

# Numbers 13:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Moses by the commandment of the LORD sent them from the wilderness of Paran: all those men were heads of the children of Israel.

## Analysis

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Moses 'sent them from the wilderness of Paran: all those men were heads of the children of Israel.' The phrase 'heads' (rashim) indicates these were tribal leaders, not random scouts - men of authority and influence. Their unanimous bad report (except Caleb and Joshua) proved devastating because of their leadership status. This teaches that leadership position doesn't guarantee spiritual discernment. Even respected leaders can spread unbelief and discourage God's people. The New Testament warns about false teachers (2 Pet 2:1-3) and urges testing leaders' teaching against Scripture (Acts 17:11, 1 John 4:1). Position must align with faithful character.

## Historical Context

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The spying mission occurred at Kadesh-Barnea in Paran wilderness, on Canaan's southern border. God commanded the spy mission (Num 13:1-2) after Israel requested it (Deut 1:22-23), showing God permits actions that reveal hearts even when He knows the outcome. The twelve leaders represented each tribe, ensuring comprehensive report and tribal buy-in. Their failure to trust God despite seeing Canaan's fruitfulness cost an entire generation Canaan's entrance. The incident demonstrates that investigating God's promises is permissible, but unbelief after seeing evidence brings severe consequences.

## Related Passages

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**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## Study Questions

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1. Do you trust respected leaders' opinions over God's clear promises, or test everything against Scripture?
2. How does this passage warn you about the responsibility that comes with spiritual leadership and influence?

## Interlinear Text

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עַל	פָּאָרָן	מִמִּדְבַּר	מֹשֶׁה	אֶת־	וְשָׁלַח
	of Paran	them from the wilderness	And Moses		sent
H5921	H6290	H4057	H4872	H853	H7971
בְּנֵי	רָאשֵׁי	אֲנָשִׁים	כָּל־	יְהוָה	פִּי
of the children	heads			of the LORD	by the commandment
H1121	H7218	H376	H3605	H3068	H6310
הָמָּה:	יִשְׂרָאֵל				
	of Israel				were
	H3478				H1992

## Additional Cross-References

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**Numbers 12:16** (Parallel theme): And afterward the people removed from Hazeroth, and pitched in the wilderness of Paran.

**Numbers 32:8** (Parallel theme): Thus did your fathers, when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to see the land.

**Deuteronomy 1:19** (References Lord): And when we departed from Horeb, we went through all that great and terrible wilderness, which ye saw by the way of the mountain of the Amorites, as the LORD our God commanded us; and we came to Kadesh-barnea.

**Deuteronomy 9:23** (Word): Likewise when the LORD sent you from Kadesh-barnea, saying, Go up and possess the land which I have given you; then ye rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God, and ye believed him not, nor hearkened to his voice.

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