

# What Do You See: Giants or God?

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 21 August 2022

Preacher: Jeff Rafferty

[ 0 : 00 ] My lapel might not be situated. I promise I'm not going to do any walking today, or I'm going to try not to. So if you want to just leave that one on, that'll be good. Numbers 13, verses 25 through 33.

You know, these verses have a very remarkable story in them that I want us to explore this morning. And the reason I want us to really dive into these verses today is because I think there are some valuable truths that each of us can learn and apply to our lives as the Lord may be leading us to serve Him in capacities.

And we think, you know what, I don't have the ability to do that. That's bigger and beyond me to do. Or maybe today you're facing some circumstances.

You're facing some challenges. You're facing some difficulties in your life. And it is bigger than you. It's more than you can deal with and get through.

And you don't know how you're going to get through it. You don't know where to turn except to the Lord. And so I think there's some valuable truths in the passages that we're going to look at today to help us to glean from that, to take these truths that are found in this scripture and really apply it to our lives.

[ 1 : 19 ] Give us faith. Give us hope. Give us trust. And realize that we have to depend completely, fully, and wholly upon the Lord to see us through.

This is the story of when Moses was used of God to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt. They've gone for several weeks headed towards the promised land.

And they're right on the border of the promised land. They're ready to enter into it. And God said, now is the time. He gave the word through Moses to tell the children of Israel, now is the time to go and take possession of the land.

This land God has been working, preparing, and readying them for a long time. They were slaves in Egypt for 400 years. And God has been preparing that land for them during that time frame.

And they stand on the edge of the promised land. And God is saying, go take possession. But before he does, God tells Moses to give the people, you know, the message of one individual from each of the 12 tribes to go into the land and spy out the land.

[ 2 : 30 ] Now, God's not going to tell them to go and spy out the land to have a battle plan or to figure out how they are going to conquer this land. It's my belief that God is sending them in so that they will see that the land is everything that God had said that it would be.

He's told them it's a magnificent land flowing with milk and honey. It's fertile. It's a land that they can go in and take possession of and become the people of God and the nation that God was raising up to be a reflection of Him to the entire world.

And He's sending these 12 spies in for them to see that God's Word is true and that it is everything that God said that it would be.

He's not sending them in so that they could see in their own power and their own strength that somehow they can take the land because that's not at all what God is doing here.

Now, most of us, if we grew up in church, we grew up studying this passage, especially if you're in a Baptist church and use Lifeway curriculum.

[ 3 : 43 ] The curriculum for the children is written on a two-year cycle. So you probably studied this passage about every two years growing up. And we know all the factual information about this story.

We know the historical truths of this story. But what I want us to do this morning is go beyond the historical truths of this passage.

And I want us to ask God to open our eyes, open our ears, that we may go beyond the historical facts of this and see the spiritual truths that God is trying to show each of us, to lead each of us, that we can take those truths that God has placed in these passages for us to apply to our lives.

Because I'm quite sure that each of us, if not right now, at some point, we're facing or will face challenges, difficulties, hardships, obstacles that are bigger than ourselves, that are beyond our power and our ability to face.

They're beyond our ability to handle and get through, and we don't know how we're going to handle it. Or God may be leading us, and I'm sure at some point He will do this.

[ 5 : 13 ] If we surrender our lives to Him, He will lead us to serve Him in capacities that we may think, I can't do that. That is beyond me.

That is not my skill. But God is laying that on our hearts. And we have to learn that we can step out in faith and trust that if God calls us to do something, if God is leading us to do it, He's not calling you because you're qualified.

He's calling you because He wants to do the work in you. And He wants to use you. Look at Moses. Moses had every excuse and every argument in the book of why he could not do what God was calling him to do, to lead a nation.

And yet God kept telling him, it's not you. It's not you. It's God that's going to accomplish that in Him.

So today I want us, before we look into our scripture, I want us to take a moment to pray. And I want us to ask God, wherever you are today, whatever circumstances you're facing, whatever obstacles you're up against, let's ask God to open our eyes, to see a truth in this passage that maybe we have never seen before.

[ 6 : 33 ] A truth that goes beyond, you know, just the historical facts of this passage and something that we can take with us in our lives and help us to walk and be the people of God and apply that to our lives that we can step out in faith and trust God to either lead us through or around those obstacles, those challenges, or those difficulties, or use us to serve Him in ways that we never believed possible.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer. Father, we thank You for this day. What a glorious day to come into Your house and to stand before Your throne and to worship You.

Lord, I don't know what each of us are facing today, what challenges that we're up against, what hardships we may be facing or maybe a calling that You're putting on some of our hearts today to serve.

But I pray, Lord, that as we study Your Word and Your truth, that You would open our eyes to see Your message to each of us. Open our ears that we might hear and give us hearts, Lord, that would be receptive, that would be receptive, Lord, to receiving Your Word and give us faith that we can face those challenges, we can face those difficulties or those obstacles, or we can step out, giving our lives as living sacrifices to You, that we know that whatever You've called us to do, wherever You've called us to serve, that we can do it in the power and the strength of Your Holy Spirit, and that it will be You that accomplishes the work through us.

And it is in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Let's look together. We're going to begin with verses 25 through 27 here in Numbers chapter 13.

[ 8 : 39 ] And we're going to begin, just we're going to look, instead of reading the whole passage all at once, we're going to look at a few verses here at once. Again, the spies have gone into the land. They have seen that it was a land, everything God said it would be.

And they're ready to come back and give their report to Israel. So let's look at verses 25 through 27. At the end of the 40 days, they returned from exploring the land.

They came back to Moses and Aaron and the whole Israelite community at Kadesh in the desert of Paran. There they reported to them and to the whole assembly and showed them the fruit of the land.

They gave Moses this account. We went into the land to which you sent us and it does flow with milk and honey. Here is its fruit. When the spies returned after going into the land for 40 days, they came back and they told the people, the land is everything that God said it would be, maybe more. It was everything that they had imagined and dreamed of. It truly was a very magnificent land.

Verse 23 tells us that they cut one bunch of grapes that were so big that they tied it to a pole and it took two men to carry.

[10:00] How many of you grow grapes in here? Have any of you ever had a bundle of grapes that large? Jerry? Jerry? You ever had grapes that large that it took two men to carry?

You can imagine. Wow. Here they have been in slavery in Egypt for 400 years and now they stand on the brink of going into the promised land, a land that was fertile, plentiful, and a land that they could settle in, raise families, and be the nation that God was calling them to be.

However, the report stops there from being very positive and uplifting and there became a division between the 12 spies.

You know, 10 of the spies began to say, the land is everything that God said it would be, but we cannot go in. We cannot attack the people that are living there.

The people are large. We look like grasshoppers in their eyes. You know, they live in very large, fortified cities, and the land would swallow us up.

[11:15] Let's look at verses 28 to 29 here. But the people living there are powerful, and their towns are large and fortified. We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak.

The Amalekites live in the Nagib, and the Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites live in the hill country. The Canaanites live along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea and along the Jordan Valley.

10 of the 12 spies, they, now this is a dangerous ground they're standing on because I want you to pay attention to what they're doing. They're not just coming back and giving a report that these men that live there are these people groups that live there are in fortified cities.

They're larger nations than Israel. You know, they look like giants. But what are they really doing? They're recommending to the nation of Israel to disobey God.

You see that? God has said, go in and take possession of the land. And they're saying, no, we can't. They're saying, we need to disobey God and do what we think is a better solution than what God is saying.

[12:29] Now let me tell you something. Never once, never ever, does anything positive come from disobeying God. Nothing ever has turned out good.

When God lays something on our heart, God commands us to do something and we disobey it. But that's what the 10 spies are doing. They're telling the people, we need to disobey God and don't do what He is saying that we should do because they're afraid.

They're scared. They think that they cannot go in in their own power and their own strength. They're looking at the people and they're not seeing God, which is pretty amazing if you want to think about it after you think about all the things that God had already done and we'll get into that in a little bit more in detail.

Let me just say something. Don't be surprised in your own life today when you feel like God is leading you to do something and it's going to take you stepping out in faith.

It's going to take you trusting in God. Don't be surprised when others around you try to talk you out of it. Even Christians. A lot of times even Christians try, oh, don't do that.

[13:54] You can't do that. You don't know how many times I have been tried to be talked out of going on mission trips. You don't know how many times I've been tried to be talked out when I felt called to go into ministry.

People try to talk me out of it. My, even my own pastor when I was a teenager in high school, when I told him I was called to ministry, you know what he told me? He said, I'm sorry. People try to talk me out of doing what God was calling me to do.

And they'll do the same thing to you. When you're stepping out in faith, doing what seems to be crazy in other people's eyes, they'll try to talk you out of it.

Even other Christians, even your own family members will try to keep you away from doing what God is calling you to do. And it's going to take grit and determination for us to realize what's going on and that they don't have the faith, but we're going to have to have the faith to stand and trust God and move forward knowing that God will do what he says he will do.

You know, Caleb and Joshua are the only two, only two, two out of twelve who believed that God would do what he said he would do and they tried to get the people to go immediately and take possession of the land.

[15:24] They wanted them to go immediately and they tried to overcome the ten spies and talk to the people. Look at verse 30. It says, Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, We should go up and take possession of the land for we can certainly do it.

Now Caleb and Joshua were not foolish enough to think because Israel was a smaller nation than all these other countries. These people were like giants to them.

They lived in fortified cities. Caleb and Joshua were not foolish enough to think that they could develop a great and mighty battle plan and they had better weapons and all this stuff and that they could go in and do it in their own power and their own strength.

They saw everything that the other spies saw. But what were they doing? What were they seeing different than the other ten spies?

They had no faith and confidence in their own power and their own ability. What they saw was God. When they looked into that land they didn't see giants and fortified cities.

[16:40] What they saw was God. Look at verse 2 of chapter 13. I don't have this in the notes so hopefully you have your Bibles open but I'll read it to you. Start with verse 1 actually.

The Lord said to Moses, Send some men to explore the land of Canaan which I God speaking I am giving to the Israelites.

God has already declared He was giving this land to Israel. It wasn't a matter in question of whether Israel could go in and take possession of the land.

God has already declared it that He is giving possession to the Israelites of this land the promised land. He's already declared it. And Caleb and Joshua were the only two who were willing to look into that land and see that God had already declared it and it would be God who would win the victory not them.

But the other 12 spies they were fearful and they were afraid and they were only looking at themselves. They were only looking at their own ability and whether they as a nation could go in and conquer the land.

[18:00] But Caleb and Joshua are fully trusting God to go in and take that land. Caleb and Joshua teach us that there are going to be times in our lives when we have to take a stand for Jesus even if we have to stand alone.

There are going to be times when we have to take a stand whether it's in faith or trust or defend the faith of God even when we stand alone and no one else around us will stand with us not even other believers not our own family.

And folks we need to teach our children this. We need to teach our children our grandchildren that there are going to be times when they stand alone in school or among their friends or others and they've got to be willing to be okay because when we're standing with God it's okay.

We're not alone are we? We're actually the majority and it's better to stand in the right alone than it is to stand with the multitudes in the crowd who are wrong.

But we have to learn to stand. You would think after all the Israelites had already seen the Lord do for them they would quickly move to take possession of the land.

[19:27] After all they had seen God already do in a short window a period of time I looked it up and what should have taken them just walking from Egypt to the promised land should have taken them about 11 days.

Now I know they stopped at times and God gave them a lot of commands so it took a little bit longer than that but we're only talking a few weeks. And in that period of time I want us to think about what God did for them in a short window of time and why should they have not had enough faith to trust in them.

Before leaving Egypt what did God do? You know he sent the ten plagues didn't he? Egypt was the most powerful nation in the world with the largest army.

Pharaoh was the most powerful man in the world at that day and time and God sent plagues upon them to the place where not only did he free Israel from them they drove them out and they gave them all their gold and possessions and Stan just said get out go.

Then what happened? Pharaoh changed his mind and he got his army together and he chased them and what happened? They get to the Red Sea they're trapped.

[20:44] trapped in between the largest army in the world and the Red Sea. Anybody know what happened? He departed the sea.

Who else could do that? Who else could do that but God? You know I heard a story one time about a pastor who was preaching and he was trying to explain away this miracle and he was saying things like it really wasn't the Red Sea it was a smaller body of water it was more like a mud puddle and this senior adult lady was sitting on the front pew and she kept going praise the Lord!

Hallelujah! Amen! And the pastor finally said do you not hear what I'm saying? It wasn't the Red Sea at all it was just a really small body of water and she said if God could drown the entire Egyptian army in a mud puddle then praise God!

Amazing! By the way if you really look at historical archaeological truths today they have found gold wagon wheels around the Red Sea in the last 20 years or so where the chariots and stuff it proves that they were washed away by the Red Sea but God divided the sea they walked around on dry ground that's another miracle when I was a kid my friend and I we we swam in ponds you couldn't see and we got out in this one pond one time and I mean we sank to our knees in mud and you think about they walked across the Red Sea on dry ground and then God brought the sea together and he destroyed the entire Egyptian army he gave them water in the desert when they were thirsty he provided food for them when they were hungry God led them through the wilderness by cloud during the day and a pillar of fire by night the people had even heard the voice of God on Mount Sinai as he prepared to give them the Ten Commandments they had already fought the Amalekites do you remember when the men had to stand and hold Moses arms up and as long as they held his arms up they defeated the Amalekites that was in that time period where they left Egypt and they were headed to the edge of the promised land they had already fought them once and God had already won the battle once but it's almost like that old saying what have you done for me lately they had forgotten everything that God had already done for them and they were simply looking at what they could do in their own power their own strength their own resources now listen are we ever guilty of doing that are we ever guilty of doing the same exact thing we look at our situation we look at our circumstances we look at our obstacles we look at challenges and we look at how we can handle it and we turn to God last as a last resort over the years I've observed a very dangerous mindset among believers and churches it seems that we're willing to only try to do the things that we feel we can do

[ 24 : 13 ] God may be leading us to do something but I've heard time and time again we can't do that no we can't do that that's beyond us it's beyond our resources so we don't do what God has called us to do and we're fearful to step out in faith and trust God to do what he's called us to do but you know what when we are only willing to do what we think we can do then what results do we get when we're only willing to do what we can physically do we get the results results that only we can do when we step out in faith and we trust God and we hold tight to his claims and his promises and his word and we follow him we get a whole different set of results don't we when we trust God to do what he says he will do or we trust

God to do what he's called us to do we get results that God can achieve and in that better and that beyond what we can do in our own strength you know I don't know about you but I want to see God work I want to see God achieve I want to see God accomplish far more than what I can because I know I'm extremely limited we don't get much I'm a country bumpkin boy from whitesville Kentucky smaller than pickens and I know I'm sophisticated and suave now but I was I was a hillbilly redneck I'm still not far from it and you're not going to get much from what I can do we're not going to get a whole lot from what any of us can do in our own strength it's what we we want to see God move don't we we want to see God stir us our nation is in trouble and we've proven that through our programs or electronics or whatever we're not going to change people's hearts we're not going to turn this nation around we're not going to bring people to

Jesus it's got to be a work of the Holy Spirit working it through us is that what you want today do you want to see God do the miraculous through us then we have to step out in faith and hold tight to him we've got to step in faith and trust that what he says he will do when we're facing challenging times do we ever forget what God has already done in our lives do we forget his word and his promises do we doubt God's ability to work in us and in our circumstances if we just stop sometimes and think back and remember what God has already done in our lives if we just stop sometimes and reflect upon his word and his promises that he gives us then our faith would be strengthened and we would realize that it's not about me it's about me being strong enough to or it's not about me being strong enough to handle a situation or circumstance it's about God working in me it's about trusting God to do what he says he will do and for God to fight the battles you know a young David a little shepherd boy taught us that in first Samuel 17 47 said all those gathered here will know that is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves for the battle is the

Lord's and he will give all of you into our hands David didn't go up against Goliath thinking just because he was at times killed bears or lions where he didn't go into that battle thinking I can win

