

AN EVIL REPORT

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Daily devotions written by Pastor Thomas Smith

“And the men, which Moses sent to search the land, who returned, and made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up a slander upon the land, Even those men that did bring up the evil report unto the land, died by the plague before the LORD.”

Numbers 14:36, 37

Moses sent these men into Canaan to search out the Promised Land. They were to survey the land and report back to the congregation with their findings. Of course, ten of the twelve spies were highly critical and pessimistic. By contrast, Joshua and Caleb were optimistic and encouraged the congregation to proceed by faith.

The Bible calls the opinion of the majority an “evil report.” We see in this tragic event the power and influence of a negative opinion. It would be wise for us to understand the nature and effect of words that have the power to hinder the progress of God’s work, both in individuals and groups.

The ten spies were fearful and negative – attempting to influence the congregation not to go into the land. Their focus was not on the great opportunity to inherit this blessed land of promise, but on the difficulties they might encounter. There was absolutely nothing in their opinion that reflected any confidence in God, His ability, or His promises. The Bible refers to it as “a slander upon the land.”

In essence, they were taking a stand against the will of God. They were voting against God’s will and plan for the nation of Israel. It was also a vote against the leader,

Moses, who had commissioned them. These men were not sent to decide if the land should or could be taken; they were only to bring back information about the land.

The results of their report were devastating. They “made all the congregation to murmur against him.” They turned the people against Moses, their God-ordained leader. God’s will was postponed. The leaders “died by the plague.”

When people side against God and His will, there will be consequences. When men take it upon themselves to turn God’s people against His leaders, they will not prosper spiritually. The entire generation of people died without entering the Promised Land.

It was only after they were removed that the younger generation occupied Canaan. This tragic event in the history of Israel should serve as a strong warning to caution us against bringing up or believing an “evil report.”