

Taking a Stand

TEXT: Numbers 13:17-33; 14:22-24

KEY VERSE: If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. — John 15:19

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Matthew 16:24-27; Romans 12:1-2

Who should we believe? Which report is true? Who should we follow? These questions must have been heavy on the minds of the Children of Israel when they heard the conflicting reports from the twelve men who had returned from spying out the land of Canaan. Their trust in God's promise had been overcome by doubt and fear. We, too, are faced each day with the challenge of distinguishing between right and wrong. And, many times, the consequences of wrong decisions are as grave as they were for the Children of Israel. Let's not forget God's promises to us.

1. The history of the Children of Israel, no doubt, would read differently if the people had followed Caleb and Joshua rather than the other ten spies. Explain the reason why it makes a difference to us whom we follow in our day.

2. It is not always easy to make the correct differentiation between truth and error, especially when the pressure is great from those around you to pursue a course other than the right one. For example, would it have been easy for you to make the right choice between the conflicting reports given by the twelve spies in our text? On what should the Children of Israel have based their decision?

3. Ten men said Israel couldn't take the land, while Joshua and Caleb insisted that it could be done. Because they took their stand for what was right, they were the only two of their generation who entered the Promised Land. What spiritual lesson can we learn from this?

4. Imagine the feelings of Joshua and Caleb when they realized that the people were siding with the other ten spies. There may be situations in our lives which cause us to be uncomfortable but force us to take a stand. For example: In a high school science class, the question is asked if anyone believes in the Biblical account of creation. No one raises his hand—but you believe. Will you raise your hand? Your face turns red, your palms are sweaty, beads of perspiration are on your brow, and you raise your hand. You hear a ripple of laughter. The teacher rolls his eyes. Give another similar situation that could necessitate standing up for the Lord. Name some emotions that might accompany taking this stand, and give possible reactions to it.

5. It is important to remember scriptural promises in these times when we must take a stand. Read Philip-
pians 4:13 and explain how this verse could help.

6. Define the word *world* in the context of 1 John 2:15-17. What are the consequences of daring to be different from the world?

7. How can we obtain the spiritual strength to take a stand for what we know is right? See Psalm 27:1 and Isaiah 40:29-31.

8. Give a Biblical example of a person who took a stand even though opposed by those around him.