

A Bible Adventure

Edition 08

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There Are Giants in the Land!

A retelling of Numbers chapters 13–14; Deuteronomy 1:19–46; 9:1–3; and Joshua 11:21–23; 14:6–15; 15:13–17.

Many months had passed since the children of Israel had left Egypt and were now camped at Kadesh-Barnea in the desert. Just a few miles to the north lay the hills of the Promised Land. Moses called the people together and said, “We have reached the land which the Lord our God has promised to give us, so go up and take possession of it as the Lord told you. Do not be afraid!”

The elders of Israel were unsure that they could do it and said, “Let us send men to spy out the land first. They can bring back a report about the route we are to take and the towns we will come to.”

Despite the elders’ lack of faith, God agreed to their plan and told Moses, “Choose a leader from each of the twelve tribes and send them to explore the land of Canaan.”

So Moses chose the spies and sent them out. The twelve spies disguised themselves and went to explore the entire land. On their way back, they stopped at the mountain city of Hebron.

“Look at those colossal fortified walls!” one of the spies exclaimed. “They tower up to heaven!”

“And look who lives here,” another spy cried out, seeing two hairy giants striding by.

The giants turned and looked fiercely down at the men.

“Who are these grasshoppers?” one of them bellowed, pointing his massive spear in their direction.

“Those little field mice, you mean?!” the other giant said, and roared with laughter.

The spies trembled. “L-l-let’s leave!—Quick!”

“No,” said Caleb, the man chosen from the tribe of Judah. “We need to find out more about this place first.”

So, leaving the rest of the spies, he and Joshua (from

the tribe of Ephraim) headed up to the city and disappeared into its towering gates.

Several hours passed before Joshua and Caleb returned from spying out the city. They had found out that the mountains around Hebron were inhabited by a race of giants known as the Anakims, all of them well over ten feet tall, and that Hebron was ruled by three giants and had been renamed Kiriath-Arba, after the greatest of the giants, Arba.

“It will be a fight, but I believe we can take the city,” Caleb said.

“Take the city?! Are you out of your mind?” said one of the other spies. “I never want to see this land of giants again!”

The spies then left the city and went down into the valley of the nearby Eschol Creek where the giants’ vineyards were ripening in the sun. There they cut down a branch of a giant cluster of grapes, and it took two of them to carry it along with other fruit back to Moses.

When the spies returned, Moses and Aaron and the entire Israelite camp came out to greet them. The spies displayed the fruit to the people and Joshua told Moses, “We went into the land to which you sent us, and it is flowing with milk and honey as God has promised.”

The people began to talk excitedly of going up to take the land until the other spies said, “But the people who live

there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large! And on top of it, the Anakims live there. They are a race of fierce *giants!*”

Dismayed at the spies’ announcement, the people started grumbling, but Caleb shouted, “We should go up and take possession of the land without hesitation. We can do it!”

“We cannot attack them!” another of the spies said. “They are far stronger than we are.”

The other spies then began to spread further discouraging reports about the land, saying that it devours those living in it, and that its inhabitants were so enormous that the spies felt like grasshoppers.

Upon hearing this, all the people wept aloud and grumbled even more against Moses and Aaron. “Why did the Lord bring us to this land just to have us all be killed

by the sword?” they wailed. “Our wives and children will be taken as captives. Let us choose a captain and return to Egypt! It would be better to die in Egypt!”

Others began crying out, “It’d even be better for us to die in this wilderness!”

Then Joshua and Caleb were filled with anger and tore their clothes and addressed the entire assembly.

“The land we passed through is exceedingly good!” they said. “If the Lord is pleased with us, He will lead us into it and will give it to us! Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will completely destroy them! Their protection is gone, and the Lord is with us!”

“Stone them!” the people replied. “They are trying to lead us into danger. Stop them now, stone them!”

The whole camp had lost all faith in God. Suddenly, the glory of the Lord appeared at the tent of the Tabernacle and God said to Moses, “How long will these people refuse to believe in Me, in spite of all the miracles I have done among them?”

“How long will I put up with this evil congregation that doubts Me and murmurs against Me? I have heard the complaints which they grumble against Me! Say to them, ‘As truly as I live, says the Lord, I will do the very things I heard you ask for, and you shall all fall in this wilderness! Not one of you over twenty years old that grumbled against Me shall enter the Promised Land!’

“But because My servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows Me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land, and his descendants will inherit it! And Joshua will lead Israel to inherit it!”

“As for your children, you who rebel against Me, those children that you have said would be taken as captives, I will give the land to *them* and they will take possession of it. They will enjoy the land that you have despised! But your bodies shall fall in this desert. For forty years you will suffer for your lack of faith and will wander until the last of you dies! Now turn around and go into the desert again.”

The ten spies who had brought back a discouraging report died of a plague. Only Joshua and Caleb were spared.

The entire camp wept and mourned before the Lord, but Moses told them it was too late. Some even tried to go into the land of the Amalekites, but God was not with them, and they were defeated. So they turned

back into the desert and began their long years of wandering there.

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Forty years passed, and the last of the older generation died. Moses, now very old himself and just about to die, told the next generation of Israelites, “Hear, Israel. You are about to go in and conquer nations greater and mightier than yourself, with great cities, walled in up to the skies. The people are strong and tall, the children of the Anakims! But be assured that the Lord your God is the One who goes ahead of you. He will subdue them before you, and you will destroy them as the Lord has promised you.”

After Moses died, Joshua boldly led the armies of Israel into the Promised Land, and soon they had conquered vast portions

of it. As they were dividing the land between the twelve tribes, Caleb came to Joshua and said, “You know what the Lord said to Moses at Kadesh-Barnea about you and me. I was forty years old when Moses sent me to explore the land, and I brought back a good report. So on that day Moses swore to me, ‘The land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance forever, because you have wholeheartedly followed the Lord.’”

With spear in hand, the white-haired old man continued, “The Lord has kept me alive for forty-five years since then, and here I am today, eighty-five years old! I’m just as strong to go out to battle now as I was then. Now give me the

hill country of Hebron that the Lord promised me. The giants are there and their cities are large and fortified, but, God helping me, I will drive them out.”

So Joshua gave Hebron to Caleb as his inheritance, and Caleb led his clan up the mountain in the boldness and might of the Lord his God. In the following battle, eighty-five-year-old Caleb defeated the armies of the giants and took their city. From there he marched against the giants living in nearby Debir, and his young nephew Othniel attacked and defeated them. Joshua’s armies then removed the Anakims from the rest of the hill country so that no giants were left in all the land of Israel.

See “Heroes of the Bible: Caleb” for more on this fascinating Bible character.