



## Desert Places: Israel's Identity Crisis

**Date:** Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> August

**Speaker:** Cap Ramdas-Harsia

**Key Verses:** Numbers 13 v17-20

**Talk Summary:** We all have to travel through the desert at some point, but do we find ourselves stuck there and struggling to move on?

The Israelites were a nation enslaved for over 400 years and having been freed from captivity by Moses' faithfulness to God, they set out on a journey through the desert to enter The Promised Land. Having sent out spies to do a recce of The Promised Land, Moses found many of the returning spies decided to spread bad reports about those that inhabited The Promised Land; this identity crisis led to the journey lasting 40 years.

Do we find ourselves feeling like we're living in the desert and not The Promised Land? The desert was a part of the route, but it was never meant to be the **FINAL DESTINATION**. We can definitely learn things in the desert, but we are not meant to make this our home, our home is meant to be the land flowing with milk and honey and we're not meant to settle and choose to live in the desert.

How is our identity shaped by our own individual circumstances?

Why is it important to understand our identity?

How do we ensure we are **rooting** ourselves in what God says about us?

How do we ensure **resilience**, rejecting identity pressures from things not of God?

In the desert we need to know our identity and continue to be **reminded** of it.

Because when we get to the edge of The Promised Land, we need to have no fear of who we are, even if it looks like we're about to take on **giants!**

## Group Discussion Questions

### Welcome

*You might want to start the group with some kind of ice breaker question. Remember to introduce yourselves when there are new people.*

### Worship

*Worship is not just singing, it is thanking God for who he is and what he has done and is lived out through a life of trusting obedience. Discussing this together is an act of worship.*

*(Small group worship resources can be found at [bvc.so/sgworship](http://bvc.so/sgworship))*

- What are you thankful for this week?
- Where has God been at work in your life?
- When have you taken risks in faith and obedience this week?

*If you have a time of singing you can skip the above questions but please do ask this question each week:*

- What has God been speaking to you about this week? *(Go around the group quickly don't spend a long time on it)*

### Word

- What do you think is the biggest influence on your identity (eg family (experience/history), friends, society, social media/news, job or lack of it, past hurts, rejections)?
- How can we encourage each other to strengthen our **resilience** against the negative pressures on our identity?
- Are there any obvious "giants" ahead of us in the coming months and how can we face into them without fear?

### Witness

*We want to be investing in authentic relationships with those who don't know Jesus yet and inviting them to anything where they might meet other Christians and Jesus. Pick one of the below each week:*

- How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?
- What church events coming up would your friends appreciate an invitation to?