

ANAK OR ESHCOL: WHICH DO YOU SEE?

Numbers 13:1-33; 14:1-10

13 And the Lord said to Moses, ²Send men to explore *and* scout out [for yourselves] the land of Canaan, which I give to the Israelites. From each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a leader *or* head among them. ³So Moses by the command of the Lord sent scouts from the Wilderness of Paran, all of them men who were heads of the Israelites. **Numbers 13:1-3 AMPC**

- These leaders were sent on a reconnaissance mission...“Go spy out the land.”
 - One leader from each tribe.
 - Joshua and Caleb were among them.
 - God ‘commands’ this idea.

¹⁷ Moses sent them to scout out the land of Canaan, and said to them, Get up this way by the South (the Negeb) and go up into the hill country, ¹⁸And see what the land is and whether the people who dwell there are strong or weak, few or many, ¹⁹And whether the land they live in is good or bad, and whether the cities they dwell in are camps or strongholds, ²⁰And what the land is, whether it is fat or lean, whether there is timber on it or not. And be of good courage and bring some of the fruit of the land. Now the time was the time of the first ripe grapes. ²¹So they went up and scouted through the land from the Wilderness of Zin to Rehob, to the entrance of Hamath.

²² And then went up into the South (the Negeb) and came to Hebron; and Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai [probably three tribes of] the sons of Anak were there. (Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) ²³ And they came to the Valley of Eshcol, and cut down from there a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they carried it on a pole between two [of them]; they brought also some pomegranates and figs.

²⁴ That place was called the Valley of Eshcol [cluster] because of the cluster which the Israelites cut down there. **Numbers 13:17-24 AMPC**

- Moses sends his team of spies to the land promised to Abraham and his descendants by God years before.

¹⁴ The Lord said to Abram after Lot had left him, Lift up now your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; ¹⁵ For all the land which you see I will give to you and to your posterity forever. ¹⁶ And I will make your descendants like the dust of the earth, so that if a man could count the dust of the earth, then could your descendants also be counted. ¹⁷ Arise, walk through the land, the length of it and the breadth of it, for I will give it to you. ¹⁸ Then Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt among the oaks *or* terebinths of Mamre, which are at Hebron, and built there an altar to the Lord. **Genesis 13:14-18 AMPC**

- The ‘spies’ are going through the land that God promised to the patriarchs and the fathers of their tribes...He wanted them to see the land and be re-charged about the promise...
 - They ‘saw’ the land, but their vision was dulled concerning the promise...
 - They ‘missed’ the ‘Concord Prophecy’...the grapes were the giants that God wanted to ignite the faith of His people...they chose to ignore them instead of being empowered by them.
 - The word ‘Eshcol’ means cluster...the Valley of Eshcol got its name from the size of the grape cluster chopped down there...the Israelites did not get ‘changed’ by all this.

²⁵ And they returned from scouting out the land after forty days. ²⁶ They came to Moses and Aaron and to all the Israelite congregation in the Wilderness of Paran at Kadesh, and brought them word, and showed them the land’s fruit. ²⁷ They told Moses, We came to the land to which you sent us; surely it flows with milk and honey. This is its fruit. ²⁸ But the people who dwell there are strong, and the cities are fortified *and* very large; moreover, there we saw the sons of Anak [of great stature and courage]. ²⁹ Amalek dwells in the land of the South (the Negeb); the Hittite, the Jebusite, and the Amorite dwell in the hill country; and the Canaanite dwells by the sea and along by the side of the Jordan [River]. ³⁰ Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once and possess it; we are well able to conquer it. ³¹ But his fellow scouts said, We are not able to go up against the people [of Canaan], for they are stronger than we are. ³² So they brought the Israelites an evil report of the land which they had scouted out, saying, The land through which we went to spy it out is a land that devours its inhabitants. And all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature. ³³ There we saw the Nephilim [or giants], the sons of Anak, who come from the giants; and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight. **Numbers 13:25-33 AMPC**

- The spies, the ten of them, gave a fear filled report to the people.
 - This land flows with milk and honey and the fruit is amazing...they couldn’t bring back any watermelons...they didn’t have a forklift!
 - They described all the obstacles and strong cities of the various enemies...(v29)

⁵ God said, Do not come near; put your shoes off your feet, for the place on which you stand is holy ground. ⁶ Also He said, I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. ⁷ And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters *and* oppressors; for I know their sorrows *and* sufferings *and* trials. ⁸ And I have come down to deliver them out of the hand *and* power of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a land good and large, a land flowing with milk and honey [a land of plenty]—to the place of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite. ⁹ Now behold, the cry of the Israelites has come to Me, and I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. **Exodus 3:5-9 AMPC**

- God promised them victory over these groups of people way back before they escaped Egypt.
 - They were concerned about huge fortified cities...little did they know the Lord would give them Jericho!
 - They were concerned about dealing with huge giant-sized enemies...little did they know David would subdue Goliath.

- I chose to use the **AMPC** version of the Bible because of **v32...**“They brought an evil report of the land they scouted...”
 - Most versions say a ‘bad report’ ...it was beyond bad...it was evil...devised to frighten, discourage, and continue the people of God to refuse His plan, purposes, and provision.
 - The ‘evil’ report ‘throttled’ their faith and presented the people of God as grasshoppers in a land of giants.
 - The Anakites were big men (Goliath size). The Nephilim were only mentioned in **Genesis 6:4...** this is pre flood only...this is a fear tactic.
 - Caleb comes to the rescue...he quieted the people and then he says, “We should by all means group and take possession of it, we will overcome it.”
 - Caleb was ‘tuned in’ to the promise of God and he knew God was sending them...but they would have no part. They could only lament their situation, weep, and complain.

14 And all the congregation cried out with a loud voice, and [they] wept that night. ² All the Israelites grumbled *and* deplored their situation, accusing Moses and Aaron, to whom the whole congregation said, Would that we had died in Egypt! Or that we had died in this wilderness! ³ Why does the Lord bring us to this land to fall by the sword? Our wives and little ones will be a prey. Is it not better for us to return to Egypt? ⁴ And they said one to another, Let us choose a captain and return to Egypt. **Numbers 14:1-4 AMPC**

- Israel gives up on God, on the promise of the promised land. On Moses, Aaron, Caleb, Joshua, and on their destiny.
 - They were willing to retreat again to slavery.

⁵ Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of Israelites. ⁶ And Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among the scouts who had searched the land, rent their clothes, ⁷ And they said to all the company of Israelites, The land through which we passed as scouts is an exceedingly good land. ⁸ If the Lord delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land flowing with milk and honey. ⁹ Only do not rebel against the Lord, neither fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their defense *and* the shadow [of protection] is removed from over them, but the Lord is with us. Fear them not. ¹⁰ But all the congregation said to stone [Joshua and Caleb] with stones. But the glory of the Lord appeared at the Tent of Meeting before all the Israelites. **Numbers 14:5-10 AMPC**

- Moses and Aaron go face down at the peoples response.
 - Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes to plead with the people...
 - They said God would give them the land by His powerful presence. They needed to believe in the Lord, His protection, His promises and take the land God was giving them.
 - They exhorted the people to fear the Lord and NOT be afraid of man.
 - Their alternative was rebellion towards God, not just slavery in Egypt.
 - The people responded: “STONE THEM!”
 - But...the glory of the Lord appears to them!
 - This is critical...the people could not comply with God’s heart...they were so mesmerized by what they saw and heard that they totally failed to see what God was showing them. God was showing them, revealing to them the answers to their prayers and the fulfillment of His promises to them, but the evidence of their circumstances was blinding their spiritual eyes. Never measure the power of God by the size of what confronts you.

“Christians recognize that God alone knows the future and holds their destiny in His strong and reliable hands. Life is more than a series of disconnected accidents, and believers are not to fret about the unknown. Their part is to live each day to His glory, discern His will in times of decision and trust Him for the guidance He has promised to provide. As we face the unknown future, we do so with a reliable Bible in our hands. God ‘has given us His very great and precious promises’, assuring us that, as we encounter the unknown, everything we need will be unfailingly provided.”

Raymond Brown