

## CONCERN FOR CHILDREN

**“Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?” (Num 14:3)**

Human infants are among the most helpless creatures on earth. A baby calf will be walking in a few minutes, running in a few days, and surviving without help in a few months. Children, by contrast, take much longer to be self sustaining. They cannot walk for months, or run for years. The term “self sustaining” is subject to some real sarcasm today because we now have a generation of “children” who may “depend” on their parents for several decades.

It is, however, a natural and godly inclination for parents to be concerned about their children. It is not at all uncommon for parents to choose a home based on a school district where their children will receive the best education. Similarly, parents often choose a church with the welfare of their children in mind. So, on the surface, we cannot fault the Hebrew people for their family concerns.

In this instance, however, there was something fundamentally wrong with their thinking. For more than 400 years God had assured them that they would inherit the “Promised Land”. He brought them out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror and with miraculous signs and wonders (Deut. 26:8). He sustained them with water from a rock and manna from heaven. He promised them : “Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall by the sword before you.” (Lev 26:8)

God saw through their hypocrisy and unbelief and pronounced judgement upon them with these words: **“Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.” (Num 14:30)** Caleb and Joshua, as you recall, were the only two spies who believed God and wanted to obey Him (see Nu. 13).

The Lord continued the pronouncement of verdict with these words:

**“As for your children that you said would be taken as plunder, I will bring them in to enjoy the land you have rejected. But you-- your bodies will fall in this desert. Your children will be shepherds here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness, until the last of your bodies lies in the desert. For forty years-- one year for each of the forty days you explored the land-- you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you.’ I, the LORD, have spoken, and I will surely do these things to this whole wicked community . . . “ (Num 14:31-35)**

Note! God condemned the parents to die in the wilderness because they were leading their children in the wrong direction. **“As for your children”** God said, **“I will bring them into the land you have rejected”**.

The pain of the next 40 years for these Hebrew children is almost beyond human comprehension. Parents and grandparents did not all die at once in a single day, they died gradually. As the long months turned into years the number of graves continued to grow. As each parent passed away the children were painfully aware that it need not have been so. Both parents and children could have enjoyed the Promised Land together if only the parents had believed God and set the proper example. Just as God purged the earth of sin to give Noah and his family a fresh start, God also chose to purge His people of unbelieving parents to give their children a fresh start in the land of Canaan. Only Caleb and Joshua were permitted the bridge the gap between the slavery of Egypt and the glorious rewards of Canaan.

Parent! God bless you for your prayerful concerns for the welfare of your children. May God give you the wisdom and courage to behave in such a way that you can both enjoy heaven together!.