

# Coach House Church BEACONS

---

**WHEN GOD SAYS 'GO' – WE 'GO'**

---

**28TH NOVEMBER 2021**

Hi, It's Andy here with this week's Beacon, which is a little different as it is 'off the cuff' as it were, following the Sunday morning service at the end of November. It was a special time as God decided to join us in a very tangible way by the Holy Spirit. We wanted to listen and be inspired and then to act as God directed us.

I was inspired by a passage from Numbers, which as its name implies can be seen as a dry book, full of lists of names as God's people are counted during two censuses that Moses carried out. God's people were 'numbered' and hence the name of the book.

Now, as I have said before, following the action, fast pace and the excitement of Genesis and Exodus, the books that follow (including Numbers) can be seen as hard work to navigate, containing detail and lists that appear to have no relevance to us today, nevertheless, they are important and we can learn a lot from these books as to how God leads and how His people are supposed to act.

I read from Numbers chapter 13

*The Lord now said to Moses, "Send out men to explore the land of Canaan, the land I am giving to the Israelites. Send one leader from each of the twelve ancestral tribes." So Moses did as the Lord commanded him. He sent out twelve men, all tribal leaders of Israel, from their camp in the wilderness of Paran.*

Moses was in charge of the Israelites, being God's appointed leader and spokesperson. God had used Moses to lead the people out of captivity in Egypt and had gone before the people guiding them and providing for them.

Now, it is important that we reflect on the instructions given in this passage as they convey a promise of God. The promise is that the land has been given – it is a conclusive statement:

*‘...explore the land of Canaan, the land I AM GIVING TO THE ISRAELITES...’*

God is making a promise, and when God makes a promise, scripture reveals to us that He fulfils them. He doesn't leave them hanging, He doesn't leave promises unfulfilled – even those contained in scripture that we look forward to seeing concluded, our assurance of the promises being fulfilled is the evidence that God has fulfilled all His promises previously. He is completely trustworthy. We look back on scripture and we are inspired to have faith for that which is yet to come.

So, in our passage God gives a promise followed by an instruction:

*Send one leader from each of the twelve ancestral tribes.” So Moses did as the Lord commanded him. He sent out twelve men, all tribal leaders of Israel, from their camp in the wilderness of Paran.*

We then have a list of leaders that were given a task:

*Moses gave the men these instructions as he sent them out to explore the land: “Go north through the Negev into the hill country. See what the land is like, and find out whether the people living there are strong or weak, few or many. See what kind of land they live in*

In other words, these men were tasked with spying out the land that God was giving them.

A little later in the passage we get the report. It tells us that they have spent 40 days checking out the territory and its inhabitants

This is what they had to say starting at verse 25:

*After exploring the land for forty days, the men returned to Moses, Aaron, and the whole community of Israel at Kadesh in the wilderness of Paran. They reported to the whole community what they had seen and showed them the fruit they had taken from the land. This was their report to Moses: “We entered the land you sent us to explore,*

*and it is indeed a bountiful country—a land flowing with milk and honey. Here is the kind of fruit it produces.*

We are told that this fruit was massive, the grapes had to be carried on poles between the men. The report was good so far, until a 'but' appears:

*But the people living there are powerful, and their towns are large and fortified. We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak!*

This doesn't put off Caleb, one of the 12 spies, who boldly declares his trust in God's promises:

*But Caleb tried to quiet the people as they stood before Moses. "Let's go at once to take the land," he said. "We can certainly conquer it!"*

Caleb took God at His word. Because God had declared that He was giving the Israelites the land, it was a forgone conclusion: It was going to happen! Caleb was brave. He may not have known all the circumstances and consequences that lay before him, but He knew that God didn't break promises.

No sooner had Caleb declared his trust, when other voices started to disagree and cast doubt into the equation:

But the other men who had explored the land with him disagreed. "We can't go up against them! They are stronger than we are!" So they spread this bad report about the land among the Israelites: "The land we traveled through and explored will devour anyone who goes to live there. All the people we saw were huge. We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak. Next to them we felt like grasshoppers

Now, when you get bad news and a few people begin to repeat it, it gathers momentum and it starts to knock your faith, it knocks your confidence. It knocks, maybe, your ability to believe fully what God has said.

We see the same thing going on in the passage. The people became agitated and started to argue in disagreement – they started to look at the problems before them, rather than the promise that God had given them.

Now, scripture tells us that in times of trouble, we lift up our eyes to where our help comes from (Psalm 121), in other words we take our eyes off the problem and

look to God who provides our solutions – it is God we rely on, not our circumstances – whatever they may be. If God has made a promise, then the Israelites should (and could) have walked into the land and taken it right there and then. What we find throughout scripture is that whenever God makes a promise, there is always someone who rebels against it and questions God's ability. What this does is it destroys the faith of the community to whom the promise has been given.

The point I want to make here, is that although God's people did eventually take the land, they had to wander around for 40 years before entering! And even when the land was finally entered (see the book of Joshua), some of God's people decided to stay where they were and were happy to remain on the land they stood!

What in essence they were saying is, this is good enough, this land is fertile enough, I don't need to push on into anything else! I think Church can be found guilty of the same reticence to move forward into the fullness of God's promises. This morning we let go of our own thinking and allowed God to speak to us, through His Spirit. We started to engage with the spiritual aspect of God showing us and encouraging us with His way forward.

Now, one of the things that we come up against us at times like these, is people say that the Holy Spirit isn't for now, it was only for the church in the New Testament in Acts. When we read the Bible, we can see, with certainty, that the Apostles 'distributed' the Holy Spirit to the early church and when all the believers were together at Pentecost, they were all filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Later in Acts 8, we meet a character named Simon the Sorcerer (sounds like something out of Monty python!). Simon decides that he would like to have the power that the apostles have to give the Holy Spirit to people -and he starts to ask if he can pay for it! He wanted to use it for his own good – and here is the crux:

When God told the people to take the land in the Old Testament, it was in order to prove to the nations who God is –to Glorify God - to show his power and provision to His chosen people. When the Holy Spirit is given to us, He always points to Jesus, He glorifies Christ's work - the work that Jesus accomplished to make us His church – and that will never change.

So, when the Spirit is moving, it is not to benefit us – to make us feel good – it is for the benefit and encouragement of the church. The Spirit points to Jesus's goodness, for we stand today and are in a church that God has ordained that He will work His promises- and fulfil His promises – through. This is an important word, because when God asks us to do something, He doesn't ask us to do it and then not equip us for the work. His word says that God equips us for the tasks HE asks us to do

Hebrews 13: 21

*May he equip you with all you need for doing his will. May he produce in you, through the power of Jesus Christ, every good thing that is pleasing to him. All glory to him forever and ever! Amen.*

So, when God says move forward in the power of the Holy Spirit and pronounce Jesus to all around.

As a church we want to be doing that, seeking God's face, listening to the Spirit and we want to be moving in the power of the Holy Spirit.

When God says Go ..... We GO!



**Coach House Church**

222 Wellington Road North, Stockport, SK4 2QN  
leadership@coachhousechurch.org // 0161 432 5604  
Registered charity in England and Wales - 1194822



**Pastor Andy Jackson**  
Pastor // Trustee  
andyj@coachhousechurch.org