

## Part 4 Numbers 13.1-15.41 Send for you J | j | C

# "The Great Commission"

*In this section the "spies" are sent. The Hebrew name rty means "explorers" or indeed "doves" because they get a "bird's eye view" of the whole land. They were to be "leaders" or princes who had been "lifted" by God and the tribes to leadership. They are also described as "Enoshim" or men of military skill-the elite commanders of Israel's armies. In the word "sent" there is a sort of "loneliness" and a certain "commission". These men are to "bring back word"-they are to prophecy on the potential of the land and how it might be taken. They are told that it is the "gift of God"-and will surely come to them*

### READING No.1 13.1-19

#### Commissioned to "see a future" for the people in the land

**Just like the apostles** -sent at the mouth of Christ-the spies were chosen to have first experience of the future God had for the people-to see how the **old life** of Canaan and the **new life** differed so they could advise its excellence and draw the people towards it. Their task was to make known **the nature of the gift God was setting before His people. As TORAH they point to Christ's apostolic commission**

#### (SPEECH No.129)

And the LORD spoke to Moses saying, "Send out" on your behalf mighty men and they shall explore the land of Canaan which I am giving to the sons of Israel.-one single warrior for each tribe of his fathers-you shall send every leader among them. *It is a stern requirement that for a time the tribes be leaderless and that the mighty ones do an ongoing assessment-in the light of the fact that the land is a "gift of God.* And Moses sent them from the desert of Paran at the word of the LORD'S mouth-they were the entire band of the mighty leadership of the sons of Israel. And these were their names:-

- (1) Shammua son of Zaccur of the tribe of Reuben ...Renowned-one of whom many have heard.
- (2) Shaphat son of Hori of the tribe of Simeon...judgement or defence
- (3) Caleb son of Jephunneh of the tribe of Judah...one who "barks out" commands
- (4) Yigal son of Joseph of the tribe of Issachar...May God redeem him
- (5) Joshua son of Nun of the tribe of Ephraim...Jehovah saves
- (6) Palti son of Raphu o the tribe of Benjamin...Deliverance of the LORD
- (7) Gadiel son of Sodi of the tribe of Zebulun...Fortune of God or troop of God
- (8) Gaddi son of Susi of the tribe of Manasseh that belongs to Joseph...fortunate (as Joseph's offspring)
- (9) Ammiel son of Gemali of the tribe of Asher...The people of God
- (10) Nahbi son of Vophsi of the tribe of Naphtali...Hidden or protected by the LORD
- (11) Geuel son of Machi of the tribe of Gad...Majesty of God.

These are the names of the mighty that Moses sent to explore the land and Moses called for Joshua son of Nun and Moses sent them to explore the land of Canaan. He said to them. "Go up this way into the Negeb and go up the mountain". *This instruction meant that they would approach from the south and come to the mountain of Abraham-which was the most famous location in the land-the setting of David's city and the centre of Jeremiah's sorrow and later in time of Christ's death and resurrection.* And see the land (prophetically) what it is lie and the people who dwell in it, whether they are undaunted and obstinate or in decline and relaxed, few or many. See what the land in which they dwell is like. Is it good rich land or poor. Look at the cities in which they dwell-whether they are camps or fortified places. See what the nature of the land is-whether it is fertile or barren and wasting. See if there is wood in it or not. And **it is imperative that you have been strong** to this point and that you take of the fruit of the land. Those days were the days of first-ripe grapes. *Moses emphasised that they were men of proven strength and encouraged them by their leadership to date. He emphasised that they should maintain a constant assiduous and indomitable spirit. It was here that nine of them were to fail lamentably.*

## READING No.2 13.21-14.7

### The leaders sensed a spiritual struggle lay ahead

Then they went up and explored the land from the wilderness of Zin to Rehob-the approach to Hamath. Then they went up to the Negeb and came to Hebron. There Ahiman, Sheshai and Talmai who were scions of Anak, lived. And Hebron (*place of Abraham's tomb*) had been built seven years before Zoan(*seat of the Shepherd kings*) in Egypt. And they came to the river or torrent of Eschol and cut down from there a branch (*for carrying and to demonstrate the wood*) and one cluster of grapes (*to demonstrate the vines*) and lifted them up on a staff between two of them and took from the pomegranates and figs. The place is called the "torrent of the cluster" on account of the cluster which the sons of Israel cut down there. *[There is a play upon words here. The Hebrew ׀ ׀ pointed with a qametz and pathah means "inheritance" whereas pointed with two pathahs it means "torrent". So we could say the place got the name "Inheritance or possession of the vine cluster (which vine is symbolic of Israel-God's vine)]* And they returned from exploring the land at the end or cutting off of the fortieth day. And they were walking on and were coming to Moses and Aaron and all the assembly of the children of Israel at the wilderness of Paran to Kadesh; and they brought word to them and the whole congregation and showed them the fruit of the land. And they were relating to Him and saying, "We came to the land where you sent we and surely it flowed with **milk and honey** and this is its fruit."

**Because** *[Hebrew ׃k] on the other extreme [Hebrew spa literally "extreme" or "the other side of the coin" or "bad news" as we would say] the people who dwell in the land are strong and the cities have very great fortifications or walls and we have seen the young or new born of Anak there. The significance is that a prominent powerful race of giants was emerging at this time.* Amalek inhabits the southern Negev and the Hittite and Jebusite and Amorite dwell in the mountain whilst the Canaanite dwells by the sea and along the Jordan. *The remit was to investigate the highland terrain and the Jerusalem area and this was the conclusion from exploration of this area and the Canaanite dwells by the sea and by the banks of Jordan. If as I consider Joshua made this opening demonstration and statement on the quality of timber and fruit and reported on the riches of nature and the cattle-all good news-he also covered five other vital facts:-*

*1 The military prowess and fortification of the territory*

*2 The current increase in Anakim or giants*

*3 The racial mix and main seats of occupancy*

*4 The highland situation especially in the historic area of Jerusalem*

*5 A final comment on the Jordan valley-which would be the ultimate point of entry.*

### CALEB (PRINCE OF JUDAH) STILLS THE PEOPLE

Satan's opposition to the commission (the Nephilim) and God's enabling

And Caleb stilled the people *[The Hebrew hsh is like our "hush" and equivalent to the Greek σιωπη which describes the quiet sequel to the fierce storm on Galilee Matthew 8.26 and Mark 4.30 with Luke 8.24] The Hebrew text has an "S" writ large as a sign of this great "hush". Clearly great alarm had broken out among the people in the late evening. The previous speaker who had showed the prospects but also put the extreme difficulty presented for any assailant. Was the speaker the renowned Shammua of the senior tribe of Reuben? I think not! It was Joshua Prince of Ephraim (cf 13.16) who was in full flow when his friend Caleb saw they had lost the support of the crowd. He punctuated Joshua and regained calm on that vital evening. This prince of Judah is lionised in Numbers and Deuteronomy-and deservedly so because "He wholly followed the LORD"-and we might ask, 'Who else could have restored calm?' Caleb stilled the people turning in the direction of Moses and said, 'Let us go up right away and let us seize possession of it for we will be made able to prevail concerning it!' The Hophal Future appears as a noun in Jeremiah 37.3 & 38.1 where Jeucal (the enabled) is one of those who were sent to Jeremiah to cause him to pray for the people. It was faith that believed for the ability God would give. "God's commissions are his enablings!" But the mighty men who went up with him said, "We are not going to be enabled to go against this people for they are stronger than we are. These men did not see the God of Jacob nor did they have like faith to Caleb. They issued or published*

abroad a word like a bear silently drawing up behind [*Hebrew tbd from bwd*] to the sons of Israel concerning the land they had explored saying, "The land we passed through to explore is a land that eats up its inhabitants and the mighty men we saw were tall We saw the **Nephilim** there-sons of Anak (*the tall long necked one*) from the Nephilim(*those angels who had "fallen down" from heaven*). We were in our own eyes as "locusts [*Hebrew bmq*] and so we were in their eyes. Israel was well aware of this "fall" which occurred in the pre-flood days. These spirits had survived the floods beings that inhabit the air and demon spirits who sought to possess man as demons and degrade the gene bank of humanity by incestuous relations with women. These princes were enlightened as to the spiritual corruption of earlier days and yet had not the faith to tackle the corruption of their own times or to believe that Satan to Yahweh must bow.

## CHAPTER 14

### The people give up on God's commission at the outset

And the whole congregation rose up and gave their voice and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel **murmured** [*Hebrew mml* A word in frequent use meaning both "remaining" or "continuing in a state" in this case of sullen complaint and also "murmuring"] against Moses and Aaron and said to them, "Would God we had died in Egypt or in this wilderness. Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword? That our wives and children should be a prey? Was it not better for us to return to Egypt? And every man said to his friend, "Give us a captain and we will return to Egypt!" And Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the sons of Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh rent their clothes and said to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, "The land which we passed through to explore is a very good one."

### READING No.3 14.8-23

#### Two men hold to the commission believing in God's resources

"If the LORD delights in us He will bring us to this land and give us a land which flows with milk and honey. Definitely do not rebel or revolt against the LORD and do not fear the people of the land for they are bread for us [*Hebrew mj*] as we would say "a piece of cake"] their shadow defence has left them and the LORD is with us, do not fear". And the whole congregation were speaking of stoning them to death with stones but the glory of the LORD caused itself to be seen at the tabernacle of the congregation to all the children of Israel. *We have a clear case of the divine intervention on behalf of two men of faith-which immediately reversed the situation and caused serious thought about the misdeed Israel were conspiring to undertake. This is less well known than the defence of Daniel or indeed Esther but it adds yet another case of the LORD showing Himself strong on the behalf of those who trust in Him.*

### (130) 11-16

#### Moses pleads for the current generation to fulfil the commission using the argument of divine strength

And the LORD said to Moses, "**How long** will this people despise reject or provoke me? **How long until they believe me because of all the signs** which I have done in their midst? *This belies God's foreknowledge despite which the LORD resolutely sustains His people and maintains their commission though they care little about it.* With a word I will cause pestilence to seize or dispossess them. I will make of you a great people and mightier than they. And Moses said to the LORD, "**The Egyptians shall hear-for You brought this people up by your great might from their midst. And they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land for they have heard that You O LORD are among this people-that You have caused Yourself to be seen 'eye to eye'; that Your cloud stand over them to minister to them and that you walk before their face by day and in a ministering pillar of fire by night. Now if You kill this people as a man the nations who have heard Your fame will say, 'From his lack of strength to bring this people to the land He swore to them He slew them in the wilderness.'**" *The LORD'S concern was "lack of faith" and Moses' concern was "the glory of God." A nation's continuance is due as this case demonstrates not to its His faithfulness to God but to God's concern for promote testimony to His name amongst other peoples that they may stand in awe of Him and turn to Him for salvation and recognise the blessings that follow from His choice of any people.*

## THE APPEAL REACHES TO THE HEART OF GOD

### Moses holds out in hope and further appeals on grounds of compassion- for pardon 17-19

And now my Lord let the strength of my Lord be great according to that which you have spoken saying, 'It takes long for the LORD to become angry; and lifts up iniquity and transgression and freeing will not free from guilt *the guilty*; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the sons to the third and fourth generation" Pardon, I pray You, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of your covenant mercy and as You have borne [*The Hebrew חסד may mean "pardon" "forgive" and "carry"*]this people from Egypt till now.

### (131) 20-24

#### The LORD ensures Israel's safety but does not guarantee that the commission will be fulfilled in a generation

And the LORD said, "I have pardoned as you have spoken *The great grace and promptitude of the LORD is preserved for us in this speech. It might be rendered "I pardon as you reason." God in His heart was reaching for the allegiance of all men-this Moses knew -but it was to be set out plainly in this speech.* And commensurate with my living the Glory of the LORD will fill all the earth. *This statement has two implications-1)In every age of man God's glory is seen in all the earth and 2)The earth(orbis terrarum) that the LORD created and revives in the millennium and replaces in the eternal kingdom shall in each phase be filled with God's glory.* Because all these men of flesh who have seen my glory and my signs which I did in Egypt and in the desert and have tempted or tested me (*with*) these ten hammer blows [*Hebrew מ[פ "time" or "blow"*]and not obeyed my voice and all who provoked or insulted me shall not see the land I swore to their fathers but my servant Caleb will be recompensed because there is another Spirit with him and he was wholly following after me and I will cause him to come into the land where he went and his seed shall possess it. But the Amalakites and Canaanites dwell in the valley. Tomorrow strike camp or travel into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea. *The protective care of the LORD abides despite disobedience yet in the term of less than forty years only the obedient will see the land promised to the patriarchs.*

### (132) READING No.3 14.8-25

#### Rejection of the calling in the commission leads to death

And the word of the LORD came to Moses and Aaron saying, "How long shall I belong to this evil congregation which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings or "abiding complaints [*Hebrew מ[ל carries the significance of "a continuing state" and "a complaint"*] Say to them, "As I live whispers the LORD as you have spoken in my ears so will I do to you. Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness and all who were mustered in the census-all who were numbered from twenty years of age and older who murmured against me. Whether you come into the land concerning which I lifted up my hand that you should dwell in it -surely Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun will come in. *The implication is that as they fall in the wilderness they will not enter Canaan.* But your little ones whom you said would be a prey I will bring in and they shall know the land intimately that you despised and you will become weary and fall in this wilderness. And your sons shall live pastorally in this wilderness forty years and bear your fornication until your corpses all fall in the wilderness. In line with the number of days you explored the land-forty days-a day for a year you shall bear your iniquities forty years and you shall be well aware of my declining or restraint or prohibition [*The Hebrew מ is א[מ which is exactly by spelling and sound our "No". The LORD retains the right to say "No!" where He once said "Yes!"*] I the LORD have said, "If I will not do this to this entire evil congregation which have ganged up [*Hebrew ד[מ against me. In this wilderness they shall be orphaned and there they shall die.* [*There is a severe play on words in the expression the LORD uses to spell out an inexorable state; transliterated*

*it reads, "yithanmu wesham yamuthu"]* And the strong men whom Moses sent to explore the land and returned and made all the congregation insult him by bringing up a slander on the land died by a calamitous smiting before the LORD'S face but Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh **lived on** from those who went up to view the land. And Moses told all these saying to all the children of Israel and the people mourned much. And they rose up early in the morning and said, "We will go up to the place where the LORD said for we have sinned" And Moses said, "What is this-you pass over the mouth of the LORD; it shall not prosper or "pass over a river" *They would never get to cross the Jordan* Do not go up for the LORD is not among you and you will not be smitten before your enemies for the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you and you will fall by the sword for this reason, you have turned from following after the LORD and the LORD will not be with you. But they proudly or presumptuously went up to the top of the hill and the ark of the LORD and Moses did not depart *{Hebrew ~~vmm~~}* from the camp and the Amalekites and Canaanites who lived in the mountain descended and smote them and hammered them or crushed them even to Hormah

### (133)CHAPTER 15

#### **The gospel at the heart of the commission re-emphasised**

And the LORD spoke to Moses saying, "Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, 'When you come to the land where you are to dwell which I am giving to you and you make

- (1) A burnt offering to the LORD or
- (2) A sacrifice to separate yourselves by vow or
- (3) A freewill offering or
- (4) In on appointed festivals

to make a savoury smell to the LORD from the herd or flock **He shall cause** the grain offering **causing** or means of coming near or access **of his encounter** with the LORD made up of a tenth mix of fine flour mingled with a quarter of a hin of oil and the wine of drink offering a fourth part of a hin you shall make or prepare with the burnt offering or sacrifice of a lamb. *This speaks volumes. It tells us that beast alone in these great offerings are of no avail-as the prophets rightly understood sacrifice-but the only approach was the "bread of heaven"-the refined flour representative of Messiah who suffered and was broken for us and the oil representative of the Holy Spirit who draws man nigh to God in his heart. Thus at the heart of the Commission we are reminded of the way in which the people of God can be assured of a future-through the **person** of Messiah alone. You might ask, "Why is animal sacrifice required?" The answer is it emphasizes **the blood** which speaks of **the work** of Messiah on the cross-which is further emphasised by **the wine** element. The wine was balanced with the oil as our joy in Messiah is balanced with the work of the Spirit in our hearts. The explanation of the amount of meal and oil is that there is a balance to be maintained between the meal segment of offering and the animal factor and this was in terms of cost.*

Or for a ram you shall make a meal offering -two tenth deals of flour mingled with a third of a hin of oil. And the wine of the drink offering of approach or access shall be a third of a hin -for a sweet savour to the LORD. *These offerings express the pleasure of the LORD answers to the pleasure of the one who approaches in experiencing personally intimacy with God characterised by the joy of the indwelling Spirit and the atoning assurance of the precious blood of Messiah.*

#### **READING No.5 15.8-16**

Or when you prepare a bullock for a burnt offering or an offering belonging to separating yourself by vow or for a fellowship offering to the LORD you shall also **bring near** along with the bullock a meal offering of three tenths of fine flour mingled with half a hin of oil. And you shall come near with half a hin of wine for a drink offering. It is an offering of sweet smell to the LORD. In this manner it is to be done for a single bullock ram sheep or lamb or kid. As you offer each one of these you shall do with them all. All who are new and growing up[like "plants"] shall prepare offering in this way to and cause themselves to come nigh with a burnt offering which is a sweet smell to the LORD. *The burnt offering well represents the whole sacrifice of Calvary and as a **TORAH** of Messiah it is pleasing to God as He was pleasing to the Father.[cf "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased". Consequently there is no exception to the manner of the offering-as Christ and only Christ can bring us nigh and atone for*

*sin]* And when a stranger living as an alien with you or anyone in your household through your generations offers a burnt offering to please the LORD he shall offer it in this way. The congregation has one rule for yourselves and the stranger living among you. The law is for you and the stranger perpetually in your generations; as you are so is the stranger before the LORD. One **TORAH** and one **basis of punishment and defence** shall be in use by you and the stranger. *Again the emphasis is that the "burnt offering" of approach to God is one for all. The idea translates easily into the Pauline statement, "All one in Christ Jesus...Galatians 3.28.*

### **(134)READING No.6 17-26**

And the LORD spoke to Moses saying, 'Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, when you come into the land where I am bringing you and you eat of the bread of the land give a portion [*Hebrew hmwr t*] heave offering]of it to the LORD. Present a cake of your flour-a heave offering heaved as a lifting up of the threshing floor-in this way lift it up. *This comparison is very suggestive. The corn is lifted high to the wind on the flat exposed threshing floor. In like manner Christ was lifted up. The same purpose is served-the Christ feeds mankind and gives life-the pure corn produces the staple of life also.* Through coming generations you shall give the LORD this heave offering. Now when you wander and do not do all these commands which the LORD gave to Moses-all that the LORD commanded by Moses hand from that day of command through your generations. If this takes place away from the eyes of the congregation and they are ignorant of it the whole congregation shall come near with a young bullock for a whole burnt offering for a sweet smell to the LORD and its meal offering and drink offering according to **the administration of punishment and defence** [*Hebrew fpc*]and one male goat for a sin offering. And the priest shall atone for all the congregation of the sons of Israel and they shall be forgiven [*Hebrew hl s meaning "have the burden of sin lifted"*] for they did it without intent and brought the burnt offering and sin offering before the LORD for their unpremeditated breach.

### **READING No.7 27-36**

But if one soul sins without being aware he shall come near with a year old female goat for his sin. And the priest shall atone for the unintentional sin of that person before the LORD and when atonement is made he shall be forgiven. *The principle of smearing or applying the blood being complete guilt is gone and this assurance is set out plainly by this Old Testament TORAH.* One and the same **TORAH** applies to the native born and stranger living among you for the unintentional sin. But he who sins with a high hand be he native born or stranger -he blasphemes the LORD that soul cuts himself off from the midst of the people. Because he is a despiser of the command of the LORD and in breach of His command that soul shall be cut off; his rebellion and guilt remains.

### **BREACH OF THE SABBATH**

And it happened when Israel was in the desert that a man was found to have been gathering wood on the Sabbath. Those who found him brought him near to Moses Aaron & the Assembly. And they rested him in custody (for Sabbath) for (law) was not expanded to deal with what to do with him.

### **(135)**

And the LORD said to Moses, "The man must die. The whole assembly shall stone him to death outside the camp. The whole assembly brought him outside the camp and stoned him and he died by the rod of the LORD to Moses.

### **(Speech No.136) SUMMARY 38-41**

And the LORD spoke to Moses saying, "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'You are to make tassels [*Hebrew xyx*] on the wings of your garments with blue cord or "twistings" or "wrestlings"[*Hebrew lfp*] *The idea is that the prayer shawl shall have sign of a nation that still wrestles with God like Israel Himself.* These tassels are for you; you shall look upon them and remember all the commandments of the LORD and do them and not spy or turn around or **TOR[A part of Torah-the Torah of lust-the other "law that is in our members as Paul says]** after your hearts and eyes that whoredom which comes of following them-i.e. their lusts. Then you will remember to do all

my commands and be holy to the LORD. I am the LORD God who brought you from Egypt to be your God. I am your Strong God. The word command itself [*Hebrew חָצַק means "constitution" or "commission" and links with Christ as "pointers. The Jews were commissioned to look for His coming*].

## The End of Part 4 "The commission"