



Portion:

SCRIPTURES

- Numbers 13:1-15:41
- Numbers 12:1-16
- Joushua 2:1-24
- Judges 1:20
- Mark 6:4
- Proverbs 18:21
- Exodus 32:24
- Deuteronomy 1:22-23
- Galatians 3:28
- 1 Corinthians 2:16

Title:

LIFE, LIES AND CONFUSED

SPIES!

- Spying Out Canaan
- Bad and Good Reports
- Rebellious People
- Speaking Against Moses
- Miriam and Prejudice
- Penalty Matches the Crime
- Intercession
- Be Careful What You Pray For
- Spying Out Jericho

Whose report do you believe? It would seem that the majority of reports can't be trusted. If we use Biblical standards to evaluate what percentage of information presented to "the people" is deceiving, we would come up with a staggering figure: 83.33%. Look around you today; can you trust the reports, can you believe what you are seeing and hearing? Do you fall for the same level of deception when feeding on the public narrative? When you look at

your brother, do you see the color of his skin or the color of his blood; or more importantly the color of the blood that covers his sin? Join us as we break away from the lies of bad reports and prejudice.

THEME: MAIN SCRIPTURE(S) THAT HAS INSPIRED MESSAGE

Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married, for he had married a Cushite woman. And they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?" And the LORD heard it. Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth. And suddenly the LORD said to Moses and to Aaron and Miriam, "Come out, you three, to the tent of meeting." And the three of them came out. And the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the entrance of the tent and called Aaron and Miriam, and they both came forward. And he said, "Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in a vision; I speak with him in a dream. Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house. With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them, and he departed. When the cloud removed

from over the tent, behold, Miriam was leprous, like snow. And Aaron turned toward Miriam, and behold, she was leprous. And Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord, do not punish us because we have done foolishly and have sinned. Let her not be as one dead, whose flesh is half eaten away when he comes out of his mother's womb." And Moses cried to the LORD, "O God, please heal her—please." But the LORD said to Moses, "If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut outside the camp seven days, and after that she may be brought in again." So Miriam was shut outside the camp seven days, and the people did not set out on the march till Miriam was brought in again. After that the people set out from Hazeroth, and camped in the wilderness of Paran. Numbers 12:1-16

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the people of Israel. From each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a chief among them." So Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran, according to the command of the LORD, all of them men who were heads of the people of Israel. And these were their names: From the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur; from the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori; from the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh; from the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph; from

the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Nun; from the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu; from the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi; from the tribe of Joseph (that is, from the tribe of Manasseh), Gaddi the son of Susi; from the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli; from the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael; from the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi; from the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi. These were the names of the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun Joshua. Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan and said to them, "Go up into the Negeb and go up into the hill country, and see what the land is, and whether the people who dwell in it are strong or weak, whether they are few or many, and whether the land that they dwell in is good or bad, and whether the cities that they dwell in are camps or strongholds, and whether the land is rich or poor, and whether there are trees in it or not. Be of good courage and bring some of the fruit of the land." Now the time was the season of the first ripe grapes. Numbers 13:1-20

Then all the congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night. And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had

died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! Numbers 14:1-2

OUTCOME: MAIN TAKEAWAY(S) I AM HOPING FOR PEOPLE

And Hebron was given to Caleb, as Moses had said. And he drove out from it the three sons of Anak. Judges 1:20

And Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household."
Mark 6:4

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits. Proverbs 18:21

Let's Set the Scene: Portion in a blurb

1. The Torah reading tells the tragic story of how the spies returned with a bad report about the Land of Promise and influenced the congregation of Israel to rebel against Yahweh. Thus God consigned the generation of Moses to wander in the wilderness for forty years.
2. This week's Portion begins in chapter 13. However, we are backtracking one chapter in today's study.

3. In the beginning of Chapter 12, we find Miriam and Aaron speaking against Moses.
4. They were speaking against him because of the Cushite (Ethiopian) woman he had married.
5. The implication in this statement is that he had married outside of the color of his race. That he had married someone “darker” than he.
6. Zipporah, was his first wife. We do not know at this time if she was still alive or if he married the Ethiopian woman after her passing.
7. Miriam led the charge in the groaning against Moses. And, in like fashion for Aaron, he followed. It was customary for Aaron to not stand up against stronger leadership. Remember in Exodus when he succumbed to the pressure of the Mixed Multitude when Moses was seemingly delayed returning to the camp. He gave in to the request of having an idol to worship. When he was confronted by Moses, his reply was one nothing short of silly. *“So I said to them, 'Let any who have gold take it off.' So they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf.”* If you read this verse in its proper context, it is almost a laughable matter.” (Exodus 32:24)
8. Miriam though, was looking to shame Moses for marrying a black woman. It was likely that Miriam herself was of a slightly

dark complexion, being from the Middle East. Moses' new wife was very lively even darker, being she was of Ethiopian descent.

9. God took issue with two topics:

- (a) He obviously took issue with Miriam and Aaron speaking about Moses.
- (b) He took issue with Miriam and Aaron speaking against Moses' choice of a woman to marry, one outside of the color of his race and of a different background.

10. God would not have any of it! *"He is faithful in all my house. With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them, and He departed."*

11. How are we to determine that? Consider Miriam's punishment and the description of that punishment the Bible provides.

- (a) "Miriam was leprous, (white) like snow."
- (b) Miriam's implication when pointing out that Moses' wife was Ethiopian, was not one relating just to her nationality. Bible scholars agree she was pointing out her darker complexion. God's punishment of making her "white" as snow, was one of showing her that color does not matter to Him. *But, if you are proud because you are lighter, I will make you "whiter" than what you already are! (emphasis mine)*

12. God did not take issue with Moses' decision to marry this Ethiopian woman. However, Miriam did, she made it very clear and it forced God to punish her for her racist proclamation. All humans are bearers of God's image; it matters not their color, nationality or gender!
13. In chapter 13, Moses sent out 12 spies to look into the promised land to make sure the place was luscious enough to live in.
14. It is important to note that God did not tell Moses to send out these spies. It was the people who talked Moses into sending out the spies. God simply allowed him to do so.

(a) *Then all of you came near me and said, 'Let us send men before us, that they may explore the land for us and bring us word again of the way by which we must go up and the cities into which we shall come. The thing seemed good to me, and I took twelve men from you, one man from each tribe.*

Deuteronomy 1:22-23

15. As usual, whenever a multiplicity of people are used to ascertain circumstances, a multiplicity of opinions will return. In the case of these spies, ten out the twelve returned a thumbs-down report.
- (a) It is probable that the ten were more impressed with the visual circumstances than with the God they served. Those circumstances were twisted in their minds to mean God was

incapable of delivering what He promised. That seems to be the case with us, more often than we'd agree to admit!

- (b) They had focused on the size of the enemy instead of the size of their God. Is that you today?
- (c) Are you watching the landscape of society today and doubting God's abilities?
- (d) God's revealing of His son's took place during a time of distress while living under bondage in Egypt.
- (e) It's possible that those who **did not** put the blood of the lamb on the doorpost, didn't do so because they really did not want to go against Pharaoh? (Note: they only survived the "death of the firstborns" because they WERE NOT FIRSTBORNS.)
 - (1) Can everyone see the blood of the lamb on your doorpost (figuratively speaking)?
 - (2) Maybe this is the time to dig deeper into the faith you have been given.

16. In chapter 14, the Israelites spoke against the LORD when they heard the report from the spies.

- (a) They groaned and complained again as to their whereabouts and how it would have been better if they stayed in Egypt, or maybe they should just die in the wilderness.
- (b) Be careful what you pray for!

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

1. God made everyone of us in His image!

- (a) His anger against Miriam and Aaron was not just to defend Moses.
- (b) It was most definitely against their undue bias and prejudice of racial difference and social status.

2. The Bible reminds us in Galatians 3:28 that there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

- (a) Apply this to our tumultuous times.

3. How do you find yourself responding to the issues facing this nation today?

- a. Are you getting sucked into one side or the other instead of finding out what God's word says?

4. Are your emotions steering your thinking or do you use the mind of Christ to steer your thoughts?

- (a) *For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ. 1 Corinthians 2:16*

Don't Let Life, Lies or Confused Spies tell you if you are going to make it to the promised land!

Seeking His Kingdom!

Manny Fernandez