



Geography of Salvation

Preaching the Map

A Bible Study with Stan Key

KADESH BARNEA

Numbers 13–14

I. The Moment of Truth.

Look again at the map and remember the journey that has led the Hebrews from Egypt to the border of Canaan (Kadesh Barnea). The map teaches important _____.

- A. The PURPOSE of redemption. The *Why?* question. “He _____ from there [Egypt], that he might _____ [to Canaan]....” (Deut. 6:23). The geography of salvation teaches that though a long _____ is involved in the journey, there are two great moments of _____:

First Crisis	Second Crisis
Leaving Egypt—_____	Entering Canaan—Kadesh/Jordan River
Changing our status	Changing our _____
Getting us out of Egypt	Getting Egypt out of us (appetites, thinking, behavior, worship styles, etc.).
What God does <i>for</i> us	What God does _____ us
Learning to _____ and _____ (University of the Desert)	Possessing our inheritance by living a life of trust and obedience
Justification	_____
The crucifixion and resurrection	_____

- B. The TIMING of redemption. The *When?* question. It took *three months* to travel from the Red Sea to Sinai. They camped at Sinai for perhaps *18 months*. When the cloud moved, God was announcing it was time to enter Canaan (Num. 10:11–12). It took eleven days to travel from Sinai to the southern border of Canaan at Kadesh (Deut. 1:2). Thus, it took roughly _____ to prepare the people to enter Canaan and possess their inheritance. It took Jesus about three _____ to prepare the disciples to possess their inheritance. While it would be unwise to try to standardize the time-period between justification and sanctification, we can be sure that _____ is not what God intends!
- C. The PLACE of redemption. The *Where?* question. Many in the church seem believe that the Jordan River is a metaphor of death and Canaan is a metaphor of heaven. This makes the desert wanderings a picture of the _____. Though many hymns and literature (*Pilgrim’s Progress*) promote this type of thinking, I find nothing in the Bible that indicates we must wait until we die to enter the abundant life! Romans 8 (not 7) should be considered normative.
- D. The WHAT of redemption. The *What?* question. The author of Hebrews 3:7–4:13 uses Numbers 13–14 as his text for a gospel sermon. His message is addressed to Christians who have begun their journey with Christ, urging them to enter into the “Sabbath rest” that God has prepared for them. Canaan living is now. It is a place of _____ and _____. Though there are battles

to fight, crops to plant, and cities to build, his yoke is easy and his burden is light (Matt. 11:28–30). In Canaan, we _____ and walk in _____.

Kadesh is that place in our journey when God brings us to the _____. Will I enter in? Or will I live in spiritual mediocrity, doing laps in the desert forever? I must choose.

*Once to every man and nation, comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of truth with falsehood, for the good or evil side;
Some great cause, some great decision, offering each the bloom or blight,
And the choice goes by forever, 'twixt that darkness and that light.
(James Russell Lowell, 1845)*

II. What happened at Kadesh-Barnea?

- A. Twelve spies are chosen and sent on a fact-finding mission to explore the land of Canaan. “Go up and see what the land is like...” (Num. 13:17–20). Among them are _____ from the tribe of Ephraim and _____ from Judah (Num. 13:1–16).
- B. The spies return with “a single cluster of grapes” (Num. 13:23, 27). It’s true! The land is more wonderful than we imagined! *But* there are _____ living on our inheritance! They are big and strong and mean and live in fortified cities (Num. 13:27–29).
- *The majority report* (10 spies): “We _____ to go up against the people for they are stronger than we are... We seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers and so we seemed to them.” (Num. 13:31–33)
 - *The minority report* (Caleb and Joshua): “Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we _____ to overcome it...” (Num. 13:30)
- C. The results of a split vote on the committee.
- *For the congregation.* They _____. “Let’s choose a leader and go back to Egypt” (Num. 14:1–4, 10).
 - *For God.* “How long will they not believe in me, in spite of all the signs I have done? I will strike them with the pestilence and _____ them” (Num. 14:11–12).
 - *For Moses and Aaron.* They plead with the people not to rebel against God. (Num. 14:5–9). When this fails, Moses _____ in prayer: “Please to your steadfast love...” (Num. 14:13–19).
- D. Although God forgave their sin (Num. 14:20), the _____ of their choice would remain with them all their lives. God sends them back toward the Red Sea. They will wander in circles for 40 years until the entire generation is gone (Num. 14:20–35). Only Joshua and Caleb are allowed to enter Canaan.

III. Four reasons why people fail in their moment of truth.

A. _____.

“We can’t go over there. There are giants and we might get hurt!” When we have a _____ mentality, we can only see the problems, not the solution. We can only think of *our* resources, not God’s. We can only focus on the present cost, not the future blessing. Oswald Chambers said: “The remarkable thing about fearing God is that when you fear God you fear nothing else, whereas if you do not fear God you fear everything else.” (See Luke 12:4–5).

B. _____.

The vote on the committee was 10–2. Is that how the will of God is determined? The Kingdom of God is not a democracy! God’s heroes are always those willing to stand alone (Noah, Elijah, Luther, Wilberforce, Bonhoeffer). “Am I seeking the approval of _____ or of _____? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ” (Gal. 1:10). “The gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life and those who find it are _____” (Matt. 7:13–14).

C. _____.

When the going gets rough in the Land of In-between, some want to choose a new leader and go back to Egypt (Num. 14:3–4). The appetite for leeks and onions is sometimes stronger than the appetite for milk and honey. The result is spiritual _____. This makes us unstable in all our ways (James 1:8) and ensures that we will do laps in the desert forever. Kierkegaard said, “Purity of heart is to _____.” Sanctification is that work of grace when God gives us an undivided heart (Ps. 86:11).

D. _____.

The Hebrews had enough faith to _____ of Egypt, but they didn’t have enough faith to _____ to Canaan. When God looks at your life, does he ask, “How long will they not believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them?” (Num. 14:11). “Without faith it is impossible to please God” (Heb. 11:6).

IV. Four commands to those stuck in the desert of spiritual mediocrity (Heb. 3:7–4:13).

The book of Hebrews gives us a gospel sermon based on Numbers 13–14. It is addressed to believers, _____ them against the danger of missing the opportunity to enter the “land of promise.” Don’t allow what happened to them to happen to *you*!

A. Do not _____ your heart (Heb. 3:7–8, 12, 15; 4:7). Heart disease (spiritual arteriosclerosis) is a real possibility for the redeemed. It works silently, especially the older we get!

Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your heart as they did in the rebellion... (Heb. 3: 15)

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you and evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God... (Heb. 3:12)

B. Let us _____ (Heb. 4:1). Sanctified trembling is a good thing. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 9:10).

Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it... (Heb. 4:1)

C. Let us _____ (Heb. 3:12, 19; 4:3). We enter the abundant life in the same way we exited the life of sin: by grace through faith. The teaching that we are justified by faith but sanctified by works is a heresy.

So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief... (Heb. 3:19)

For we who have believed enter that rest... (Heb. 4:3)

- D. Let us _____ (Heb. 4:11). Striving to rest is a gospel oxymoron that invites us to live in the paradox, in the tension of two realities at the same time: salvation is totally God's work but I must repent and believe (this is harder than you think!).

Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience... (Heb. 4:11)

For many, the *big question* is this: What happens to those who _____?
Where do they go when they die?

TABLE TALK

1. Define the "normal Christian life."
2. Do you think of Canaan as heaven or as a metaphor of the victorious Christian life? Why is the answer to this question so important?
3. How does your theology explain people who have enough faith to get out of Egypt but not enough to get into Canaan? What happens to them when they die?
4. Has God ever brought you to a place like Kadesh Barnea? How did you respond at your "moment of truth"? What have you learned?
5. Which one of the four reasons that caused the Hebrews to turn back (fear, popular opinion, double-mindedness, or unbelief) represents your greatest struggle?

I'm Pressing on the Upward Way

By Johnson Oatman, Jr., 1898 (1856–1922)

*I'm pressing on the upward way,
New heights I'm gaining every day;
Still praying as I onward bound,
"Lord, plant my feet on higher ground."*

Refrain:

Lord, lift me up, and let me stand
By faith on Canaan's tableland;
A higher plane than I have found,
Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.

*My heart has no desire to stay
Where doubts arise and fears dismay;
Though some may dwell where these abound,
My prayer, my aim, is higher ground.*

*I want to live above the world,
Though Satan's darts at me are hurled;
For faith has caught the joyful sound,
The song of saints on higher ground.*

*I want to scale the utmost height
And catch a gleam of glory bright;
But still I'll pray till rest I've found,
"Lord, lead me on to higher ground."*