

# Snatching Defeat from the Jaws of Victory

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Numbers 13

Believing God is easy to proclaim with our lips and challenging to portray with our lives! We say, “I believe God!” “I trust in Jesus!” “I believe God’s Word!” Or “Take God at His Word and trust Him.” Those statements roll off our tongues very easily, don’t they? Some days, maybe a little too easily. Do you ever struggle to believe God and take Him at His Word? Most Christians do. The children of Israel did. God had promised them the land of Canaan, and now it was time to take possession of the land. But unbelief, that led to rebellion, crippled the effort.

Examine the following passages considering **Numbers 13 & 14: Psalms 95:7-11; 1 Cor 10:5-11; Heb 3:7-19; Heb 4:1-13; Jude 5**

## I. God’s Covenant Promise: His Deity on the Line

- A. Genesis: The land promised to Abraham and his descendants.
  - 1. **Genesis 12:7**, *Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.”*
  - 2. **Genesis 13:14–15**, *The Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him... **15** for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever.*
  - 3. **Genesis 17:8**, *And **I will** give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.”*
- B. Exodus: The promise repeated to Moses at the burning bush
  - 1. **Exodus 3:8**, *... I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey...*
  - 2. **Leviticus 20:24**, *But I have said to you, ‘You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey.’*
- C. When God made the promise to Abraham, it became a binding covenant that could not be broken without God violating His “God-ness.” If God does not keep His word, He is no longer God! His Word rests solely on His character and is unbreakable.

## II. God’s Directed Invitation: His Bounty Promised

- A. The command to possess the promises of God and the call for spies (**Deuteronomy 1:19-23**)
  - 1. Charles Spurgeon, “*Unbelief prompted them to send spies... God had told them that it was a good land, and he had promised to drive out the inhabitants.*”
- B. The obligation of spiritual leadership to follow God (**Numbers 13:1-2; cf. 14:36-37**)
- C. Moses’ instruction to the Spies (**Numbers 13:17b-20**)
- D. The 40-day, 500-mile investigation carried out (**Numbers 13:21-26**)

## III. The Spies Report: Two Different Visions

- A. The Majority Report (**Numbers 13:27-29**) (10 spies)
- B. The Minority Report (**Numbers 13:30**) (Joshua & Caleb)
- C. The Differences
  - 1. The Majority report left God out of the equation (**Numbers 13:27, cf. vs. 2**)
  - 2. **Vs. 28** – “However” (“*The land to which you {Moses} sent us*”)
  - 3. The Majority report saw obstacles / Caleb and Joshua saw God.

## IV. Faith or Fear: The Irrationality of Unbelief

- A. Moses recounts this rejection later in **Deuteronomy 1:30–33**, *The Lord your God who goes before you will himself fight for you, just as he did for you in Egypt before your eyes, **31** and in the wilderness, where you have seen how the Lord your God carried you, as a man carries his son, all the way that you went until you came to this place.’ **32** Yet in spite of this word you did not believe the Lord your God, **33** who went before you in the way to seek you out a place to pitch your tents, in fire by night and in the cloud by day, to show you by what way you should go.*
- B. John Calvin, “*All our miseries are caused by our despising the astonishing goodness of God, and refusing to hope in Him as He has spoken.*”
- C. Fear will always overcome faith when the physical limitations are in view (**Numbers 13:32**)
  - 1. The land devours its inhabitants (**13:32b cf. 13:27**)
  - 2. Yet, the land supports giants (the forebearers of Goliath) (**13:32c-33**)

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## V. Light for Our Path

### A. Faith is essential to access God's power and can be mingled with weakness.

1. The father of the demon possessed son, **Mark 9:20–24**, *And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. 21 And Jesus asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. 22 And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” 23 And Jesus said to him, “‘If you can’! All things are possible for one who believes.” 24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!”*

### B. Faith governs our affections and directs them to God and His will.

1. **1 John 5:14–15**, *And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.*
2. In Prayer **Matthew 7:7–8**, *“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Matthew 21:22, And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.”*

### C. Faith aligns our behavior in obedience.

1. **Joshua 22:5**, *Only be very careful to observe the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways and to keep his commandments and to cling to him and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.”*