

Adam Clarke:

Introduction

Twelve men, one out of every tribe, are sent to examine the nature and state of the land of Canaan, Numbers 13:1-3. Their names, Numbers 13:4-16. Moses gives them particular directions, Numbers 13:17-20. They proceed on their journey, Numbers 13:21, Numbers 13:22. Come to Eshcol, and cut down a branch with a cluster of grapes, which they bear between two of them upon a staff, Numbers 13:23, Numbers 13:24. After forty days they return to Paran, from searching the land, and show to Moses and the people the fruit they had brought with them, Numbers 13:25, Numbers 13:26. Their report - they acknowledge that the land is good, but that the inhabitants are such as the Israelites cannot hope to conquer, Numbers 13:27-29. Caleb endeavors to do away the bad impression made, by the report of his fellows, upon the minds of the people, Numbers 13:30. But the others persist in their former statement, Numbers 13:31: and greatly amplify the difficulties of conquest, Numbers 13:32, Numbers 13:33.

Verse 2

Send thou men, that they may search - It appears from Deuteronomy 1:19-24 that this was done in consequence of the request of the people, after the following address of Moses: "And when we departed from Horeb, we went through all that great and terrible wilderness - and we came unto Kadesh-Barnea; and I said unto you, Ye are come unto the mountain of the Amorites, which the Lord our God doth give unto us. Behold the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged. And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said: We Will Send Men Before Us, And They Shall Search Us Out The Land and bring us word again, by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come. And the saying pleased me well, and I took twelve men of you, one of a tribe," etc., etc. Nearly the whole of these verses is added here by the Samaritan.

Every one a ruler - Not any of the princes of the people, (see Numbers 1) for these names are different from those; but these now sent were men of consideration and importance in their respective tribes.

Verse 13

Sethur, the son of Michael - It would have been strange had the numerous searches after the explanation of the mystical number 666, Revelation 13:18; Revelation 17:5, met with nothing to their purpose in the name of this son of Michael. סֶתוּר (Sethur), from סָתַר (sathar), to hide or conceal, signifies hidden or mysterious, and includes in it the numerical letters of the No. 666: ס 60, + ת 400, + ו 6, + ר 200, = 666. But of what utility can such expositions be to any subject of history or theology?

Verse 16

And Moses called Oshea Jehoshua - (Oshea), Heb. יְהוֹשֻׁעַ should be written Hoshea: the word signifies saved, or a savior, or salvation; but יְהוֹשֻׁעַ, he shall save, or the salvation of God; a letter, says Calmet, of the incommunicable name of God, being added to his former name. This was not the first time in which he had the name Joshua; see Exodus 17:9 (note), and the note there. Some suppose he had this change of name in consequence of his victory over Amalek; see Exodus 17:13, Exodus 17:14.

Verse 18

See the land, what it is - What sort of a Country it is; how situated; its natural advantages or disadvantages.

And the people - whether they be strong or weak - Healthy, robust, hardy men; or little, weak, and pusillanimous.

Verse 20

The land - whether it be fat or lean - Whether the Soil be rich or poor; which might be known by its being well wooded, and by the fruits it produced; and therefore they were desired to examine it as to the trees, etc., and to bring some of the fruits with them.

Verse 21

From the wilderness of Zin - The place called; זִין (Tsin), here, is different from that called זִין (Sin) or (Seen). Exodus 16:1; the latter was nigh to Egypt, but the former was near Kadesh Barnea, not far from the borders of the promised land.

The spies having left Kadesh Barnea, which was in the desert of Paran, see Numbers 13:26, they proceeded to the desert of (Tsin), all along the land of Canaan, nearly following the course of the river Jordan, till they came to Rehob, a city situated near Mount Libanus, at the northern extremity of the Holy Land, towards the road

the Israelites had been greatly cramped with their long and severe servitude in Egypt. And this may in some measure account for their alarm. On this subject the reader is desired to turn back to the note on Genesis 6:4 (note).

Canaan was a type of the kingdom of God; the wilderness through which the Israelites passed, of the difficulties and trials to be met with in the present world. The promise of the kingdom of God is given to every believer; but how many are discouraged by the difficulties in the way! A slothful heart sees dangers, lions, and giants, every where; and therefore refuses to proceed in the heavenly path. Many of the spies contribute to this by the bad reports they bring of the heavenly country. Certain preachers allow "that the land is good, that it flows with milk and honey," and go so far as to show some of its fruits; but they discourage the people by stating the impossibility of overcoming their enemies. "Sin," say they, "cannot be destroyed in this life - it will always dwell in you - the Anakim cannot be conquered - we are but as grasshoppers against the Anakim," etc., etc. Here and there a Joshua and a Caleb, trusting alone in the power of God, armed with faith in the infinite efficacy of that blood which cleanses from all unrighteousness, boldly stand forth and say: "Their defense is departed from them, and the Lord is with us; let us go up at once and possess the land, for we are well able to overcome." We can do all things through Christ strengthening us: he will purify us unto himself, and give us that rest from sin here which his death has procured and his word has promised. Reader, canst thou not take God at his word? He has never yet failed thee. Surely then thou hast no reason to doubt. Thou hast never yet tried him to the uttermost. Thou knowest not how far and how fully he can save. Do not be dispirited: the sons of Anak shall fall before thee, if thou meet them in the name of the Lord of Hosts.