

September 15th
SPYGATE IN CANAAN

“Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan and said to them, “Go up into the Negeb and go up into the hill country, and see what the land is, and whether the people who dwell in it are strong or weak, whether they are few or many, and whether the land that they dwell in is good or bad, and whether the cities that they dwell in are camps or strongholds, and whether the land is rich or poor, and whether there are trees in it or not. Be of good courage and bring some of the fruit of the land.”
Now the time was the season of the first ripe grapes.” **NUMBERS 13:17-20**

Victor Wembanyama. Center for the San Antonio Spurs of the National Basketball Association. Also has a height of seven feet, four inches. But that's not all, his wingspan is about eight feet. He's already won one Defensive Player of the Year award and has led the league in blocked shots the last three seasons...and he's only twenty-two years old. Okay, so I'm a big NBA fan because my son is a fan. But how does this connect to the book of Numbers? Well, as professional basketball players look to score, they defy laws of gravity to do it...except when “Wemby” is in the painted area close to the basket. Instead of attacking the basket, they run away because they don't want their shot blocked. Even though Goliath didn't play basketball, he was even more an intimidating threat, standing most likely at nine feet, nine inches tall. Well, guess where Goliath was from? The land of Canaan. When the spies go into the land to check it out, they do find amazing fruit, but they also see the giant men that live there and describe themselves as “grasshoppers.” What does God teach us here men?

Well, we don't know much about the Promised Land but a few descriptions like “land of milk and honey.” But we do also see an example of the great fruit that is in the land. When have you ever seen a grapevine cut down and it can only be carried by a pole carried by two men because its so heavy? Yup, I haven't seen that either. But that's exactly what they bring back with them from the 40 days. But this abundance of riches isn't enough to sway their rebellious hearts. They can only look at the intimidating men that await them when they cross the Jordan River. It's only been a year since they crossed the Red Sea and saw the mighty army of Egypt drown. But that's not enough for them. God still isn't big enough for them...even the God who was at Sinai Mountain. But that's not all, they cry out in this way: “Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness!” They express their desire to die either in Egypt or in the desert. How does God respond to this? Well, God disciplines them by giving them exactly what they asked for...to die in the wilderness. Everyone (except Joshua and Caleb) over the age of 20 will die in the desert wilderness.

Men, these Israelites have doubted God time and time again. In fact, God gives it a count of ten times that they had put Him to the test. We're thousands of years removed from these events, but a few yards away at the same time. We don't live in a desert. But we do live with the rebellion of our hearts. God has given us so much blessing in Jesus Christ, but we often are too distracted by other “giants” that we live unfazed by His grace and glory. We see the obstacles rather than the God who triumphs. But wait...there's more. Even as God judges the people, He leads the people in their wilderness wanderings. He doesn't leave them to lead themselves. The Tent of Meeting still travels with them. He still provides bread every day. That is a God of grace and mercy. This is your God! How will God's presence and power shape you today as you live for Him?

Spend some time thinking about discouragements that you've faced that cause you to look away from Christ's strength and presence. Ask Him to help you see Him clearly so you can walk boldly in His Name.

For Further Reading: Numbers 14:1-45

