

Well Able

Numbers 13:1-14:9

- There are two different views of the world expressed in our passage of the day
- But they are not just two different opinions
- One of them is right and one of them is wrong

- One expresses faith in God and belief in His promises
- The other trusts only what the eyes can see and the human mind can calculate

- One acknowledges that God is all-powerful
- The other wonders if God is powerful enough

- One presses forward in obedience
- The other stays put

- Today, we discuss the children of Israel and their failure to enter the promised land
- The world view that says God is "well able" to overcome them
- And the world view that says "they are stronger than we"

- Our theme is the correct world view
- The One that says "Well Able"
- From Numbers 13:1-14:9

- A land was promised to the father of Israel, Abraham beginning in Genesis 12
- The borders of this land were defined in Genesis 15, verse 18

"In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:"

- This promise was confirmed, when God spoke to Abraham's son Isaac in Genesis 26:3

"Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father;"

- We pick up the story when the children of Israel have been led out of captivity in Egypt
- Led by Moses, they are looking forward to taking up residence in their promised "land of milk and honey"
- God instructs Moses to send men into the land and he outlines the purpose

Numbers 13:1-3

1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them.

3 And Moses by the commandment of the LORD sent them from the wilderness of Paran: all those men were heads of the children of Israel.

- This is a command from God
- He restates the promise
- The land "which I give unto the children of Israel"
- There could be no doubt – this was their land

- The very reason the actions of the next verse are taken is the promise...

Numbers 13:17-21

17 And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this way southward, and go up into the mountain:

18 And see the land, what it is; and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many;

19 And what the land is that they dwell in, whether it be good or bad; and what cities they be that they dwell in, whether in tents, or in strong holds;

20 And what the land is, whether it be fat or lean, whether there be wood therein, or not. And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land. Now the time was the time of the firstripe grapes.

21 So they went up, and searched the land from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath.

- The mission was to bring back intelligence
- It was to determine the state of things within the land
- Whatever the circumstances, they did not impact the promise
- Or the faithfulness of the One who made the promise
- Strong or weak
- Few or many
- Good or bad
- Tents or strong holds
- Fat or lean
- God's promise remained
- It was up to the people to believe – or not believe

- Let's see what happens

Numbers 13:25-33

25 And they returned from searching of the land after forty days.

26 And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land.

27 And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it.

- A report is given after forty days of searching
- They provide eyewitness accounts and even physical evidence

- Everything was just as God said in Exodus 3:8

"And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites."

- The report that first came to Moses
- When God spoke to him from the burning bush in the wilderness
- Was corroborated by this evidence
- Everything checked out
- In other words – what God said is true

- But, there is more...

Numbers 13:28-29

28 Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there.

29 The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan.

- "Nevertheless" is a key word in this passage
- It is like our modern "on the other hand"
- It opens the possibility of going a different way
- Not trusting God

- The phrase takes the eyes of the people off God's promise and shifts their focus to circumstances
- They see strong people
- Large, walled cities
- Unusually large people
- And imposing terrain

- These are things that the mind of man struggles with
- Challenges
- Obstacles
- Impediments

- More input is needed...

Numbers 13:30-31

30 And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.

31 But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.

- Caleb breaks into the story and offers a little sense

- He takes God at His word
- Saying "Let us go up at once"
- He would prefer to waste no time

- He is convinced they can possess it
- God said they would possess it
- That's why he makes another statement: "we are well able to overcome it"

- What gave him this idea?
- It certainly wasn't the evidence that was provided by those who not inclined to believe God
- For they said, essentially, that everything was against them
- The people in the land are stronger
- They have fortified themselves – and are even bigger than us
- And the circumstances prevent us

- Is this true?
- Yes, If you don't believe God

Numbers 13:32-33

32 And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature.

33 And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

- This is called an "evil" report
- It is an "unfavorable" report
- They were providing facts
- But they were facts that didn't matter

- They didn't take into account the God over their circumstances
- The God that was on their side
- The God that made the promise

- That's why Numbers 14 continues...

Numbers 14:1-9

1 And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night.

2 And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!

3 And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt?

4 And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.

5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.

6 And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes:

7 And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land.

8 If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey.

9 Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not.

- Joshua and Caleb trust God
- They view the world based on what He has promised
- They see the future, not because they have any special vision
- But because God has revealed it

- Israel was "well able" to enter the land
- The land was theirs
- God promised
- The trustworthy God
- Who cannot lie

- But they did not enter
- Their lives (and the course of history) were altered forever for lacking faith

- I wonder if we are lacking faith?
- If we question the promises of God?
- If we have our eyes on circumstances?

- We should be like Caleb and Joshua
- Who saw the land of promise again
- And lived there
- 40 years later
- Because they believed

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