

Explore the Promised Land  
Numbers 13:1-14:25  
Key Verse: 14:24

"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."

This year of 2012 is the beginning of the next 50 years of UBF. This year may have specific significance in each of our lives. We should thank God for guiding us this far and think about the promised land he is pointing to. I'd like to think with all of you about the promised land God gave us in two aspects. First is the world campus mission, and the second is the spiritual growth. May God open our eyes to see the promised land and may He give us the faith and spirit of Joshua and Caleb.

God commands exploration of Canaan (13:1-25)

The Book of Numbers begins with numbering the Israelites who could go to war at Mt. Sinai a year and a month after the Exodus. During that time, the Israelites made a covenant with God and became a special people who had fellowship with God at the Tent of Meeting. In spite of their sin of idolatry, God forgave them. The land God was going to give the Israelites was not an unoccupied paradise prepared for them. They had to fight with the occupants and conquer them to possess the land. God led them to the Desert of Paran where they could see the promised land. Then God commanded through Moses, "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." God wants us to do everything by faith, but he doesn't want us to do things blindly not knowing the situation and without strategy and tactics. In fact, the Bible records wars in which God commanded his servants to explore the battle fields, instructed strategies and tactics, whereby they won victories by obeying God's instructions. Exploring the enemy camp is a basic step before a military operation. Sun Bin's Art of War, a Chinese classic military manual, states, "If you know others and know yourself, you will not be imperiled in a hundred battles; if you do not know others but know yourself, you win one and lose one; if you do not know others and do not know yourself, you will lose in every single battle." There were two things Sun Bin did not know; the first is that "the battle belongs to the Lord" (1Sa 17:47), the second is that one can know himself and others when he has spiritual eyes.

God repeatedly called the land of Canaan "the land I am giving to the Israelites" or "the land I promised them on oath" (13:2, 14:16, 23, 30, 15:2). God wanted to encourage the Israelites by helping them to know the beauty of the land, be thankful to God, and be filled with desire to conquer and possess the land. God's command to explore the land reminds us of his command to Abraham, "Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever....Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you." (Ge 13:14-17) Think about the verbs in these verses--"Look around," "go," "walk through the land."

God wants us to look at the land he gives us and explore it. He wants us to walk through the land by faith and possess it in our hearts. The land is full of idol-worshipping enemies and corrupt secular cultures. God wants to bring about His kingdom through our conquest and possession of the land. We don't want war. Spiritually, however, the world is in war and the war will continue until our Lord's Second Coming. What is the promised land for us to conquer? It is the campuses we are ministering to. Our homes and work places are also the land God has given to us. For the past 50 years, God has blessed UBF to send out 1,800 missionaries to 91 countries. But 64% of 91 countries are in the pioneering stage by one chapter. Before us there are 140 countries that are waiting for UBF missionaries. In the United States and Germany where the majority of UBF coworkers are working, we have reached only one quarter of the major campuses. God wants us to lift up our eyes and look at the promised land and continue the conquest for the coming 50 years.

Internally the promised land we should look at and conquer is spiritual maturity. God's will for us is to restore us in the image of Christ (Ro 8:28-29). For this purpose, God works in all things in our lives. Christ's image is formed through continuous battle with our old self, that is, the sinful nature. When our old self dies through obedience to God, we put on the new self and become spiritual men and women. We should check where we are in this spiritual campaign. We should press on like Apostle Paul to be united with Christ by following Christ's example in his death and resurrection (Php 3:10-12). To put off our old self, it often requires spiritual battle to the point of shedding our blood. At the moment when our old self dies, we experience the power of the resurrection and receive freedom in Christ. One leader I served came to me at night and said, "I made decisions to quit my habit of watching porno so

many times, but I can't stop it." The Holy Spirit gave us the words from Ephesians 4:22-24, "You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." He could not overcome temptations because he was still in his old self that loved lust. That night, he sincerely repented of his love for lust more than for God and gave his heart to God. From that time on, he was freed from the habit that had plagued his life for long.

Pride, self-glory seeking, and lust have deep roots. To uproot them, we need a hydraulic hoe and dynamite. When we dig deep by the hoe of the word of God until we expose the root of our sin, the Holy Spirit blows it off by his power and transforms us to be a new person. When we put on the new self, we can enter into life to the full which the Lord Jesus promised in John 10:10, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." We should also grow in faith, hope, and love until our home, fellowship, chapter and the UBF community as a whole have the kingdom of God fully. The kingdom of God fully comes when we obey the Lord's new command, "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another" (Jn 13:34). What a beautiful and precious community of brothers and sisters we have in UBF? Can we find such wonderful friends in the world? While focusing on our ministry and work, we often miss the blessed love fellowship among our members whom God chose before the creation of the world and called to be a family. Let us look after one another, considering each one in our community as more precious than the whole world. Let's continue building up a beautiful community of love so that the world may know God's love through us.

#### Reports of Exploration (13:26-14:9)

The 12 leaders returned with a cluster of grapes and other fruits after exploring the 250 miles long land. They said, "We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey. Here is its fruit." People must have shouted with joy. "Look at the grapes. They are as big as golf balls!" But when they heard the explorers saying, "But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there," the atmosphere changed. The Anakites were giants who wore XXXL size of clothes. Goliath, whom boy David later fought with, was thought to be one of the remnants of the Anakites.

Then Caleb silenced the people and said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it." But the ten men who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are." And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land. They said, "The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. We saw the Nephilim there. We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them." (30-33) Here "spread a bad report" means "falsely accuse." If the land devoured those living in it, the people they saw must have been ill-fed and weak, contrary to what they said about them. "All the people we saw are of great size" sounds like an exaggeration. Any tribe or ethnic group is composed of people with varying height. Diversity in creation is God's wisdom and pleasure. They even reduced themselves to grasshoppers. Grasshoppers were the organic food John the Baptist ate (Mk 1:6). It was not difficult for the holy man to capture grasshoppers. The ten leaders were full of imaginations of being captured by powerful enemies after fleeing here and there like grasshoppers.

What is their problem? They had no God in their sight, thoughts, and words. Caleb, Joshua, and the ten leaders left Egypt together and experienced God's power, character, and guidance together. Why then couldn't they have the spirituality which Caleb and Joshua had? It is just as the Apostle Paul pointed out in 1 Corinthians 3:1: There are believers who grow to live by the Spirit and believers who remain worldly. What determines one's spiritual growth? It is one's reverence for God and obedient attitude toward God. One who reveres God and lives before him feels God in all things, learns from Him and grows. On the other hand, one who lives before people and sees things with human eyes cannot grow spiritually. When the ten leaders saw the land of Canaan with human eyes, they saw fortified cities and strong and well-equipped enemies. On the other hand, they saw themselves as weakened by slavery in Egypt, and untrained with feeble equipment. They saw no possibility of victory in war, so they gave up. In order to justify themselves, they gave a bad report about the land. Caleb saw the same things the other explorers saw. But he could see the land with God's eyes through the Holy Spirit who dwelt in him. He saw that the people of the land were like prisoners sentenced to death under God's judgment. And Caleb was convinced that God would use his people as His instrument and give them the land. So he could say, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it" (30).

We are fighting against the secular humanism, materialism and the goddess of pleasure of this post-modern era. From the time of fishing young people to the time of raising them as disciples, we feel as if we are wrestling with

giants. When we see the campuses with human eyes, we are filled with negative thinking and fear and we feel small and powerless. We are weak but God is strong. God is indeed great. Think about the Almighty God who created the vast universe. This God is with us. When we fix our eyes on the Almighty God, God becomes bigger and bigger in our minds and hearts and the problems become smaller and smaller until they disappear. And the Holy Spirit fills our minds and hearts with courage and conviction that "We can certainly triumph and conquer." Amen. People who heard the report of the ten leaders raised their voices and wept aloud all night. Think about the scene of two million people sitting and wailing under the light from the pillar of fire, which was a sign of God's protection and love. It showed the tragedy of unbelief. All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron and said, "If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this wilderness! 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?" (14:2-3) "If only we had died in Egypt!"--this was the habitual grumble of the Israelites (Ex 14:11, 16:3, Nu 20:3). This was a grave sin of forgetting the grace of God who had redeemed them from their miserable life of slavery. Even though we forget all other things, we should not forget the grace of God who redeemed us. They even thought of going back to Egypt. They wanted to go back to slavery if only they could have security. They did not know the meaning of the freedom and privilege of serving God. Spiritual blessings involve sacrifice. When we know the meaning of the spiritual blessings, we can overcome all hardships with thanksgiving. And we can possess peace and joy that come from heaven in all circumstances. Only those who know the meaning of spiritual blessings can enter into the blessings.

These faithless people finally discussed about choosing a leader to take them back to Egypt. Moses and Aaron fell facedown before the congregation. (4-5) They probably fell facedown before God in apprehension of God's impending judgment upon the people. Then Joshua and Caleb who had gone with the ten leaders tore their clothes and said, "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. 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. 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." (7-9) In ancient times, clothes were rare and expensive. Therefore tearing clothes was a big decision as well as an expression of great sorrow and righteous anger. Joshua, Moses' aide, hadn't stood for Caleb when Caleb spoke first so as not to undermine the credibility of Caleb's words. At this time, however, he stood with Caleb to prove the authenticity of Caleb's message. What can we learn from Joshua and Caleb?

First, faith that believes God's promise. Joshua and Caleb had a conviction of conquest because they believed God's promise. God had promised Abraham to give his descendants the land and had foretold their slavery in Egypt, their exodus and return to the promised land (Ge 15:7-21). God confirmed this promise to Isaac and Jacob and later said to Moses, "So I have come down to rescue them from the land of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey"--the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites (Ex 3:8). God surely keeps his word. Faith is full trust in God's promise. Joshua and Caleb had 100% trust in God's promise. Their faith came from their absolute trust in God himself. We have the Lord's promise, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Mt 28:18b-20). "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Mt 6:33). "Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh" (Ga 5:16). When we believe in the Lord's promise, we can have the conviction and courage to challenge any situation and reveal God's glory.

Second, faith in God's sovereignty and power. Joshua and Caleb said, "If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, ... and will give it to us." To them, the strong enemies in the land were not a problem, because no one can stand against God if God leads his people into the land. If God Almighty, the Sovereign Lord does, nothing is impossible. We must believe this and do his work. When people says, "It is not possible," we can say, "God can do it." Joshua and Caleb knew that only one thing is needed in order to see God's promise realized-- and that is, to please God. How can we please God? We can please God by believing in him (Heb 11:6). God is pleased with our repentance, obedience, and shepherd heart. We should pray for spiritual revival of America by faith. We should pray for raising 100,000 missionaries to evangelize the world's major campuses by faith. If God is pleased with us, he will lead us into the promised land and he will give it to us.

Third, victory in spiritual battle. Joshua and Caleb said, "Do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will devour them." In the eyes of Joshua and Caleb, the people of the land looked like delicious food like pizza or "bubgogi". Other versions translate the latter part of this verse as "we will swallow them up" or "they are bread for

us." Their appetite, confidence and desire to conquer are marvelous. They saw them as bread because they believed that the idols and evil spirits they relied on-- all ran away before the presence of God and God was with His people. They remind us of the Lord's promise, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you" (Ac 1:8). Joshua and Caleb were filled with the Holy Spirit because they defeated Satan's attack. Satan attacks us with arrows of doubt and fear whenever we try to do anything. When we are hit, we lose our strength and desire, and fall into negative thinking and complaints. As leaders in God's army, we must first win the spiritual warfare against Satan by holding on to God's words of promise. When the Holy Spirit works, the evil spirits of secular humanism, materialism, and carnal pleasure run away. Ephesians 6:16-17 says, "Take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." When we are filled with the Holy Spirit by defeating Satan, we have burning desire and vision from God and we can work by the power of God.

Joshua and Caleb warned the Israelites, "Only do not rebel against the LORD." This verse teaches us that giving up the promised land due to unbelief is rebellion against God. Unbelief is a backward road that leads to failure and shame, while faith is a forward road that leads to victory and glory. We don't have a backward road. The Holy Spirit points to only a forward road towards the promised land. Let's not be afraid. Let's not be disappointed by our situation or little visible fruit. It's all right if we love God with all our hearts and do what we should do each day by faith. We are doing what God wants us to do if we raise the Bible students whom God gives us and our children to be spiritual men and women. God is working with us and He will fulfill His will in His way and in His time. Curse on unbelief and blessing on faith (14:10-25)

As people were about to stone Joshua and Caleb, the glory of the LORD appeared at the tent of meeting. God 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?" (10-11) How did the Israelites treat God with contempt? They had seen many signs and they lived daily in God's sign. Every day, they ate manna from heaven and witnessed God's protection and guidance through a pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire during the night. Nevertheless they did not believe in God. We wonder how the Israelites in Moses' time and the Jews in Jesus' time could be so unbelieving. How about us? Do we remember God's deliverance that enabled our own exodus from slavery to sin and death? Do we realize God's provision and nourishment every day? Do we feel the protection and guidance of the Holy Spirit 24 hours a day? We must become believing people through all these. We must live as God's children who feel God every moment and thank Him and confess our love for Him every day.

God wanted to destroy the Israelites with a plague and raise a new people through Moses. But Moses prayed for the sake of God's name and of his people. He pleaded with God to forgive them just as God had forgiven them in accordance with His great love. (12-19) Moses' prayer reminds us of the Lord Jesus' prayer on the cross for our forgiveness. His prayer also teaches us about how to serve and pray for God's flock of sheep under our care. Indeed God heard Moses' prayer and forgave his people. But God said that not one of those who treated Him with contempt by disobeying Him and testing Him would ever see the promised land (21-23). God led them back to the wilderness and let them wander for 40 years until all who were 20 years and older and disobeyed God perished. It was the longest funeral procession in history. Those who died in the wilderness can be compared to those who remain in the life of flesh until they die, failing to enter into spiritual life. They fail to enter the abundant life, the life led by the Spirit and the life that bears fruit that lasts-- because they do not know the value of spiritual life and avoid the spiritual warfare with their old selves.

Read verse 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." The land Caleb went to was the hill country of Hebron. There lived the Anakites, the giants (Jos 14:12). God was pleased with Caleb and promised that God would bring him into the land and his descendants would inherit it. God said, "my servant Caleb has a different spirit." Why could Caleb have a different spirit? God did not say, "he is a man of faith" or "he is brave," but said "he follows me wholeheartedly." Here "wholeheartedly" means to fill a vacuum with something-- 100%. Caleb filled his soul with God only. He did not allow anything else to occupy his heart along with God. He gave his whole heart to God and served God's will wholeheartedly. Here we learn what kind of person God seeks. God does not seek able men. God seeks men and women whose hearts are wholly devoted to Him.

Caleb loved God with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength (Dt 6:5). God loved him and was pleased to dwell in him and wanted to bless him and his descendants. Verse 32:12 says that Joshua also followed God wholeheartedly. Later Caleb, at the age of 85, inherits the hill country of Hebron after conquering the Anakites,

as God blessed him. Joshua led the new generation of Israel and conquered the land which he had seen and believed he would enter. God leads those who follow Him wholeheartedly to the promised land and gives it to their descendants.

God chose us as well, and showed us his great love and power of salvation. We devoted ourselves to God our Creator and Redeemer. Only God can make our life truly meaningful, fruitful, and abundant. Only God is our eternal reward, joy, and glory. May we give our whole hearts to God, discarding any vain things we hold on to. Let's go forward to the land God promised to us-- the spiritual world of true freedom, truth, and abundance. Let's pray that God's kingdom may come to the land God gave us-- our homes, Christian communities, and souls in the campuses in America and in the world. Amen.