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**Sunday School Lesson**

February 10, 1946

A. D. Cann

**A PEOPLE DISCIPLINED**

Lesson: Numbers 14:11-24

Golden Text: "Whom the Lord loveth he reproveth: even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."—Proverbs 3:12.

**COMMENTS ON THE LESSON**

The lesson for today is taken from the book of Numbers. It is given this name because it records the two numberings of Israel, the one in the second year of their journeyings (1-4), the other on the border of Canaan, 38 years afterwards (24). The chapter preceding the lesson records the expedition of the spies (13-14). The printed portion today records the dismal results of the refusal of the Israelites to enter Canaan after the report of the twelve spies was made.

I. PROVOCATION: Numbers 14:11: **And the Lord said unto Moses, how long will this people provoke me?**—Israel's unbelief provoked God to anger. In spite of all the signs God had given them they still accepted the report of the ten spies which declared the inability of Israel to enter the promised land.

12. **I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they.** This was no doubt the greatest test that ever came to Moses to try his loyalty. If he accepted the proposition it would sort of make him a second Abraham. That is he would be an ancestor of the whole Hebrew people. Moses reaction shows his supreme interest in the public good.

II. INTERCESSION 13: **And Moses said unto the Lord, then the Egyptians will hear it**—As Moses sees it God's honor is at stake among the Egyptians.

14. **And they will tell it to the inhabitants of the land: for they have heard that thou Lord art among this people**—God had identified himself with the Israelites and their failure would reproach him among the Canaanites.

15. **Now if thou shalt kill all this people**—This verse explains the pestilence mentioned in verse 12. See 14:37.

16. **The Lord was not able to bring this people into the land**—"The prestige of Jehovah among the nations was a concern of Moses as it was of the later prophets. These nations would not understand that God had rejected the Israelites because of sin, but would attribute their annihilation to his lack of power." Arnold's Commentary.

17. **Let the power of my Lord be great**—It requires moral power to shew mercy.

18. **The Lord is long-suffering**—Moses emphasizes God's great prerogatives, the most divine of which is shewing mercy and forgiving sin.

19. **As thou hast forgiven**—God's mercy in the past encourages him for the present.

III. PARDON 20: **I have pardoned according to thy word**—Here is the answer to Moses intercession.

21. **All the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord**—All the world will know how God hates sin and has provided a remedy for it.

22. **Have tempted me now these ten times**—We tempt or try God when we distrust him. Ten symbolizes completeness or full number.

IV. PUNISHMENT 23: **Surely they shall not see the land which I swore unto their fathers**—Israel's attitude toward God's promises shewed their unfitness for the promised land even if God did let them go in.

V. PRESERVATION 24: **But my servant Caleb, because he hath another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully**—"Not only a bold, generous, courageous, noble, and heroic spirit; but the spirit and influence of the God of heaven thus raised him above human iniquitous and earthly fears, therefore he followed God fully. God shewed him the way he was to take, and the line of conduct he was to pursue, and he filled up this line, and in all things followed the will of his Maker. How many are retarded in their course, and fall short of the blessings of the gospel, through magnifying the number and strength of their adversaries, their own weakness and the difficulties of the way."—Dr. A. Clarke.

**QUESTIONS AND THEMES FOR DISCUSSION**

1. Why was God provoked with the Israelites?
2. Why would God's proposition appeal to a man less loyal than Moses?
3. Moses is said to be the world's greatest intercessor. (Christ alone excluded. Explain.)
4. Give reasons why God pardoned Israel.
5. Compare Caleb and Joshua with the ten other spies and shew the analogy between the wilderness and Canaan in Christian experience.

February 17, 1946

**TRUE TO A GREAT HERITAGE**

Lesson: Deuteronomy 4:1: 32-40

Golden Text: "He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered." Psalm 114:4.

**COMMENTS ON THE LESSON**

The book of Deuteronomy is more or less a summary of the history and laws of the two preceding books. This is essential since the former generation has passed away and a new one is in the making. In the chapters from which the lesson is taken Moses reminds the younger generation of God's mercy to their fathers and exhorts them not to forget the commandments delivered them.

I. REVELATION, Deut. 4:1: **Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes, and unto the judgments**—The statutes referred to the rights and ceremonies of religion, while judgments had respect to matters of civil right and wrong. Israel was to be teachable, obedient and dependent upon God.

II. HISTORY, Deut. 4:32: **Days that are past**—No nation had experienced God's benevolence like Israel.

33. **Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire**—This no doubt has reference to God speaking out of the midst of the fire at Mount Sinai.

34. **Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation**—"It was indeed a most extraordinary thing that a nation consisting of upwards of 600,000 men besides women and children, should, without striking a blow, be brought out of midst of so powerful a nation as Egypt." This deliverance together with God's care and protection through the desert could never be forgotten. **Temptations**—"The mighty miracles which God wrought to try the faith and prove the obedience of the children." **Signs**—"Parti-

cularly the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire, signs of God's continual presence. **War**—Hostile engagements such as those with the Amalekites, the Amorites, and the Bashanites, in which the power of God was manifest rather than the power of man." **Great terrors**—Fear and consternation such as were produced by the ten plagues." Dr. A. Clarke.

35. **The Lord he is God**: "A statement of a pure monotheism, by which the reality of the gods of other nations is denied." Arnold Commentary.

36. **Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee**—Moses emphasizes the supernatural revelation given to Israel and the unusual way in which it was given.

37. **He loved thy fathers**—"The purpose of God was wholly beneficent, without partiality to Israel except as the responsible agent of God to mankind, and without prejudice against the Canaanites except as usurpers and stumbling blocks in the paths of the world's welfare." H. C. Moore.

38. **To drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou art**—Because of their minority, lack of equipment, etc., nothing but divine aid could enable them to dispossess the strong tribes of Canaan. **To give thee their land for an inheritance**—"To be theirs as if they inherited it from their fathers."

III. DOCTRINE, 39—**The Lord is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else**—Another reminder to be loyal to Jehovah.

IV. DUTY, 40: **Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments**—Jesus Christ has come to save us, by implanting that new life, that loving and obedient spirit, which enables us to keep the commandments.

**QUESTIONS AND THEMES FOR DISCUSSION**

1. Why is it essential for Moses to give a summary of the law?
2. What four elements make up Israel's inheritance in our lesson today?
3. Against what odds, and by what means did God take him a nation?
4. Explain—"The purpose of God was wholly beneficent."
5. Through what means are we enabled to keep God's commandments?

**MINUTE MEDITATIONS**

"The Lord shall guide thee continually."

What a blessed thought! Confronted with the uncertainties of a future hidden from view, we may "tread safely into the unknown" with the assurance that One who knows the way leads on.

The night may be dark, but He will guide us to the light. The road may be rough, but He will give strength and comfort. The way may be long, but He will impart blessing through an unailing companionship.

"Continually" is the promise. By day and by night. In sickness and health. Through hardship and prosperity. In the springtime of youth or the winter of old age. Perpetual guidance is assured us, so that we may face our tomorrows with a song of confidence

"Lord, I would clasp Thy hand in mine,  
Nor ever murmur or repine;  
Content, whatever lot I see,  
Since 'tis God's hand that leadeth me."