

“Who will Stand in the Gap for the Lord?!” (Slide 1)

“Caleb and Joshua (Hoshea), the son of Nun!”

Reading: Numbers 13:1-16

From the time they left Egyptian captivity until the time they were to inhabit the land God had promised them, the children of Israel were a thorn in God's side. They were rebellious, unbelieving, without faith, selfish and never content with what God provided.

In the 13th chapter of Numbers, Moses was instructed by the Lord to select men from the 12 tribes of Israel to spy out the land that the Lord God had promised to them.

These men were to be *“leaders”* amongst the men of their respective tribes. The attachment of that qualification would lead us to believe that these men should be well respected, honest, trustworthy, of good report, and capable of providing a doing their job well.

As I prepared this lesson, I thought to myself, did God need spies to tell Him what the land and the people were like? He was the creator of the world, all seeing and all knowing, so the obvious answer was, no!

What we are reading is a test, a purification of those who had faith and those who lacked faith. God will say in the 14th chapter that even after all that He has done for them and what they witnessed; (Slide 2) ***“yet have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice”***

But what of Joshua. Joshua for certain, along with Caleb could and would *“Stand in the Gap”* for the Lord. (Slide 3) Moses called *Hoshea-Joshua*. The name Hoshea means *“salvation”* and Joshua is in reference to *“Jehovah God”* and means *“The Lord Saves.”*

I believe this is significant because it is a clear indication as to the relationship between Moses and Joshua.

Joshua was his trusted soldier amongst a disheartening, backstabbing, and obstinate people. Joshua was someone Moses could rely on. A confidant if you will. Caleb was blessed with the same qualities and relationship with Moses.

Caleb and Joshua, along with 10 other men were given a forty day mission and this task by Moses in: (Slide 4)

Numbers 13:17-20

17 When 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. 18 See what the land is like, and whether the people who live in it are strong or weak, whether they are few or many. 19 How is the land in which (Slide 5) they live, is it good or bad? And how are the cities in which they live, are they like open camps or with fortifications? 20 How 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.

I believe there was a great deal of difference between the approach of this mission by Caleb and Joshua in contrast to these ten other men. From what we know about Caleb and Joshua, they felt not only the presence of God, but His strength as they entered the unknown.

The other men were driven by fear and unfaithfulness toward the God who had led them safely thus far.

I think in our own lives we can look back and see the hand of God in certain circumstances and trials we've endured. The outcomes were the result of His intervention. Our faith should have been bolstered because of what He's done which should help us endure future trials.

So the spies were sent out and indeed they saw the land flowing with "*Milk and Honey*." When I was young and I heard that phrase "*land flowing with milk and honey*" I pictured that in my mind literally. I thought it was like a waterfall. In one, honey flowed like water and in the other, milk. Wouldn't that be awesome to just stick out your tongue and have your fill of both.

But it actually means a land that is fertile and suitable to grow food and raise livestock. Indeed, that is what all the spies witnessed. They even brought back some of the fruit of the land to show its goodness. Grapes in fact!

The spies return and give their report:

Numbers 13:25-33 (Slide 6)

25 When they returned from spying out the land, at the end of forty days, 26 they 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. (Slide 7) 27 Thus 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. 28 Nevertheless, 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. (Slide 8) 29 Amalek 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."

(Slide 9) 30 Then 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." 31 But 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." (Slide 10) 32 So 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. (Slide 11) 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."

Nephilim? I don't want to spend a great deal of time on this but it is interesting and emphasizes the great faith that Caleb and Joshua displayed.

A common mystery about the *Nephilim* is enhanced by the belief that these people were the result of the Sons of God referring to *Angels* as having sexual relationships with human women.

Even today, there are conflicting beliefs as to who the *Nephilim* are and where they came from? Some say that they could not be the Sons of God, that is; *Angels* or *Fallen Angels* because they are incapable of having sexual relations with humans because they are Spiritual beings.

Their existence as far as a relationships with humanity are like the resurrected men and women in eternity as Jesus points out in:

Luke 20:34-36 (Slide 12)

34 Jesus said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, 35 but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; 36 for they cannot even die anymore, because they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.

God's Angels also had a specific purpose in regards to human beings. In contrasting Jesus and the angels, the Hebrew writer records this in:

Hebrews 1:14 (Slide 13)

Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?

The responsibility of Angels was to serve and not to procreate.

The word *Nephilim* means “Giant.” Human beings that are very large in height and most likely overall body mass. Fierce and even scary in appearance to the common man.

If the 10 spies who gave a bad report believed the “*Nephilim*” to be literal Sons of God, that is angelic, it would magnify their fear and somewhat explain their response.

The sons of God are sometimes referred to as angels:

Job 1:6 (Slide 14)

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.

However, in this context they are human and are “Giants.” Some believe they are descendants of Goliath. What we do know is these sons of Anak were large, just as their father Anak as verified in:

Deuteronomy 1:28 (Slide 15)

“Where can we go up? Our brethren have made our hearts melt, saying, ‘The people are bigger and taller than we; the cities are large and fortified to heaven. And besides, we saw the sons of the Anakim there.’”

If *Joshua* and *Caleb* believed the sons of God were angelic, it would magnify their level of faith. Angels or not, I believe the following statement sets up how they approach their task.

(Slide 16) ***“If God be for us, who can be against us!”*** Paul’s statement in **Romans 8:31** is the way *Caleb* and *Joshua* felt when spying out the land.

When the spies returned their reports were quite different. Composed of their system of faith or lack thereof.

Joshua and *Caleb* stood opposed to the majority and it could have cost them their very lives. If not for God’s intervention, they would have been stoned to death!

Numbers 14:1-10 (Slide 17)

1 Then all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. 2 All 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!’ (Slide 18) 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?’ 4 So they said to one another, ‘Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt.’”

(Slide 19) ***5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces in the presence of all the assembly of the congregation of the sons of Israel. 6 Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; (Slide 20) 7 and 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. 8 If the LORD is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us—(Slide 21) a land which flows with milk and honey. 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.” (Slide 22) 10 But 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.

The congregation, the whole of the people cried in hopelessness, but Joshua and Caleb stood bold in the Lord before them.

God was ready to destroy these people but Moses pleaded with God to spare them. He didn’t kill them but punished them in the wilderness and took away their opportunity to live in the “*land flowing with Milk and Honey.*”

Caleb for his faithfulness was rewarded by God in the promised land.

As for Joshua, he became a great leader for the Lord and stood up against the majority his entire life. He stayed faithful to the God he trusted. The one he entrusted his life and soul to.

The man that “*Stood in the Gap for the Lord,*” exhorts us this day:

Joshua 24:14-15 (Slide 23)

14 “Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. 15 If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, (Slide 24) choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

The question for us today? Can we be as courageous and stand opposed to the majority, while “*Standing in the Gap for the Lord?!!*”

Invitation

Today, to qualify for “*Standing in the Gap,*” one must be baptized into Christ. Have you submitted yourself to Christ Jesus by being immersed in that watery grave? If not, don’t delay. Do it today!!

If you have been baptized but have let your armor fall to the desires of this earth, may we help you pick it back up and put it in place so that you can “*Stand in the Gap*” once again. We will pray for you and with you.

Please let us know how we can assist you this day!!

Reading Numbers 13:1-16

1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses saying, 2 “Send 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." 3 So 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. 4 These then were their names: from the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur; 5 from the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori; 6 from the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh; 7 from the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph; 8 from the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Nun; 9 from the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu; 10 from the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi; 11 from the tribe of Joseph, from the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of Susi; 12 from the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli; 13 from the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael; 14 from the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi; 15 from the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi. 16 These are the names of the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land; but Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun, Joshua.

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