

**TITLE: WE ARE WELL ABLE**

**TEXT: NUMBERS 13:26-33**

**INTRO:** God chose Israel as His people, developed them into a nation in Egypt, then lead them miraculously to the promised land. Unfortunately, this journey took about 38 years longer than it should have, and an entire generation of Israelites wandered in the wilderness and died without seeing the promised land. The reason for this can be found in our text this morning.

## **I. THE TERROR OF THE TEN (v. 26-29, 31-33)**

- A. The good news (v. 26-27)
1. (v. 26) It was a land the flowed with milk & honey. Milk (goats/cattle – i.e., a land that could sustain herds & flocks - good ranching) and honey (from figs/dates – i.e., agriculture; good farm land). “Land of opportunity.”
  2. (v. 27) It was all exactly as expected, because it was exactly as God said it would be (**Ex 33:3**)! This is what He had promised them. They even brought back huge samples of grapes, pomegranates, & figs (v. 23).
  3. Remember that they had come from Egypt (hot, dry, very little rain, no wells, etc.) – so this should’ve been very exciting that God had given this land to them.
- B. The bad news (v. 28-29)
1. (v. 28) Nevertheless! This word should never have been a part of the presentation!
  2. The people are strong (stronger than God?); the cities walled (too high for God?); sons of Anak (giants– bigger than God?)
  3. (v. 29) The Amalekites live there. Why should this matter? They’d already defeated the Amalekites once (**Ex 17**)!
  4. And the Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites, Canaanites. Why should this matter? They already knew who lived there before they went to spy it out! Did they expect to find a perfect, beautiful land completely uninhabited? God had already told them that He would drive these people out because of their sins!
  5. Why all the doubt? Hadn’t they seen enough to trust in God? God never required “blind” faith. He had always demonstrated His power to them (10 plagues, spoiling of the Egyptians, parting of the Red Sea, waters of Meribah, etc.).
- C. The evil report (v. 31-33)
1. (v. 31) “*We be not able...*” – a defeatist attitude will never succeed. “*They are stronger than we.*” But what about God?
  2. (v. 32) “*The land eateth up its inhabitants!*” Now they’re even afraid of the good land itself! But what’s the real problem?
  3. (v. 33a) “*We saw giants, and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers...*” – self-esteem issue. If you don’t think you can do it, then you’re probably right!
  4. (v. 33b) “*and so (hence, thus) we were in their sight*” – what you think about yourself is what others will think about you! These men had no confidence in themselves or in God. They had already written the script! Cf. with David’s mighty men – **2 Sam 23:8f**.

## **II. THE CONFIDENCE OF CALEB (v. 30; 14:9)**

- A. “*Caleb (& Joshua) silenced the people*” – tried to stop the discouraging words ASAP. Discouragement can spread like cancer!
- B. “*Let us go up at once...*” – Immediately (before they had time to let the negative words of the ten cause them to fear and become discouraged).
- C. “*We are well able to overcome it!*” – What strong, confident words in the midst of a weak, negative moment. This wasn’t confidence in one’s own ability, but in the power of God (**14:6-9**–“*the Lord is with us*”; **Rom 8:31**–“*If God be with us, who can be against us?*”). They knew who fought the fight for them.
- D. It seems hard to understand why this confidence wasn’t shared by all (all had seen God’s power displayed so many times).
- E. How did this weakness make God feel? This was the very purpose for doing everything He had done and bringing them to this point. It should’ve been a moment of great joy! But they were too afraid to accomplish the task and receive the promised land!

## **III. THE CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH**

- A. Don’t be a naysayer. E.g., “\_\_\_\_\_ doesn’t work” (door knocking, gospel meetings, talking to your friends, etc.).
- B. Don’t listen to the naysayers. This is what the majority of the Israelites did (listened to the ten), even to the point of almost stoning Joshua & Caleb (**14:10**). If you’re not going to help, at least don’t hinder!
- C. As Individual Christians – don’t be afraid to talk to others, to be different, to be called names (**Jam 4:4**).
- D. As a congregation – we can’t be afraid of offending people, of being different, of not having the respect of the community because we won’t be lumped in with those who refuse to hold to the Truth, ignoring the authority of the Bible. We can’t fear rejection. We can’t fear preaching against things society accepts (e.g., abortion & homosexuality) (**1 Jn 2:15**). Congregations fall away because of these things!
- E. Fear God, not men (**Mt 10:28**). After being told of their punishment (wandering in the wilderness), these weak, fearful men added to their sin of not trusting God by not fearing God (who had then told them *not* to go up against the Canaanites).
- F. Think about how our fear and doubt regarding His gospel message makes Him feel. God has feelings (love, anger, wrath, disappointment; grieve not the Holy Spirit - **Eph 4:30**). How does it make Him feel when we doubt the methods of worship & evangelism He has commanded, and we either do nothing at all, or we change His laws to fit our own ideas?

**CONCLUSION:** God had expectations of the Israelites, and He has expectations of us also. Those Israelites feared because they forgot who would fight their battles. As Christians (spiritual Israelites), we can learn from their failures. We can decide to be on His side, & do His will fearlessly, regardless of the consequences we’ll face. We can follow the example of Caleb & Joshua. **Jos 24:15**–“*...we will serve the Lord!*”