

LET THE BIBLE SPEAK SERIES

Ronny F. Wade, Speaker

GIANTS IN THE LAND

Num. 13:30-33

After the children of Israel were freed from bondage of Egypt, they began their journey toward Mt. Sinai. While in the wilderness God provided for them, food, drink, protection. At Sinai they received the law, that would govern them as a nation, along with the pattern for the tabernacle etc.

After being numbered and organized they were now ready to enter the promise land and receive the blessings God had for them. From Deut. 1:19-23 it seems they originated the idea of "searching out the land." Both Moses and God went along with the idea. God told them to:

- a. determine if the people were strong or weak, few or many.
- b. See how the people lived i.e. in tents or strong holds.
- c. What the land looked like--fat or lean.

After 40 days the spies returned with their report.

- a. All agreed that the land was wonderful. Flowed with milk and honey. Fruit in abundance. Very bountiful.
- b. Ten of the twelve spies doubted they could conquer these strong people.
- c. Two (Joshua and Caleb) objected and said "we are able".
- d. The majority prevailed and for the next 38 years Israel wandered in the wilderness, while an entire generation died.
- e. They chose not to take possession of a land God had promised to them because **THERE WERE GIANTS IN THE LAND.**
- f. They were dominated by this mentality.

I. Two Attitudes Are Here Manifested.

1. The Ten Spies:

- a. Their report not very optimistic
- b. It was one of gloom and doom
- c. They saw only problems, instead of possibilities "the men are larger and stronger than we are.
- d. They saw giants instead of God, defeat instead of victory.
- e. It was a "bad" report. One that stressed the negative rather than the positive.

2. The Two Spies:

- a. They had an optimistic report, one of hope and prospect.
- b. They saw possibilities instead of problems.
- c. They saw God instead of giants.

- d. Victory instead of defeat.
- e. God said Caleb "had a different spirit" i.e. outlook. He was motivated and driven by a different attitude.
- f. Why the difference? They all saw the same thing? The only difference was in their perspective of what they thought they saw meant.

II. Present Application: 1Cor. 10:11 "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come."

Romans 15:4 "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scripture might have hope.

- 1. Today in the church and world we still have these same two groups of people.
- 2. Some see the good in people---others the bad.
- 3. Some see opportunities---others see problems.
- 4. Some say "we can" "we are able" others say "we can't" "it will never work."

III. The Ten Spies--What Kind of Men Were They?

- 1. They doubted. "we are not able" (13:31) They questioned their own strength, resources and the God who led them.
- 2. The depreciated themselves. "We are in our own sight as grasshoppers and so we were in their sight." (Num. 13:3) Note: "Our own sight"---People tend to see us as we see ourselves.
 - a. Self-concept in children and adults alike important in relation to their success.
 - b. The church also. If we see ourselves as small--weak--ineffective--second rate etc. others will see us the same way.
- 3. They were afraid. Joshua tells them "neither be ye afraid" (Num. 14:9). Fear always follows doubt and self-depreciation.
 - a. Fear paralyzes us. Limits our activities and inhibits our growth and progress.
 - b. Fear of the unknown in church work hinders the work in many areas such as (scriptural organization, mission work, active progress in disciplinary matters etc.)
- 4. They had a critical spirit.
 - a. When people become negative and inactive, they turn to criticizing those who want to move forward.
 - b. It appears that the whole congregation was influenced by these ten men. They began to mummer and complain against Gods leaders Moses and Aaron (14:1-2)
- 5. They were rebellious. "Let us make a captain and return to Egypt" (Num. 14:4).

a. Can you imagine being on the brink of entering the promised land, and then wanting to return to the land of slavery?

b. Perhaps this tells us more about our nature than we want to admit.

1. We choose what we know over what we don't know.

2. We take the easy choice.

3. We refuse to risk, we don't trust God. In reality we don't believe God.

6. Ingratitude. Implied is a spirit of ingratitude. They were not thankful for all God had done for them, in the two years since they left Egypt. They had forgotten his constant care and provisions in their behalf.

They also seemed to turn their back on his promise to give them the land for which they had longed.

7. They Were Men of Unbelief. All these negative traits come from a spirit of unbelief. Heb. 3:18-19 "And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."

Application: Isn't it ironic as we look at this list and see how these things parallel the negatives we see among the church today?

It is these same attitudes that hold us back-----divide us-----and cause us to wander around failing to accomplish God's plans for the church.

This attitude of negativeism:

1. talks down God's work

2. causes people to become prophets of gloom and doom

3. "nothing is useful"---"everything is a waste of time." Such an attitude is a millstone around the neck of usefulness, is a cancer to the mind of its advocates, an ice-pack on the fervor of the faithful.

IV. The Language of Defeat.

1. Israelites: "It had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness" Ex. 14:12--Can't succeed, so better to remain in slavery.

2. Felix: "When I have a convenient season" (Acts 24:25) The language of procrastination is the language of defeat.

3. Job's wife: "Curse God and die" (Job 2:9) No use, why persevere any longer?

4. Elijah: "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life" (1Kings 19:4). Was discouraged, and the language of discouragement is language of defeat.

5. One-talent man: "I was afraid" (Mt. 25:25) Fear keeps many from using their talents.

6. Moses: "They will not believe me" "I am not eloquent" (Ex. 4:1-10) Lacked confidence.

V. Joshua and Caleb--What Kind of Men Were They?

These two men had a different attitude, disposition and focus.

1. They were men of faith. "We are able to overcome" (13:30) They believed in themselves, their fellow Israelites, but most of all in God.
2. They were men of Confidence: "The people are bread for us, their defense is departed from them and the Lord is with us." (14:9) They had confidence in the outcome.
3. They were men of Courage. "fear them not" (14:9) They were not afraid of the walled cities, or the giants or the strength of the people.
4. They were men of Action: "Let us go up at once and possess it" (13:3) Positive people say "do it now." They do not procrastinate.
5. They were men of thankfulness. They understood the land was a gift from God (14:7-8). They wanted to claim God's promises.

VI. The Language of Victory

1. "I can do all things through Christ" Phil. 4:13
2. "Our God will fight for us" Neh. 4:20
3. "Our God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Psa. 46:1
4. "Let us rise up and build" Neh. 2:18
5. "Yet have I not seen the righteousness forsaken" Psa.37:25
6. "For the eyes of the lord are over the righteous and his ears are open to their prayers" 1Pet.3:12
7. "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory" 1Cor.15:57

Today as we face the giants of SIN, DISCOURAGEMENT, SUFFERING, SICKNESS, PERSONAL TRAGEDY, AND INDIFFERENCE, we need these positive traits. We need to speak the language of victory.

Numbers 3:32 tells us there were 603,550 men of war. Of that number only 2 (Joshua and Caleb) entered the land of Canaan. 603,548 fell in the wilderness. The only two who made it were the two who said at the first "we can." Will you develop the disposition of these two men or that of the shameful spies?