A The rejection of the messenger

- ❖ At the gates of the promised land, spies were sent to scout it out. Their report said that the land was as good as God had said (Numbers 13:27). But a discouraging message was added (Numbers 13:28, 31). Then God spoke through Caleb to encourage them to conquer it (Numbers 13:30).
- ❖ After a night of meditation, the people made a decision: to reject the messengers of God who had been leading them (Num. 14:1-4). When Joshua and Caleb repeated words of encouragement to them, they decided to stone them (Num. 14:6-10).
- ❖ Subsequently, many other messengers were also rejected (2Ch. 25:15-16; Amos 7:10-13).
- ❖ What was the reason for the rejection? The message they brought from God did not match their expectations, nor did they want to abandon their sinful lifestyle.

B The rejection of the message

- ❖ **Contempt**
  - — In the time of King Jehoiakim, the people were involved in serious sins. God commanded Jeremiah to write a scroll with the prophetic message so that the king and his advisors would be warned and repent of their evil ways (Jer. 36:1-3).
  - — But Jehoiakim despised the message and destroyed it by throwing it into the fire, although a few begged him not to do so (Jer. 36:21-25).
  - — In response, a harsh prophecy was pronounced against Jehoiakim, and the destroyed message was rewritten and expanded (Jer. 36:27-31).
  - — We might think that if we don't read the Bible, we can do whatever we want and live peacefully. But if we ignore God's warnings, we will reap the consequences of our sin and wickedness.
- ❖ **Obstinacy**
  - — The last king of Judah, Zedekiah, swore allegiance to Babylon, but broke his covenant. He repeatedly refused to accept the warning messages God gave him through Jeremiah. (2 Chronicles 36:12).
  - — When Jerusalem was surrounded by the Babylonian army, Zedekiah called Jeremiah to give him a message from God (Jer. 38:14).
  - — The message was clear: surrender to Babylon and you will save your own life, and Jerusalem (Jer. 38:17-23). But Zedekiah rejected the message. His obstinacy led to the final destruction of Jerusalem (2 Chron. 36:13).
  - — For eleven years God communicated messages of hope to him if he would repent and change his conduct. At times, he even reacted positively, but he did not make permanent reforms (Jer. 34:8-11).
- ❖ **Hypocrisy**
  - — Why did Jesus call the Pharisees hypocrites?
    1. (1) Because they preached one thing and did another (Mt. 23:3)
    2. (2) Because they imposed heavy burdens on others, but they themselves did not want to carry them (Mt. 23:4)
    3. (3) Because everything they did was a facade, only to be seen by others (Mt. 23:5)
    4. (4) Because they liked to receive honors, but they did not honor others (Mt. 23:6-7, 11-12)
    5. (5) Because they praised the prophets, but did not want to obey their messages (Mt. 23:29-31)
    6. (6) Because they claimed to serve God, but they wanted to kill those who spoke to them on His behalf (Mt. 23:34)
  - — Jesus' words against the hypocritical Pharisees were written so that we would avoid following their example, and abandon any attitude or thought that leads us to reject the message that God gives us.

C Practical application

- ❖ “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it” (George Santayana).
- ❖ Humanity's experiences with God—be they good or bad—are not to be overlooked or discounted.
- ❖ We are not condemned to repeat the mistakes of past generations if we pay attention to the warnings of Scripture and the messages that God sends us through his prophets (1 Cor. 10:11).

APPENDIX: THE VISIONS OF ELLEN G. WHITE

The visions that Ellen G. White received in public were accompanied by extraordinary phenomena: she did not breathe; her eyes remained open; she moved completely unaware of what was happening around her; ...

Although some accused her of self-hypnotization (mesmerism), she did not control when she entered a vision, nor when she came out of it.

When Ellen went into vision, James White invited those presents to examine her to eliminate any doubt regarding her supernatural origin that her antagonists might have, and to strengthen those who believed in her.

Those who accused her of mesmerism were astonished to see that she was indeed not breathing and fled in terror from the place where the vision was occurring.