

## Will Your Faith Be Remembered?

**Intro: How many of you recognize this name? Shammua, Shaphat, Igal, Palti, Gaddiel, Gaddi, Ammiel, Sethur, Nahbi, Geuel. All ten of these men are mentioned in the Bible; yet we do not seem to recognize any of them! Would you be surprised if I told you that they were leaders in the Bible? Would you be surprised if I told you that they helped shape the destiny of the Jewish people? And yet, we do not now know them. Don't you find that remarkable? Why have they been forgotten?**

**How many of you recognize these names? Joshua, Caleb Interestingly, most of us would probably recognize these names right away. Yet, these two men were not able to have the influence of the former with their own generation. How is it that we remember them and have forgotten the others? For an answer let's turn to Numbers 13.**

### **The conduct and words of the spies**

This was one of the most significant moments in the history of the Jewish people. Moses had led the people from Sinai to the border of the promised land. Twelve men, each a leader from his tribe, were issued orders by Moses to go out on a reconnaissance mission to spy out the land. They made amazing discoveries along their 40 day trek: In the Negev, the south country, at Hebron they found the descendants of Anak, people of gigantic stature; but coming into the fertile valleys they found prolific vineyards and fruit as gigantic as the men they had seen. From one vine they cut a huge cluster of grapes which they carried between two men on a pole to preserve for the others to see.

Upon their return the whole congregation was gathered to hear first hand the report of the mission. One could imagine the amazement of the people and the oughs and aughs as they brought out the fruit for all to see. But then, there came the news about the inhabitants. The spies made known that the cities were large and fortified and that the whole land was occupied by various peoples, the Amalekites, the Hittites, the Jebusites, the Amorites, and the Canaanites. And yes, there were giants in the land as well. At this point one could well imagine how the ough and aughs had turned instead to “oh no” with protests of fear and anxiety.

Caleb quieted the people and made known to them his conviction that they should go forth just as the Lord had commanded; but he was contradicted by the majority who insisted that success was impossible. Their words were powerfully faith-destroying. A rebellion was started. One last time Moses and Aaron sought to bring the people to faith. Joshua and Caleb addressed the people; but they would not be persuaded. And you know the outcome. That whole generation was allowed to experience their own prophecy. They died in the wilderness. Only Joshua and Caleb were destined to enter the land.

Even now, we still recognize the names of only two—Joshua and Caleb. The others would not be remembered at all except by the fact that their names are

etched innobly in Scripture as monuments of unbelief. Will your faith be remembered? Consider with me why it is that one is remembered and the other is forgotten.

### **Contrasting the "spirits" of the spies**

If we might borrow the words of Numbers 14 God said about Caleb, *But My servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it. (Numbers 14:24)*

It is the spirit that we have that determines whether our faith is remembered or forgotten. Let's contrast forgotten faith with remembered faith!

**Forgotten faith focuses on the obstacles of faith. Remembered faith focuses on the blessings of faith.**

*So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great size. (Numbers 13:32) and they spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, "The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. (Numbers 14:7)*

Both saw the same land.

The forgotten leaders saw only the immensity of the land.

The remembered leaders saw the goodness of the land.

So today whether our faith is remembered or forgotten depends upon how we look at the opportunities before us. Faith looks at the potential blessings of God; unbelief looks at the immensity of the challenge.

**Forgotten faith pays no attention to the evidence God has given.**

**Remembered faith recalls and depends upon the promises of God.**

God's judgment upon the ten spies was simply this: "all the men who have seen My glory and My signs, which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice..." Think about how many declarations of God these ten had to ignore to persist in their unbelief.

Over 633 years ago God had made known to Abraham that this land would theirs and his people would be enslaved in a foreign land for four hundred years and then they would take possession of it (Gen. 15:12ff). These spies could see a God who could know and control the sweeping changes of history itself. Yet this was ignored.

When God revealed Himself at Sinai with awesome splendor and might, He assured their conquest of the land, saying, *Behold, I am going to send an angel before you to guard you along the way, and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. (Exodus 23:20)*

Yet this was ignored. Even now in the command to spy the land was the assuring promise of God that they would receive it.

*Send out for yourself men so that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I am going to give to the sons of Israel (Numbers 13:2)*

How much more evidence did they need?! Yet this was ignored.

Caleb in contrast had no doubt about God's fulfillment of His word. The only condition or concern placed upon the fulfillment of these promises was the faithfulness of God's people. It is this sole condition that Caleb focuses on"

*If the Lord is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it to us—a land which flows with milk and honey. (Numbers 14:8)*

"If the Lord is pleased with us..." This is all that mattered.

And so it is today. Your faith will be remembered if you have a spirit that says, "I know God will bless us, if we do what He says. If the Lord is pleased with us.. we will accomplish God's work"

**Forgotten faith relies upon one's own capability to defeat and overcome challenges. Remembered faith relies upon the presence and power of God to assure victory.**

The ten spies were totally focused on their own capability. Of course, from a military standpoint, they were totally vulnerable. The enemy had every advantage in size, fortification, weaponry, numbers. And it is interesting to note how they viewed themselves. They had a "grasshopper complex".

*and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight." (Numbers 13:33)*

Caleb in contrast sees himself as a lion.

*Only do not rebel against the Lord; and do not fear the people of the land, for they shall be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the Lord is with us; do not fear them. (Numbers 14:9)*

His self-confidence did not grow out of pride but out of faith in God. When we are faithless our own sense of potential is decreased. We feel we can accomplish nothing and it becomes self-fulfilling prophecy. If so, then we will be forgotten; but if we see ourselves as victors through God's strength, then our faith will long be remembered.

**Forgotten faith is willing to obey the Lord only so long as one can agree with what He says; but, remembered faith is willing to obey God fully.**

The bottom line in the wilderness controversy ultimately rested in this fact: would God's people do what He had commanded them or not!

Throughout the desert experience we could safely presume that the ten spies had only reluctantly followed the leading of Moses, God's appointed commander. This becomes evident when immediately upon being confronted with the prospects of invading the land, they wanted

to appoint another leader and go back to Egypt (14:2-4). The truth is, they had not really been obeying the Lord at all! Had they come this far because God wanted them to or because they had wanted to?! Something to think about!

Caleb is described by the Lord in this way, "He has followed me fully". For Caleb his journey to the borders of Canaan was not a tentative, reluctant and uncertain journey. Each step was made in the confidence of a faith that says, "I shall not fear to walk where the Lord leads". He was willing to take the last step in the same faith that He had taken all others.

Thus, remembered faith is not halting, uncertain, and scared; but rather it is willing, confident and fearless in doing God's will. Faithful people are not afraid to go where the Lord leads them.

**Conclusion: I imagine that probably every one of us tonight can think of someone who they remember from the past because of their faith. I feel sure that person had the qualities I've spoken about tonight. But the question is, "Will someone yet to come think about you and say, "I remember that person's faith". He/she was an inspiration and encouragement to me.**