

-Save This Page as a PDF-

The Sin of Kadesh-barnea

13:1 to 14:45

The decisive rebellion.



The spy story in **Numbers 13-14** plays a crucial role within the unifying literary and theological structure of the book. It is closely and directly linked to the two census lists in **Numbers Chapter 1** and **Numbers Chapter 26** and is recalled as important ways in the second half of the book in **Chapters 32** and **34**. The spy story is explicitly linked to the first census list in **Numbers Chapter 1** through its use of the specific age formula, **every single one of you who were included in the census over the age of twenty (14:29)**. The same phrase is used repeatedly as a formula throughout the numbering of the twelve tribes in the **first chapter** of **Numbers**. The spy story is also explicitly tied in with the second census list in **Chapter 26**. An addendum at the end of the census in **26:63-65** reads: **These are the ones counted by Moshe and Eleazar the priest, who took a census of the people of Isra'el in the plains of Mo'av by the Jordan across from Jericho. But there was not a man among them who had also been included in the census of Moshe and Aaron the priest when they enumerated the people of Isra'el in the Sinai Desert; because Adonai had said of them, "They will surely die in the desert."** So there was not even one of them, except Caleb and Joshua.

The addendum clearly alludes to the spy story of **Numbers Chapters 13** and **14** in which the definitive judgment of the **Exodus** generation occurred. The spy story has clear associations with the two pillars of the structure of the book of **Numbers**, that is, the first census list in **Chapter 1** and the second census list in **Chapter 26**. The theme of the spy story plays a pivotal role in the central narrative in defining the theme of the book of **Numbers** as a whole - the death of the **Exodus** generation and the birth of a new generation of hope on the edge of the Promised Land. We will note other references to the spy story later in **Chapters 32** and **34**, further strengthening the argument for its central place in the theme and structure of **Numbers**.²²⁵

These verses are displayed in a chiastic fashion (see [Ac - Numbers from a Messianic Jewish Perspective: Chiasm and introversion](#)). The inverted symmetry of this section of Scripture is clear. The selection of unfaithful spies led to the defeat by the Amalekites (**A-A**), **God** allowed the ten tribes to spy out the Land in **His** grace (**B-B**), but the report of the spies was negative so **Moshe** had to intercede (**C-C**). **Faith and obedience are the main points (D).**

A The selection of the spies (**13:1-16**)

B Spying out the land (**13:17-25**)

C The report of the spies (**13:26-33**)

D Faith and obedience (14:1-4)

C Moshe intercedes (**14:5-20**)

B Gods Response: discipline, not wrath (**14:20-38**)

A Defeat by the Amalekites (**14:39-45**)