

# Righteous Perspective Among Naysayers

Today we are discussing keeping a righteous perspective among naysayers. It is not always easy and is rarely popular. But there is often a reward.

## Introduction

We are starting a new teaching series today about wavemakers. Just as a rock thrown into a lake will make waves that extend out from where it went into the water, people can be the center of waves of change. This month we are sharing about people in the Bible that stood against the tide of public opinion or common thought. We are going to look at different men and women in the Bible that stood out and made a huge difference in the lives of God's people. Today we are looking at having a righteous perspective among naysayers.

After the exodus and the people of Israel left Egypt they were headed to Caanan, God's promised land for them. God had delivered Israel from slavery in Egypt and had grown them into a great nation, just as he had promised Abraham generations before. The journey should not have taken too long. We read in Genesis that Jacob's sons made the journey many times back and forth to Egypt to obtain grain during the great famine.

## Sending in the Spies

As the Israelites approached the land that God had promised to them, they decided it would be good to send spies into the land. These men were to gather information about the land, its inhabitants, and the fruit of the land. The leaders of the tribes of Israel brought this idea to Moses who asked the Lord if they should. God allowed them to send in the 12 spies, one from each tribe, to investigate and bring back information. Let's read Numbers 13:1-3 and 17-20

### Numbers 13:1-3

(1) The LORD said to Moses, (2) "Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders." (3) So at the LORD's command Moses sent them out from the Desert of Paran. All of them were leaders of the Israelites.

### Numbers 13:17-20

(17) When Moses sent them to explore Canaan, he said, "Go up through the Negev and on into the hill country. (18) See what the land is like and whether the people who live there are strong or weak, few or many. (19) What kind of land do they live in? Is it good or bad? What kind of towns do they live in? Are they unwalled or fortified? (20) How is the soil? Is it fertile or poor? Are there trees in it or not? Do your best to bring back some of the fruit of the land." (It was the season for the first ripe grapes.)

This sounds pretty simple. Go into the land the Lord has been promising you, check it out, and bring back some fruit and a report on what to expect. They spent 40 days traveling through the land of Caanan and they saw all they needed to see. The men returned and gave their report.



## The Spies Return

The spies went to Moses and gave their report. They reported the land is good and very fruitful. They even brought back a huge cluster of grapes to show how bountiful the land was. But there was a problem. Fear was in their hearts. They took their perspective off God and forgot all He had delivered them from and looked at taking the land God had been promising them as impossible. They looked at it like they were taking the land in their own strength and with their own wisdom. Let's read their report in Numbers 13:28-33.

### Numbers 13:28-33

(28) But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there. (29) The Amalekites live in the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live near the sea and along the Jordan." (30) 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." (31) But the men who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are." (32) And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, "The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. (33) We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them."

They were afraid. They lost sight of God and forgot all He had done for them and delivered them from up to this point. They were looking at the situation from their own point of view, a very natural perspective. They were all in agreement except for Caleb and Joshua.

## Caleb's Report

Caleb stood up and refuted the recommendation of the others. He didn't disagree with the report of the land or the people who inhabited the land. Caleb stood up for God and His call on the people. Caleb and Joshua were ready to go. They were ready to take the land and inhabit it just as the Lord had been promising the children of Abraham for generations. Caleb and Joshua both shared their righteous perspective among naysayers.

Verse 30 tells us Caleb silenced the assembled people and said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it." Caleb trusted the Lord. He stood on God's promise. Caleb was ready to accept the destiny of what God had been telling the people of Israel for generations. He didn't focus on the natural. He was focusing on the supernatural. Caleb trusted the Lord and what the Lord said. Caleb stood up and spoke in favor of God and His plan in opposition to those assembled.

## The Result

We read the result of this meeting at the beginning of chapter 14 of Numbers. Let's read Numbers 14:1-9.

### Numbers 14:1-9

(1) That night all the members of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. (2) All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, "If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this wilderness! (3) Why is the LORD bringing us to this land only to let



us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?" (4) And they said to each other, "We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt." (5) Then Moses and Aaron fell facedown in front of the whole Israelite assembly gathered there. (6) Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes (7) and said to the entire Israelite assembly, "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. (8) If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. (9) Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will devour them. Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them."

All of Israel decided to believe the lies and recommendations of the 10 spies who were afraid. They ignored the promise of God and decided to forget all He had done for them in the past. They disregarded Caleb and Joshua. Israel's faith was being tested, and they failed.

The result of all this was Israel spent 40 years wandering in the desert. God said not one person from that generation would inherit the promised land. Because of their unfaithfulness, their children would suffer wandering in the desert for 40 years. The only two of the entire generation that would be allowed to enter the land were Caleb and Joshua. They were the only ones who had not lost faith in the Lord.

God rewarded Caleb and Joshua. Joshua succeeded Moses as the leader of the Israelites and led them into the promised land 40 years later after Moses died. Caleb, and the tribe of Judah, inherited some of the best of the promised land. God was faithful to Caleb and Joshua because they were faithful to him.

## Conclusion

Have you witnessed anyone showing a righteous perspective among naysayers? We are all in that place at one time or another in our lives; sometimes many times. God relies on us to stay true to Him and keep our perspective on Him. He relies on us sharing the good news of Jesus Christ even when it is not popular.

This passage of scripture we read today can be applied to our lives in many ways. The application today is twofold. Do not lose faith in what the Lord promises. God has promised us many things. He provides all we need to live a happy and healthy life. Jesus shares God's two greatest commandments in Matthew 22:36-40 which says:

### Matthew 22:36-40

(36) "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" (37) Jesus replied: "**Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.**" (38) **This is the first and greatest commandment.** (39) **And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'** (40) **All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."**

All we need to do is love God with our whole heart, soul, and mind and then love others just as much as we love ourselves. That alone is not popular these days.

Listen to the voice of the Lord in your heart. Do what he asks you to do. Stand up when he asks you to stand up and sit still when he asks you to sit still. If the Lord prompts you to speak, speak, and if He



prompts you to keep your mouth shut, keep it shut. Stay true to your faith in the Lord and keep pointing people to Jesus. In this, you will have a righteous perspective among naysayers.

When we are obedient to the Lord, even when it doesn't make sense, He rewards us. God rewards obedience and faith. Caleb showed great faith and stood on the promises of God. We must also show great faith and stand on God's promises in a world that turns further and further from Him every day.

Going along with the crowd may seem like the safe thing to do, but sometimes God calls you to stand up and stand out. Don't be afraid if He is calling you to do that. Be like Caleb. Be a wave maker!

