



REST
PART ONE

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The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He led them out from it. 18For a period of about forty years He put up with them in the wilderness. 19When He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land as an inheritance--all of which took about four hundred and fifty years. (Acts 13:17-19 NASB)

Today's message will be very simple, but to illustrate the point we'll look at a number of Bible verses. In the three verses we've just read, we find a summary of the history of God's people in the Old Testament. They were slaves in Egypt, from where God rescued them through Moses, amidst many miracles and powerful acts. Then, God wanted to bring them into the promised land of Canaan. If you look at a map, the physical distance between Egypt and Canaan (present day Israel) is very short. But it took God's people forty years to cross the desert and enter the Promised Land. Why didn't they make the journey quickly? Because of disobedience. Why did they disobey God? They chose to not trust in God. We'll look at exactly what happened, but basically the reason they didn't immediately enter into the Promised Land, the reason they didn't obey what God had shown them, was unbelief.

Starting in Numbers, chapter 13, we'll look at the account of what exactly happened.

*Then the LORD spoke to Moses saying, 2Send out for yourself men so that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I am going to give to the sons of Israel; you shall send a man from each of their fathers' tribes, every one a leader among them.(Numbers 13:1-2 NASB) Note carefully that God says, "the land of Canaan, **which I am going to give to the sons of Israel.**" Here is God's promise. We must trust in Him when He gives us a promise. God is promising Israel, "I am going to give you the land."*

3So Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran at the command of the LORD, all of them men who were heads of the sons of Israel. Verses 4 to 16 give us the names of the twelve spies who were sent into Canaan. Let's go on to verse 17.

*17When Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, he said to them, "Go up there into the Negev; then go up into the hill country. 18See what the land is like, and whether the people who live in it are strong or weak, whether they are few or many. 19How is the land in which they live, is it good or bad? And how are the cities in which they live, are they like open camps or with fortifications? 20How is the land, is it fat or lean? Are there trees in it or not? Make an effort then to get some of the fruit of the land." Now the time was the time of the first ripe grapes. Note that God had already told them, "I am giving you the land." But they still had to do their part. At times God gives us a promise; we have to trust in the promise, but at the same time there's a part **we have to play in order to see the promise fulfilled.** They didn't say, "Oh good, God told us He's going to give us the land, so let's go in immediately and when we get there we'll find out what it's like." No. They sent spies ahead of them to find out all they could about the land. There are things that only God can do for us, and things that we have to do, that God cannot do for us. In this way we are co-workers with God.*

21So they went up and spied out the land from the wilderness of Zin as far as Rehob, at Lebo-hamath... 23Then they came to the valley of Eshcol and from there cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes; and they carried it on a pole between two men, with some of the pomegranates and the figs...

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25 When they returned from spying out the land, at the end of forty days 26they proceeded to come to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; and they brought back word to them and to all the congregation and showed them the fruit of the land. Two men were needed to carry a single cluster of grapes. The land God promised them is a good and fruitful land.

27Thus they told him, and said, "We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. 28Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there. 29Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan."

Sometimes God promises us something, and it's something good, but when we analyze what it will cost us to possess His promise, we're become uneasy, because we begin to see that there are enemies in the land who want to attack us and make it difficult for us to conquer the land. That's when we need to trust in God. "God, You told me that you would give me the land, and even though very strong peoples live there, You will give me the victory as I follow You." Amen? That's how the Israelites should have acted. That's how they should have seen things. But they chose not to.

30Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will surely overcome it." Caleb was one of the spies who had gone into Canaan. The voice of faith. The voice of trust in God.

31But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us." Immediately they contradicted what Caleb had reported.

32So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great size. 33"There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight." The voice of unbelief. And therefore, the voice of disobedience.

Then all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. 2All the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! 3"Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder; would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" 4So they said to one another, "Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt." (Numbers 14:1-4 NASB) Many things in the Old Testament serve as symbols for us, to guide us in our present-day lives. Usually, Egypt, and the slavery that Israel experienced there, represent the world and the slavery to sin in which we lived before Christ brought us out. The Promised Land represents the abundant life which is already ours in Christ. At times it's difficult to follow Christ. At times we are acutely conscious of the giants in the land. On the one hand we have the promises of God, but on the other hand we see the reality of the giants.

Have you ever said to yourself, "Oh, it would've been better if I'd never left Egypt. Better to go back. I want to return to my old life because these giants are so depressing. They're too strong for me." I have. At those times we must stand strong and trust in God. "God, You've promised me in Your word that there is abundant life in Christ. Yes, I will have struggles and battles while little by little I conquer the land; however, You've promised me abundant life. You've promised me an eternal reward. I'm going on with You. I'm going to be a Caleb or a Joshua, and not one of those ten spies that walked in unbelief and discouraged the rest of the Israelites." Amen?

(Reading this, I ask myself, how would the Pharaoh have reacted if the Israelites had returned to Egypt? He would have immediately put them into slavery once more. But at times, faced with trials and difficulties in life, we don't think logically. And these Israelites were not thinking logically either.)

5Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces in the presence of all the assembly of the congregation of the sons of Israel. 6Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; 7and they spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, "The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land.

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8If the LORD is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us—a land which flows with milk and honey.” Words of encouragement. Words of faith. Words of trust. Words of reality.

9“Only do not rebel against the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they will be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them.” 10But all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Then the glory of the LORD appeared in the tent of meeting to all the sons of Israel. Interesting! Joshua is trying to encourage the people. Their reaction? They want to kill him.

11The LORD said to Moses, “How long will this people spurn Me? And how long will they not believe in Me, despite all the signs which I have performed in their midst? 12 I will smite them with pestilence and dispossess them, and I will make you into a nation greater and mightier than they.” God is very patient, but at times His patience runs out. And here His patience ran out with these people due to their unbelief.

13But Moses said to the LORD, “Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for by Your strength You brought up this people from their midst, 14and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that You, O LORD, are in the midst of this people, for You, O LORD, are seen eye to eye, while Your cloud stands over them; and You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. 15Now if You slay this people as one man, then the nations who have heard of Your fame will say, 16‘Because the LORD could not bring this people into the land which He promised them by oath, therefore He slaughtered them in the wilderness.’ 17But now, I pray, let the power of the Lord be great, just as You have declared, 18The LORD is slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generations.’ 19Pardon, I pray, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of Your lovingkindness, just as You also have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.” Moses is asking God to forgive the people. This Moses was a true shepherd. He was a man of character. He loved God’s people.

So the LORD said, “I have pardoned them according to your word; 21but indeed, as I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of the LORD. 22Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice, 23shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who spurned Me see it. 24But My servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it. 25Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites live in the valleys; turn tomorrow and set out to the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea.” 26The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 27“How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who are grumbling against Me? I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel, which they are making against Me. 28“Say to them, ‘As I live,’ says the LORD, ‘just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will surely do to you; 29your corpses will fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me. 30‘Surely you shall not come into the land in which I swore to settle you, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.’” Why are Caleb and Joshua going to enter, and not the others? Because they believed, and acted based on their trust in God. We must trust in God. He has promised us abundant life. He has promised us wisdom. He has promised to meet all our needs, spirit, soul and body. He has promised to complete the good work that He began in us. He’s promised all these things. We must believe and act based on faith and not unbelief. We must be like Joshua, like Caleb, with our eyes open to the reality of the giants; but at the same time, saying, ‘We will go up, we will take the land; little by little we will take it because God promised it to us.’

God says all will die in the wilderness with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, and the children of those who had complained against Him. 31‘Your children, however, whom you said would become a prey—I will bring them in, and they will know the land which you have rejected. 32But as for you, your corpses will fall in this wilderness. 33Your sons shall be shepherds for forty years in the wilderness, and they will suffer for your unfaithfulness, until your corpses lie in the wilderness. 34According to the number of days which you spied out the land, forty days, for every day you shall bear your guilt a year, even forty years, and you will know My opposition. 35I, the LORD, have spoken, surely this I will do to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be destroyed, and there they will die.’”

**WILL YOU BE
A CALEB, OR A
JOSHUA?**

36As for the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land and who returned and made all the congregation grumble against him by bringing out a bad report concerning the land, 37even those men who brought out the very bad report of the land died by a plague before the LORD. 38But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive out of those men who went to spy out the land. 39When Moses spoke these words to all the sons of Israel, the people mourned greatly.

That's where we'll finish for today. There's a very clear message in what we've shared. God has given us the Promised Land, in Christ. Many times we face difficulties, testings, personal weaknesses, many things that are like the giants in the land of Canaan. But we must trust in Christ that little by little we **will** take the land.

So, this week I want you to think about Joshua and Caleb, about their character. And about the fact that faced with the giants in the Promised Land, in their hearts they continued to trust God, and acted based on that trust.

Will you be a Caleb, or a Joshua? To whom are you going to listen and obey?



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“IF ANYONE THIRST, LET THEM COME TO ME AND DRINK”- JESUS
(JOHN 7:37)