**Numbers 13-16**

Exploring Canaan

**13**The Lord said to Moses, **2**“Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders.”

**3**So at the Lord’s command Moses sent them out from the Desert of Paran. All of them were leaders of the Israelites. **4**These are their names:

from the tribe of Reuben, Shammua son of Zakkur;

**5**from the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat son of Hori;

**6**from the tribe of Judah, Caleb son of Jephunneh;

**7**from the tribe of Issachar, Igal son of Joseph;

**8**from the tribe of Ephraim (a tribe of Joseph), Hoshea son of Nun;

**9**from the tribe of Benjamin, Palti son of Raphu;

**10**from the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel son of Sodi;

**11**from the tribe of Manasseh (a tribe of Joseph), Gaddi son of Susi;

**12**from the tribe of Dan, Ammiel son of Gemalli;

**13**from the tribe of Asher, Sethur son of Michael;

**14**from the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi son of Vophsi;

**15**from the tribe of Gad, Geuel son of Maki.

**16**These are the names of the men Moses sent to explore the land. (Moses gave Hoshea son of Nun the name Joshua.)

**17**When Moses sent them to explore Canaan, he said, “Go up through the Negev and on into the hill country. **18**See what the land is like and whether the people who live there are strong or weak, few or many.**19**What kind of land do they live in? Is it good or bad? What kind of towns do they live in? Are they unwalled or fortified? **20**How is the soil? Is it fertile or poor? Are there trees in it or not? Do your best to bring back some of the fruit of the land.” (It was the season for the first ripe grapes.)

**21**So they went up and explored the land from the Desert of Zin as far as Rehob, toward Lebo Hamath. **22**They went up through the Negev and came to Hebron, where Ahiman, Sheshai and Talmai, the descendants of Anak, lived. (Hebron had been built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) **23**When they reached the Valley of Eshkol, they cut off a branch bearing a single cluster of grapes. Two of them carried it on a pole between them, along with some pomegranates and figs. **24**That place was called the Valley of Eshkol because of the cluster of grapes the Israelites cut off there. **25**At the end of forty days they returned from exploring the land.

Report on the Exploration

**26**They came back to Moses and Aaron and the whole Israelite community at Kadesh in the Desert of Paran. There they reported to them and to the whole assembly and showed them the fruit of the land. **27**They gave Moses this account: “We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. **28**But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there. **29**The Amalekites live in the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live near the sea and along the Jordan.”

**30**Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, “We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.”

**31**But the men who had gone up with him said, “We can’t attack those people; they are stronger than we are.” **32**And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, “The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. **33**We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.”

The People Rebel

**14**That night all the members of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. **2**All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, “If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this wilderness! **3**Why is the Lord bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn’t it be better for us to go back to Egypt?” **4**And they said to each other, “We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt.”

**5**Then Moses and Aaron fell facedown in front of the whole Israelite assembly gathered there. **6**Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes **7**and said to the entire Israelite assembly, “The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. **8**If the Lord is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. **9**Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will devour them. Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them.”

**10**But the whole assembly talked about stoning them. Then the glory of the Lord appeared at the tent of meeting to all the Israelites. **11**The Lord said to Moses, “How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the signs I have performed among them? **12**I will strike them down with a plague and destroy them, but I will make you into a nation greater and stronger than they.”

**13**Moses said to the Lord, “Then the Egyptians will hear about it! By your power you brought these people up from among them. **14**And they will tell the inhabitants of this land about it. They have already heard that you, Lord, are with these people and that you, Lord, have been seen face to face, that your cloud stays over them, and that you go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. **15**If you put all these people to death, leaving none alive, the nations who have heard this report about you will say, **16**‘The Lord was not able to bring these people into the land he promised them on oath, so he slaughtered them in the wilderness.’

**17**“Now may the Lord’s strength be displayed, just as you have declared: **18**‘The Lord is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.’**19**In accordance with your great love, forgive the sin of these people, just as you have pardoned them from the time they left Egypt until now.”

**20**The Lord replied, “I have forgiven them, as you asked.**21**Nevertheless, as surely as I live and as surely as the glory of the Lord fills the whole earth, **22**not one of those who saw my glory and the signs I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness but who disobeyed me and tested me ten times - **23**not one of them will ever see the land I promised on oath to their ancestors. No one who has treated me with contempt will ever see it. **24**But because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it. **25**Since the Amalekites and the Canaanites are living in the valleys, turn back tomorrow and set out toward the desert along the route to the Red Sea.”

**26**The Lord said to Moses and Aaron: **27**“How long will this wicked community grumble against me? I have heard the complaints of these grumbling Israelites. **28**So tell them, ‘As surely as I live, declares the Lord, I will do to you the very thing I heard you say: **29**In this wilderness your bodies will fall - every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me.**30**Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun. **31**As for your children that you said would be taken as plunder, I will bring them in to enjoy the land you have rejected. **32**But as for you, your bodies will fall in this wilderness. **33**Your children will be shepherds here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness, until the last of your bodies lies in the wilderness. **34**For forty years—one year for each of the forty days you explored the land—you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you.’ **35**I, the Lord, have spoken, and I will surely do these things to this whole wicked community, which has banded together against me. They will meet their end in this wilderness; here they will die.”

**36**So the men Moses had sent to explore the land, who returned and made the whole community grumble against him by spreading a bad report about it -  **37**these men who were responsible for spreading the bad report about the land were struck down and died of a plague before the Lord. **38**Of the men who went to explore the land, only Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh survived.

**39**When Moses reported this to all the Israelites, they mourned bitterly.**40**Early the next morning they set out for the highest point in the hill country, saying, “Now we are ready to go up to the land the Lord promised. Surely we have sinned!”

**41**But Moses said, “Why are you disobeying the Lord’s command? This will not succeed! **42**Do not go up, because the Lord is not with you. You will be defeated by your enemies, **43**for the Amalekites and the Canaanites will face you there. Because you have turned away from the Lord, he will not be with you and you will fall by the sword.”

**44**Nevertheless, in their presumption they went up toward the highest point in the hill country, though neither Moses nor the ark of the Lord’s covenant moved from the camp. **45**Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down and attacked them and beat them down all the way to Hormah.

Supplementary Offerings

**15**The Lord said to Moses, **2**“Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘After you enter the land I am giving you as a home **3**and you present to the Lord food offerings from the herd or the flock, as an aroma pleasing to the Lord - whether burnt offerings or sacrifices, for special vows or freewill offerings or festival offerings -  **4**then the person who brings an offering shall present to the Lord a grain offering of a tenth of an ephah of the finest flour mixed with a quarter of a hin of olive oil. **5**With each lamb for the burnt offering or the sacrifice, prepare a quarter of a hin of wine as a drink offering.

**6**“‘With a ram prepare a grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah of the finest flour mixed with a third of a hin of olive oil, **7**and a third of a hin of wine as a drink offering. Offer it as an aroma pleasing to the Lord.

**8**“‘When you prepare a young bull as a burnt offering or sacrifice, for a special vow or a fellowship offering to the Lord, **9**bring with the bull a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of the finest flour mixed with half a hin of olive oil, **10**and also bring half a hin of wine as a drink offering. This will be a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the Lord. **11**Each bull or ram, each lamb or young goat, is to be prepared in this manner. **12**Do this for each one, for as many as you prepare.

**13**“‘Everyone who is native-born must do these things in this way when they present a food offering as an aroma pleasing to the Lord. **14**For the generations to come, whenever a foreigner or anyone else living among you presents a food offering as an aroma pleasing to the Lord, they must do exactly as you do. **15**The community is to have the same rules for you and for the foreigner residing among you; this is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. You and the foreigner shall be the same before the Lord: **16**The same laws and regulations will apply both to you and to the foreigner residing among you.’”

**17**The Lord said to Moses, **18**“Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘When you enter the land to which I am taking you **19**and you eat the food of the land, present a portion as an offering to the Lord. **20**Present a loaf from the first of your ground meal and present it as an offering from the threshing floor. **21**Throughout the generations to come you are to give this offering to the Lord from the first of your ground meal.

Offerings for Unintentional Sins

**22**“‘Now if you as a community unintentionally fail to keep any of these commands the Lord gave Moses - **23**any of the Lord’s commands to you through him, from the day the Lord gave them and continuing through the generations to come - **24**and if this is done unintentionally without the community being aware of it, then the whole community is to offer a young bull for a burnt offering as an aroma pleasing to the Lord, along with its prescribed grain offering and drink offering, and a male goat for a sin offering. **25**The priest is to make atonement for the whole Israelite community, and they will be forgiven, for it was not intentional and they have presented to the Lord for their wrong a food offering and a sin offering. **26**The whole Israelite community and the foreigners residing among them will be forgiven, because all the people were involved in the unintentional wrong.

**27**“‘But if just one person sins unintentionally, that person must bring a year-old female goat for a sin offering. **28**The priest is to make atonement before the Lord for the one who erred by sinning unintentionally, and when atonement has been made, that person will be forgiven. **29**One and the same law applies to everyone who sins unintentionally, whether a native-born Israelite or a foreigner residing among you.

**30**“‘But anyone who sins defiantly, whether native-born or foreigner, blasphemes the Lord and must be cut off from the people of Israel. **31**Because they have despised the Lord’s word and broken his commands, they must surely be cut off; their guilt remains on them.’”

The Sabbath-Breaker Put to Death

**32**While the Israelites were in the wilderness, a man was found gathering wood on the Sabbath day. **33**Those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and Aaron and the whole assembly, **34**and they kept him in custody, because it was not clear what should be done to him. **35**Then the Lord said to Moses, “The man must die. The whole assembly must stone him outside the camp.” **36**So the assembly took him outside the camp and stoned him to death, as the Lord commanded Moses.

Tassels on Garments

**37**The Lord said to Moses, **38**“Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘Throughout the generations to come you are to make tassels on the corners of your garments, with a blue cord on each tassel. **39**You will have these tassels to look at and so you will remember all the commands of the Lord, that you may obey them and not prostitute yourselves by chasing after the lusts of your own hearts and eyes.**40**Then you will remember to obey all my commands and will be consecrated to your God. **41**I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt to be your God. I am the Lord your God.’”

Korah, Dathan and Abiram

**16**Korah son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and certain Reubenites - Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth - became insolent **2**and rose up against Moses. With them were 250 Israelite men, well-known community leaders who had been appointed members of the council. **3**They came as a group to oppose Moses and Aaron and said to them, “You have gone too far! The whole community is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is with them. Why then do you set yourselves above the Lord’s assembly?”

**4**When Moses heard this, he fell facedown. **5**Then he said to Korah and all his followers: “In the morning the Lord will show who belongs to him and who is holy, and he will have that person come near him. The man he chooses he will cause to come near him. **6**You, Korah, and all your followers are to do this: Take censers **7**and tomorrow put burning coals and incense in them before the Lord. The man the Lord chooses will be the one who is holy. You Levites have gone too far!”

**8**Moses also said to Korah, “Now listen, you Levites! **9**Isn’t it enough for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the rest of the Israelite community and brought you near himself to do the work at the Lord’s tabernacle and to stand before the community and minister to them? **10**He has brought you and all your fellow Levites near himself, but now you are trying to get the priesthood too. **11**It is against the Lord that you and all your followers have banded together. Who is Aaron that you should grumble against him?”

**12**Then Moses summoned Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab. But they said, “We will not come! **13**Isn’t it enough that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey to kill us in the wilderness? And now you also want to lord it over us! **14**Moreover, you haven’t brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey or given us an inheritance of fields and vineyards. Do you want to treat these men like slaves? No, we will not come!”

**15**Then Moses became very angry and said to the Lord, “Do not accept their offering. I have not taken so much as a donkey from them, nor have I wronged any of them.”

**16**Moses said to Korah, “You and all your followers are to appear before the Lord tomorrow - you and they and Aaron. **17**Each man is to take his censer and put incense in it - 250 censers in all - and present it before the Lord. You and Aaron are to present your censers also.” **18**So each of them took his censer, put burning coals and incense in it, and stood with Moses and Aaron at the entrance to the tent of meeting. **19**When Korah had gathered all his followers in opposition to them at the entrance to the tent of meeting, the glory of the Lord appeared to the entire assembly. **20**The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, **21**“Separate yourselves from this assembly so I can put an end to them at once.”

**22**But Moses and Aaron fell facedown and cried out, “O God, the God who gives breath to all living things, will you be angry with the entire assembly when only one man sins?”

**23**Then the Lord said to Moses, **24**“Say to the assembly, ‘Move away from the tents of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.’”

**25**Moses got up and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel followed him. **26**He warned the assembly, “Move back from the tents of these wicked men! Do not touch anything belonging to them, or you will be swept away because of all their sins.” **27**So they moved away from the tents of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. Dathan and Abiram had come out and were standing with their wives, children and little ones at the entrances to their tents.

**28**Then Moses said, “This is how you will know that the Lord has sent me to do all these things and that it was not my idea: **29**If these men die a natural death and suffer the fate of all mankind, then the Lord has not sent me. **30**But if the Lord brings about something totally new, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them, with everything that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the realm of the dead, then you will know that these men have treated the Lord with contempt.”

**31**As soon as he finished saying all this, the ground under them split apart **32**and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and their households, and all those associated with Korah, together with their possessions. **33**They went down alive into the realm of the dead, with everything they owned; the earth closed over them, and they perished and were gone from the community. **34**At their cries, all the Israelites around them fled, shouting, “The earth is going to swallow us too!”

**35**And fire came out from the Lord and consumed the 250 men who were offering the incense.

**36**The Lord said to Moses, **37**“Tell Eleazar son of Aaron, the priest, to remove the censers from the charred remains and scatter the coals some distance away, for the censers are holy - **38**the censers of the men who sinned at the cost of their lives. Hammer the censers into sheets to overlay the altar, for they were presented before the Lord and have become holy. Let them be a sign to the Israelites.”

**39**So Eleazar the priest collected the bronze censers brought by those who had been burned to death, and he had them hammered out to overlay the altar, **40**as the Lord directed him through Moses. This was to remind the Israelites that no one except a descendant of Aaron should come to burn incense before the Lord, or he would become like Korah and his followers.

**41**The next day the whole Israelite community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. “You have killed the Lord’s people,” they said.

**42**But when the assembly gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron and turned toward the tent of meeting, suddenly the cloud covered it and the glory of the Lord appeared. **43**Then Moses and Aaron went to the front of the tent of meeting, **44**and the Lord said to Moses, **45**“Get away from this assembly so I can put an end to them at once.” And they fell facedown.

**46**Then Moses said to Aaron, “Take your censer and put incense in it, along with burning coals from the altar, and hurry to the assembly to make atonement for them. Wrath has come out from the Lord; the plague has started.” **47**So Aaron did as Moses said, and ran into the midst of the assembly. The plague had already started among the people, but Aaron offered the incense and made atonement for them.**48**He stood between the living and the dead, and the plague stopped.**49**But 14,700 people died from the plague, in addition to those who had died because of Korah. **50**Then Aaron returned to Moses at the entrance to the tent of meeting, for the plague had stopped.[[l](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Numbers+13-16&version=NIV#fen-NIV-4245l)]