



Today we have the incredible joy of opening the living Word of the Lord to the book of Numbers 13. And in so doing, we ask the Lord to open our hearts so that the Spirit will teach, correct, convict, and train us in righteousness. There are times in your life that a **proper perspective gives you a correct vision**. I read a story recently about...

A man driving by a cornfield who stopped to chat with the farm boy who was working there, and the following exchange ensued:

Man- It looks like the corn is turning yellow

Boy- Yes, we planted yellow corn

Man- Well, it looks to me like you're not going to get but about half a crop

Boy- that's right, we planted on halves

In anger the man shouted, "You are not far from a fool, are you, son?"

"No sir," said the boy, "just a fence between us." – J.N. Griffith in *Looking Up*.

It matters which **side of the fence you are on**. This is the difference between seeing and believing. We encounter an episode in the fourth book of the Scriptures where the people of God are given two options: **fear or faith**. Which perspective are you living by? Fear or faith?

Faith or Fear? [Numbers 13:1-2, 16-20, 26-28, 30-33; 14:5-9, 11-12, 24]

Faith always keeps the main things the main things (13:2)

The main thing, the mission of these leaders among the tribes of Israel, was to **spy** out the land. Specifically, the land which was **given by the Lord**. If you read Deuteronomy 1:22 you will find the initiative to investigate the new territory came from the **people and not from God**. Here we see the Lord giving details how the mission takes place.

Why were the spies sent out? They were commissioned to find out about the *people (13:18), production, power, pine trees and produce*. The spies were dispatched to find the **goodness of the Promise**. The **goal** was **not to decide** whether entering the Land was possible or desirable—the Lord had already commanded Israel that this was the Land he was giving.

Faith- "**the gaze of a soul upon a saving God (Tozer)**- keeps the main things the main things in your life. *What is the chief goal (Mission) of man? To know God and enjoy Him forever. Are the main things the main things in your life today?* Mission drift is a danger. Only by faith this is possible

and sustainable. Don't forget your mission. *We lives as spies in a kingdom that is not ours*, sent by the rightful King!

Faith prepares you and requires you to live courageously (13:20)

Faith- knowing what the Lord says is true- gives you courage. Thankfully, our Sovereign Creator knows the spies and his community are in need with the simple reminder “**be of courage.**” A Hebrew word which means **strengthen oneself.** Courage can be defined as “**the ability to do something that frightens or strength in the face of pain.**”

This week I had the privilege of walking through the Civil Rights Museum in Birmingham. Two vivid images are seared into my memory. The first, a glass encased memorial to Denise McNair, a 11-year-old girl who was brutally murdered when a bomb exploded during Sunday School. And I looked at a piece of brick that destroyed this girl's life, tears filled my eyes and a righteous anger filled my heart at prejudice and cowardice.

The second memory: when the passive protestors attempted to fill up the jails they asked volunteers to stand. The first ones to stand were the youth and women. Where are our courageous men?

Where are the people of faith who will stand upon the Word of the Lord in the face of pain? **Oh that we would live by faith and Be of good courage!** Oh that we would be **risk-takers** for Jesus.

As the great parliamentarian Edmund Burke said, “**The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.**”

Where are the missionaries, pastors, those who will change the world for the sake of Christ and storm the gates of hell? ***Faith in Christ prepares and requires you to live courageously.***

Fear always focuses on “I can't” or “it won't” (13:28)

The delegation returns and commences to give details of their expedition: a place that flows with milk and honey. Excellent for grazing milk-giving animals and full of bees, where syrup from the fruits (figs) flow. **A main source of sweeter in the Middle East.**

However! Epes- *end (of the earth), no, nothing, however, but, only, yet.* Before our eyes we see this spiritual truth play out; **fear always focuses on I can't or it wont happen.** Don't forget this is the Promised Land, given by the hand of the Lord. **It is out for delivery (The can practically track it online).** And yet fear says it will never happen. **What in your life fits into the “it will never happen” category?**

Notice how fundamentally irrational their unbelief was. The majority report (10 spies) now contradicts the good report they already gave to Moses. **Was some truth?** Sure the people are big, sure the towns were fortified (35-50 ft walls 15 ft thick)... but God!

The reality is that we fear so much today simply because we do not fear God enough –Randy Smith

Don't let fear focus your mind on the "I can't or it won't." Let promises of the Gospel message deep into your heart so that you will **sing with confidence nothing is impossible with the Lord!**

Faith marks and distinguishes your life (13:30 & 14:24)

Caleb, hearing the fear of the other ten, **quiets the people**. Finally able to speak (*I can Caleb animated in the background*) he simply says: let's go, take possession, and overcome! (Victor- Let's Go) Caleb does not **contradict** the other report, he simply **rejects their conclusion**. **What is different?**

Caleb was born in Egypt with a name that means dog. *And you thought your family name was bad?* Most of the Israelites in **Caleb's generation** never quite get the hang of what **freedom** is all about. Caleb was a man, once set free from his bondage by the grace of the Lord, **never wanted to go back**. Have you been set **free by faith** in Jesus Christ? **Faith (in the Atoning- Passover) marks your life**. Never go back to spiritual bondage.

Caleb also has something what we all need, **dogged determination**. Caleb understood that the **bigger the fears, the bigger His God**. The stronger the fortress, the stronger his Savior. Caleb was a man who stood up, by faith, and proclaimed that he would never give up because Yahweh would never give up on him!

Caleb was the man that Satan doesn't want to pick a fight with. The little guy on the playground that no one wanted to fight. Why? Because he so strongly believed that he was determined to follow the one true God no matter what!

Faith distinguishes the life of a true follower because true faith is courage that conquers. Disbelief is cowardice that correctly assesses the situation but fails to take God into account. **Is your life permanently tattooed by faith?**

Faith will always lead you back to the Lord (14:6-9)

Now two men speak up. They tear their clothes- **a sign of grief and distress** because of the humiliation of the implied rebellion against Yahweh. Now listen to their message: If the Lord (8), He will (8), He will give, don't rebel against the Lord (9), Lord is with us (9) , and the glory of the Lord (10). Lord-covenant name for God

The greatest concern that Caleb and Joshua have is what pleases the Lord. **It is as if nothing else matter to them but the Lord, his plan, providence, and glory.**

It is, perhaps, one of the hardest struggles of the Christian life to learn this sentence – "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Thy name be glory." –Spurgeon

A life lived by faith will always lead straight to the Lord.

Fear breaks trust and faith (14:11-12)

For Israel, fear was not a **wrong focus** but a **breaking of faith and trust** in the Lord. A conclusion explicitly spoken by the Lord, "How long will these people despise me?"

Fear is the antithesis of faith. **2Tim. 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and sound judgment**

Often we think that if God would visible prove himself then our fear will go away (14:11). No number of miracles will cause your fear or lack of faith to dissipate. Rather, the only hope we have to live a faith-filled life is **daily trust in Yahweh**. When you fear, **remember that it is not coming from the Savior.**

Courage is fear that has said its prayers --Unknown

Response: Head-Heart-Hands

Num. 13:16 These were the names of the men Moses sent to scout out the land, and Moses renamed Hoshea son of Nun, Joshua.

For reasons not explained here, Moses changed the name of one spy from **Hoshea** (Salvation), to Joshua (Yahweh is salvation).

It's one thing to know about salvation. Abundant life is knowing that the **Lord saved you**. Do you know for sure? **Rom 10:12** since there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, because the same Lord of all richly blesses all who call on him. **13** For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Can you say today with confidence that Jesus alone is your hope, your life, your all? Faith will radically change your perspective.

Caleb's Spirit

14:24 But since my servant Caleb has a different spirit and has remained loyal to me, I will bring him into the land where he has gone, and his descendants will inherit it.

What was Caleb's spirit? He understood true freedom. He had a faith that **remained** and a faith that **sustained**.

An elderly woman used to pray every day, "Lord if you furnish the grace, I'll furnish the grit."

We return to our primary question: what will you choose? Fear or Faith?

Will you take a stand?

Notes

Num. 13:1 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

Num. 13:2 “Send men to **spy out** the land of Canaan, which **I am giving** to the children of Israel; from each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a **leader** among them.”

- The literary form of the instructions to search out the Promised Land are given in the same manner as previous directives, utilizing the introductory formula of divine speech.
- The revelatory nature of God’s interaction with Moses and other Israelite leaders has been observed as a major theological theme throughout the Book of Numbers, as well as being the key literary structural element.
- **Scout** Milgrom notes that “it is hardly conceivable that Moses would have sent 12 clan heads on a spying mission. He would not have risked the chieftans nor have resorted to such a large number. It is noteworthy that for a true case of espionage – at Jericho—Joshua sent two spies in Josh 2:1 (JPS, 100).
 - The goal of their mission was not to decide whether entering the Land was possible or desirable: the Lord had already commanded Israel that this was the land he was giving them (13:1) (Duguid, 168)
 - In light of Moses’ rehearsal of the sequence of events in the sending of the spies in Deut

1:19–46, in which we learn that the **initiative** to spy out the land came from the people, **not from God**, one should likely put the instruction from the Lord to “send some men to explore” subsequent to the initial request of the people.

- According to Deut, the initiative to scout the land stemmed from the people, not from God—constituting a breach of faith because God had already scouted the land. Hence, when Moses approved the expedition he was condemned to die in the desert (JPS, 100)
 - **Deut. 1:19** “We then set out from Horeb and went across all the great and terrible wilderness you saw on the way to the hill country of the Amorites, just as the LORD our God had commanded us. When we reached Kadesh-barnea, **20** I said to you: You have reached the hill country of the Amorites, which the LORD our God is giving us. **21** See, the LORD your God has set the land before you. Go up and take possession of it as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has told you. Do not be afraid or discouraged. **Deut. 1:22** “Then all of you approached me and said, ‘Let’s send men ahead of us, so that they may explore the land for us and bring us back a report about the route we should go up and the cities we will come to.’
 - **Send**—literally “send for yourself.” Not God’s doing
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 - **Men**- Anashim- can refer to important and brave men
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- In the earlier generations this land was a promised inheritance; now it was about to become a reality as possession, for the text emphasizes using **the present participle**:
 - “The land of Canaan which I (myself) am giving to the children of Israel.” But though the promise of land is never rescinded, possession of and prosperity in the land will be highly dependent on Israel’s faithfulness.¹¹

Num. 13:3 ¶ So Moses sent them from the Wilderness of Paran according to the command of the LORD, all of them men who *were* heads of the children of Israel.

Num. 13:4 Now these *were* their names: from the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur;

Num 13:5-15

Num. 13:16 ¶ These *are* the names of the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun, Joshua.

- Because of the nature of the task laid before them, these men probably were from among those listed in the military conscription of chap. 1 and hence able to go to war in the coming conquest of the land.
- Caleb literally means “dog”. But in the ANE as most likely part of a longer epithet and could also signify faithful servant (JPS)
- For Caleb, see excurses 31 in JPS, 391.
- At the conclusion of the list of the scouts’ names, emphasis is given to the person of Joshua, whose former name was Hoshea. The inclusion here serves several purposes in the narrative:
 - (1) to highlight his role as a leader,
 - (2) to portend his role as a spokesman for God, and
 - (3) to provide a structural marker for the chiasmic rhetorical structure of the passage in which contrast is made between the faithful leaders—Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and

Caleb—and the faithless ten scouts who held sway over the Israelite congregation.

Num. 13:17 ¶ Then Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said to them, “Go up this way into the South, and go up to the mountains,

Num. 13:18 and see what the land is like: whether the people who dwell in it *are* strong or weak, few or many;

Num. 13:19 whether the land they dwell in *is* good or bad; whether the cities they inhabit *are* like camps or strongholds;

Num. 13:20 whether the land *is* rich or poor; and whether there are forests there or not. Be of good courage. And bring some of the fruit of the land.” Now the time *was* the season of the first ripe grapes.

- Moses faithfully reiterated to the tribal scouts the instructions given him by the Lord.
- They were directed to explore the land of Canaan from which their ancestral tribal leaders had journeyed some four hundred years earlier during a time of famine.
- They were to head northward through the hill country regions later to be known as Judah, Samaria, and Galilee (“go up”) starting in the Negev (“southlands”).
 - They would reach as far north as Rehob of Lebo-Hamath in southern Lebanon.
 - Biblical texts indicate that the Negev region stretched southward from Hebron (Qiryat Arba) into the Zin Wilderness region, whereas in modern times the term denotes the region from Arad and Beersheba southward to Elat on the Gulf of Aqaba.
- The scouts’ primary objective was to reconnoiter the land to provide the answers to a series of questions Moses posed concerning the quality and productivity of the land and the military strength of its inhabitants.
- Though the specific time (day/month) frame is not provided, seasonal data was noted in the instructions and in the produce brought back by the scouts.
 - This was the time of the first harvest of the vineyards (v. 20), hence late summer or early fall (late July to early September), several months after the departure from Mount Sinai in early spring.
- The questions move from general to specific in a pattern of pairs that focus on the land and its peoples. As noted above, the very questions portend the possibility of a negative response. The land as a gift from God would surely be good, as suggested by the phrase “flowing with milk and honey.”
 - At the center of the chiasm, noted in the “Structural Outline of Numbers 13–14” in the above excursus, was the question, “Is it good or bad (evil)?” Their response at the conclusion was one of both/and rather than either/or. The land is good, but the people are bad news.

Num. 13:21 ¶ So they went up and spied out the land from the Wilderness of Zin as far as Rehob, near the entrance of Hamath.

- The journey begins with a summary statement
- The exact location of this Rehob is unknown, though the region of Lebo Hamath suggests a site in southern Lebanon, such as Beth Rehob near Tel Dan on the southern flank of Mount Hermon.

Num. 13:22 And they went up through the South and came to Hebron; Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi, the descendants of Anak, were there. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)

- Particulars of the scouts' journey begin with the Negev region, which they travel through on the way to Hebron.
- The ancestry of the Hebronites is highlighted by the mention of three clans of the Anakim or Anakites, namely Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi. These names are Semitic in origin, reflecting the fact that the inhabitants of the land spoke a Semitic dialect, though they might have necessarily been of Semitic ancestral stock
 - The name Anak was associated with a people famed and feared for their great size and military prowess and may also be associated with the ethnic phrase *ly-‘anaq* found among the Egyptian Execration Texts of the early second millennium b.c. In v. 33 in the Septuagint the term was translated as “giants,” and they were associated with the Rephaim in Deut 2:11.
 - Remnants of these giants survived into the time of the Judges and the beginning of the Israelite monarchy. In Josh 12:21–22 the Anakim were noted as having lived in the Hebron region, as well as to the west in the Shephelah in such cities as Gath, and in the coastal plain in Gaza and Ashdod.
 - Some have suggested that the famous Goliath, who was defeated by David, was one of the surviving descendants of these exceptionally tall individuals.

Num. 13:23 Then they came to the Valley of Eshcol, and there cut down a branch with one cluster of grapes; they carried it between two of them on a pole. They also brought some of the pomegranates and figs.

Num. 13:24 The place was called the Valley of Eshcol, because of the cluster which the men of Israel cut down there.

Num. 13:25 And they returned from spying out the land after forty days.

- The name of the valley, Eshkol, means “cluster (of grapes)” and was also the name of the brother of Mamre the Amorite, an associate of Abraham and the one for whom the town on the northwestern outskirts of Hebron was named (Gen 14:13). Hence the valley may have been named originally according to the family name of Eshkol, and then developed as a prime region for viticulture.
- The duration of the scouts' exploration of the land was recounted as forty days, the approximate time it would have taken for such a journey on foot, assuming the men kept a good pace throughout the expedition.
 - The number forty often is used in the Bible for an indefinite period in excess of a month.
 - Having trekked from the Zin Wilderness, through Hebron and the central hill country, all the way to Lebo Hamath and back again, would mean that they would have covered a minimum of three hundred and fifty miles and perhaps as much as five hundred miles in

their lateral movement in reconnoitering the hill country and valleys.

Num. 13:26 ¶ Now they departed and came back to Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; they brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land.

- In typical Hebrew literary pattern, the report begins with a summary statement utilizing three verbal concepts.

Num. 13:27 Then they told him, and said: "We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this *is* its fruit.

Num. 13:28 Nevertheless the people who dwell in the land *are* strong; the cities *are* fortified and very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there.

Num. 13:29 The Amalekites dwell in the land of the South; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan."

- Their accounting of the quality of the land was a faithful representation of that which they had seen and partaken from the regions into which they had been sent.
- Milk and Honey-
 - It was indeed an exceptionally fertile land, worthy of being described as "flowing with milk and honey."
 - Excellent for grazing milk-giving animals and filled with bees: a perfect land for people like the Israelites (Stubbs, 129).
 - Honey, not bees honey but syrup made from fruit such as figs, the main source of sweetness in the Middle East (Goldingay, 36).
- **Nevertheless**-hints at the spies wickedness
 - But as quickly as they gloried over the produce of the land, they began to grumble about the power of the people of the land. The solemn report turned sour; the wondrous picture turned piteous; the glorifying words became gloomy.
 - The rabbis summed it up, "slander which does not have some truth in the beginning will not be accepted in the end." The scouts began with truth as not to arouse suspicion (JPS, 104).
 - Notice how fundamentally irrational their unbelief was. The majority report was fundamentally flawed; contradicting the good report about the nature of the land that the scouts gave Moses first (Duguid, 172).
- The contrastive report concerning the people of the land marks a major turning point in the narrative and is introduced by the emphatic and restrictive Hebrew adverbial phrase *'epes kî*, which could be translated as "however, on the other hand," or "but."
 - The divergent context is further emphasized by the placement of the noun for strength, *'az*, at the beginning of the nominal clause: "strong are the people who inhabit the land."
- **Fortified**- ancient Canaanite cities had walls 30-50 ft high and 10-15 ft thick.

Num. 13:30 ¶ Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it."

- Speaking firmly with a visionary declaration to the Israelite audience, Caleb issued a trifold emphatic challenge: "Let us indeed go up," (as the scouts had done initially), "and we will

- possess it” (as God had promised), “for we are certainly capable of it” (by God’s power)
- As noted above, Caleb here serves as the spokesman in the narrative for the faithful leadership represented by Moses, Aaron, and Joshua.
- Caleb- was born a slave in Egypt and his name meant “dog.” Most Israelites of Caleb’s generation never quite get the hang of what freedom is all about (NIV). Caleb is a shining example of “dogged determination.”
 - We all live under the same sky, but we don’t all share the same horizon –Konrad Adenauer
 - Caleb does not contradict the report of the spies only their conclusions.
- Faith is courage that conquers. Disbelief is cowardice that correctly assesses the impossibility of a situation but fails to take God into account, thereby snatching defeat out of the jaws of victory (Gane, 602).

Num. 13:31 ¶ But the men who had gone up with him said, “We are not able to go up against the people, for they *are* stronger than we.”

Num. 13:32 And they gave the children of Israel a **bad report** of the land which they had spied out, saying, “The land through which we have gone as spies *is* a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it *are* men of *great* stature.

Num. 13:33 There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.”

- As readily as Caleb had challenged the people to mount a campaign to conquer the land, the other ten scouts debunked the idea that they could be successful against the formidable foes of Canaan.
- They used the same terms as Caleb but negated them
- Bad report- “an evil report”- their accusations about the land are untrue.
 - Hebrew word – dibba- is mostly used for slanderous or untrue statements.

Num. 14:5 Then Moses and Aaron fell facedown in front of the whole assembly of the Israelite community. 6 Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who scouted out the land, tore their clothes 7 and said to the entire Israelite community: “The land we passed through and explored is an extremely good land. 8 If the **LORD** is pleased with us, **he** will bring us into this land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and give it to us. 9 Only don’t rebel against the **LORD**, and don’t be **afraid** of the people of the land, for we will devour them. Their protection has been removed from them, and the **LORD** is with us. Don’t be afraid of them!”

- **Clothes**- out of grief and distress because of the humiliation heaped on Moses and particularly because of the implied rebellion against God (JPS, 108).
- **Fear**- literally “and you have no fear.” Implies that others may have cause to fear these nations but not Israel for the “Lord is with us.” (JPS, 109).
- **Face**- to fall on your face is the OT’s ultimate mark of religious worship and awe, but in Numbers it usually anticipates some great act of judgement (TOTC, 121).
- **Hoshea to Joshua**- a small shift in 13:16 which meant salvation to “the Lord saves.” Its one

thing to have faith in salvation. Joshua, however, expressed the specific hope that at the crucial moment someone would turn up. Joshua had faith in the saving presence of the Lord, Israel's God (Duguid, 170).

- **Faith-** specific faith in the Lord's presence and favor with his people drove Joshua and Caleb's interpretation of the facts in front of them (Duguid, 170).

Num. 14:11 The LORD said to Moses, "How long will these people **despise me**? How long will they not trust in me despite all the signs I have performed among them? 12 I will strike them with a plague and destroy them. Then I will make you into a greater and mightier nation than they are."

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Num. 14:20 The LORD responded, "I have pardoned them as you requested. 21 Yet as surely as I live and as the whole earth is filled with the LORD's glory, 22 none of the men who have seen my glory and the signs I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tested me these ten times and did not obey me, 23 will ever see the land I swore to give **their fathers**. None of those who have despised me will see it. 24 But since my servant Caleb has a **different spirit** and has remained loyal to me, I will bring him into the land where he has gone, and his descendants will inherit it. 25 Since the Amalekites and Canaanites are living in the lowlands, turn back tomorrow and head for the wilderness in the direction of the Red Sea."

- **Loyal- literally** "follow fully." Is used almost exclusively in describing Caleb whose loyalty consists of confirming God's word, bearing witness to His truth (JPS, 113).

Application

An elderly woman used to pray every day, “Lord if you furnish the grace, I’ll furnish the grit.”

A man driving by a cornfield stopped to chat with the farm boy who was working there, and the following exchange ensued:

Man- It looks like the corn is turning yellow

Boy- Yes, we planted yellow corn

Man- Well, it looks to me like you’re not going to get but about half a crop

Boy- that’s right, we planted on halves

In anger the man shouted, “You are not far from a fool, are you, son?”

“No sire,” said the boy, “just a fence between us.” – J.N. Griffith in *Looking Up*.

Giants may seem enormous from the perspective of shrimps, but comparing them with the power of the Almighty tends to cut them down to size (Duguid, 170).

If you fear the Lord, you will be free from the fear of your enemies; if you forget God, you will inevitably fear men (Duguid, 170).

Stand up stand up for Jesus, stand in His strength alone; the arm of flesh will fail you; ye dare not trust your own.

Stand up stand up for Jesus, the strife will not be long; this day the noise of battle, the next, the victor’s song. To him who overcometh, a crown of life shall be; He with the King of glory, shall reign eternally.