dr. Tom Constable's "Notes on Numbers"
The Israelites at Kadesh Barnea
Although we are accustomed to thinking of the Israelites as “wandering” in the desert for 40 years, it would have been impossible for about two million people to trek continuously across a barren desert. Most of this time (as on the journey from Egypt) would have been spent watering their flocks at a desert oasis, or moving between one oasis and the next.

Kadesh ("holy") was an oasis in the Desert of Paran, part of the much larger Desert of Zin in the Negev Desert. During much of their forty years of ‘wandering’ in the desert, the Israelites probably camped at Kadesh Barnea (Barnea means “desert of wandering,” so the full name means “the holy place in the desert of wandering”).

The exact location of Kadesh Barnea has been hotly debated for many years. Victorian scholars equated Kadesh with the small spring at Ain Qudeis in the Wadi Qudeis, situated about 50 miles southwest of Beersheba. Most modern archaeologists, however, believe that Kadesh was located at Ain el Qudeirat, the largest oasis in the northern Negev Desert, about 6 miles north of Ain Qudeis in Egypt.

The narrow Ain el Qudeirat valley (a seasonal river valley or wadi) still contains remains of a fortress on a settlement mound (called a “tell”) dating from 1150 BC—250 years after the Israelites' conquest of Canaan, during the time of the Judges. It also has remains of an earlier stone-lined aqueduct leading from the spring itself, where the burnt-lime mortar was dated between 1440 and 1640 BC, a period which includes the Israelites’ arrival at Kadesh Barnea in 1445 BC.

Long before the Israelites settled at Kadesh, Abraham had lived in this area following the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 20:1), and the LORD appeared to Hagar, Abraham’s slave girl, at a well “between Kadesh and Bered” (Gen 16:14). After the conquest of Canaan under Joshua, Kadesh was at the southeast border of the land of Judah (Josh 15:3), and was probably fortified at this time to protect Judah’s boundary.

Ein Avdat
Today travelers driving through Israel's Negev Desert along Route 40 from Beersheba to Eilat cross the Mt. Ramon ridge and descend into the huge natural crater known as Makhtesh Ramon. About 15 miles north of Mizpe Ramon a small track leads to the desert oasis of Ein Avdat, in a narrow gorge leading to the Wadi of Zin. Here modern travelers can experience desert conditions similar to those encountered by the Israelites when they arrived at the oasis of Kadesh.

Makhtesh Arif
The Makhtesh Arif is located in the Negev Desert. A makhtesh is a geological landform with steep walls of resistant rock surrounding a deep, closed valley which is usually drained by a single wadi (river). The valleys have limited vegetation and soil, and contain a variety of different colored rocks. There are five of these makhtesh landforms in Israel.