

# History Repeats Itself by Carl McMurray

Numbers 13-14 provide us with some relevant and valuable lessons concerning our service to God. It was after leaving Egyptian bondage and arriving at the south end of Canaan that God sent them into the land where they were to live. After their prayer - for freedom, the awesome miracle at the Red Sea and God's provision on their march, one might expect them to march into the land and possess God's gift. Instead there were three reactions.

**First** – there was doubt. Their vision immediately focused on the city fortifications and the giants in the land. Their acknowledgement that the land truly was a land of milk and honey was almost a side note.

**Second** – there was fear. Numbers 14:1 indicates that the people cried all night over their situation. Not exactly the thankful victory march that God might have expected from an appreciative people.

**Lastly** – there was stubborn rebellion. They just sat down on the childish “I can't and you can't make me” position. They wanted to stone Caleb and Joshua for even trying to encourage them. And what was the result of all the above? They got what their actions were asking for. The land offer was taken away and they were sent into the wilderness to wander and die. Mrs. McMurray would have said they were sent out there to “think about what they'd done.”

It strikes me that those people were not really that different from us today. Every Christian has at one time been enslaved to sin. God sets us free and leads us out of that bondage by the agency of a prophet like Moses; Jesus, our Lord. And then God sends us today into the place where we are to live with the promise that He will be with us and bless our efforts to serve Him..

**First** - He sends us into our homes with directions for taking possession of them. He gives us roles and responsibilities and expects dedication to our spouse and training and discipline for our children.

**Secondly** - He sends us into our jobs, schools, and assorted contacts with the world. He tells us not to form “alliances” that will overcome us but instead to be lights and examples in the darkness. God expects us to use our tongues, our behavior in holiness, and our good works toward others to defeat Satan on that plain of battle that is just outside the walls of our home.

**Lastly** - He sends us into the fellowship of the church. He calls us to be participants, not spectators. The affairs of a nation should be handled by that nation – whether it was Israel then, America now, or the kingdom always. God calls us to partnership in volunteering, leading, serving, teaching, hospitality, cleaning, singing, greeting, visiting, inviting, writing, praying, folding, helping, and otherwise actively loving one another.

Sadly, our response is not always that different from Israel's either. Some doubt and continue to hang back without having the faith in God that His directions are for our good. We pray our thanks for freedom, safety, and material blessings and then don't use them.

Some stand unmoving in fear, not believing that the Lord already has the battle won so that it does not hinge on our own particular talents. They resemble the “faith only” folks in that they was the Lord to do absolutely everything. They're afraid to stretch, try, and grow.

And others even go so far as to stubbornly rebel. “I won't, period,” is their response. Sometimes one excuse and sometimes another is given, but basically “I can't” after awhile is understood as “I won't” and Israel's stubborn refusal to trust God and grow into His blessings is repeated four thousand years later.

Don't allow history to repeat itself in your life. God will not call nor lead you anywhere that He Himself is not already present. The victory belongs to Him, not you, so don't worry about your inadequacies. The battle is for your growth, not to showcase your talents. Go into the place where you live and possess all that the Lord has offered