

**Theme: Challenges for Heights**

**Text: Numbers 14:1-12**

**Introduction:**

It is important as Christians we get the understanding that our challenges are not meant to destroy us but to build and to set us for victory and the attainment of God's prophetic promises.

**Background of Text**

You will realize from the context of the text we've just read that God upon his own initiatives, volitions, convictions, and sovereign. And He being moved and motivated by the passion of love, justice, and fairness, and of course the raging cry of a suffering and dying people, counselled himself to deliver them.

(Just like when we pray and cry to Him He moves swiftly with great might on our behalf)

By His wisdom and the strength of His might, He did something that had never been done in history. He moved with great terror and vengeance against the Egyptians and their pharaohs with only two things in mind, to liberate His people and to bring them into a good land He had prepared for them! (God always does a complete work).

(May I suggest to you that, when God takes you out, He will bring you in)

The Lord liberated His people and brought them through many difficulties! But, at the banks of Jordan, the very grounds next to the promise, and right at the limits and verge of the of entering the promised land, a challenge arose. They received bad news that turned their rejoicing into mourning

(Have you been there before? The wedding was set for next week, then the man says, I am no longer interested! ....Many of us have experienced the same, right when we thought, thank God, at last I have made it, then the Devil comes showing his ugly head. A challenge surfaces!!)

The Israelites received a bad report ! **Numbers 13:27 – 33 (Read)**

**--the land is good, but!!** – the woman is good but, the man is nice but...: Beware of BUT, and don't throw the **good** away with the **but**. Treat the good and the but as you would the **The Baby and the Bath water..** Appreciate the **good**, but work on the **but**

**Lesson 1 Good things come with uncertainties (the but), and there is no easy way to the pearl.**

(whether it is freedom, successful life, wealth, excellence in your profession, a university degree, or getting a wife/husband – you've got to battle and overcome some challenges, discouragements).

Why?

1. Bad report is bound to come in any and every form at every level, even as a news of discouragement. (**My own experience when I wanted to enrol in a Ghanaian University:** (a) Others who had gone ahead of me and attempted but failed told me it was simply impossible. (b) Then when I got one, the same people came again with question of accreditation. (c) Then school fees ...
2. Apart from Bad report from others, you yourself may not seem to qualify in your assessment of yourself for whatever God wants you to do and become. (**I will never forget the fright of my calling and the awareness of my personal weaknesses**

**TN: Remember, Hope deferred makes the heart sick: ( Prov. ) So the Israelites decided to elect another leader who will lead them back to Egypt:**

**Lesson 2: Our Challenges have the tendencies to cause us to give up on God, question His integrity and to become sinicle about His ability and faithfulness.**

And we ask question like, if there is God and why? He may as well ask the same question the other way round: If there is God why not?

This was the most tragic move: They rejected God and the leaders God has given to them. They ignored Moses and Aaron who have been with them all this while, and chose to elect new leaders. At least Aaron has always been their man preparing golden calf for them, yet they dismissed him. This is sheer ungrateful .

(But don't worry when people reject you because you follow God)

**TN** So, in vrs.11 & 12, God says. The people have rejected and despised him, and so He will strike. Thank God for Moses' intercession

**Lessons 3 (vrs 6,7) . Every challenge presents you with an unequal opportunity to birth your dreams, depending on what you make of it.**

- Caleb and Joshua could not wait to see and dwell in this place which would change their lot, so despite the many other voices, they rose and spoke differently concerning the same land they all went to spy out. (**I normally hear a great number of our African brothers and sisters complaining about how tough Britain is, but I choose to see and to meet the few who have even become millions in the same country**)
- Caleb and Joshua were therefore motivated and driven by the perspective and interpretation of the land (their challenges), why the rest were driven and frightened away, and even frozen by the same land. (**My brother left me in peaceful Ghana, but returned to a war ravaged Liberia, because he claimed Ghana was too difficult to support life. Come to think of it, his decision was more of running from frying pan to fire!**) The Israelites chose to return to the same land that devoured them and their children returning their backs on Canaan!!

**Lessons 4 If only we'll consider well, we will realize that the opportunities in our challenges far surpass our greatest challenges. The only thing is we don't know!**

Analogy: A pregnant woman – Out of nine month birth pangs, brings another life into the world, make a man a father, another mother, grand parents, honor to the father, joy to others, husband or wife to someone, - the child would become a leader and influence the world ... all this just for a prize of nine months endurance.

**NB: Israel, a people without a country were going to have one - their children and posterity. Above all freedom and liberty which they had never known all their lives in Egypt...yet they chose to fear the prize and lost the opportunities and privileges.**

**Lessons 5: The greatest challenge therefore in life is how to overcome our immediate challenge toward our opportunity or dreams. Because, every challenge leads us closer to the opportunity and promise!!**

- Those who did not make it to Canaan died at the banks of Jordan, a stone throw away from their eternal inheritance. (Vr. 26--)

**TN: What to do in order to ride on the wings of your challenge to great heights:**

- a. Vr. 7 See things from the perspective of God. Or see things from the point of view of God - the way God would see the. Don't rely on your own feelings and emotions or physical strength
- b. Vr. 8 Always endeavour to know God's will concerning the thing. If He promised you, then it means He would move mountains just to help you obtain the promise.
- c. Vr. 9 Never become a rebel or join those who rebel against God's purpose because of their own lack of understanding, fear and insecurities.
- d. Vr. 10 Remember it is easy to throw stones (criticize) – so people (even the greater number of them including your family) will criticize you. But don't be deceived by numbers and the logic and intensity of their criticisms.
- e. Vrs 22 – 23, Remember the past good God, the God of your little valleys remains your good God of your present and future great challenges.
- f. Vr. 24. God's approval and victory in every challenged is gladly obtained by those who choose to be different by following Him fully!