

Ministry of Grace Church

Numbers Chapter 14 – Speaker Notes

Last time we were together we looked at Numbers chapter 13. There we witnessed the 12 spies who were chosen to spy out the land that *Yahweh* was giving to the Israelites. Unfortunately, ten of the spies were only looking with their physical eyes. As a result, they saw a land that flowed with milk and honey, just as *Yahweh* had promised them, but they also saw giants and well-fortified cities.

Had they been looking with their spiritual eyes, remembering all the things *Yahweh* had done for them, especially what He had done for them when the odds had been heavily stacked against them, they would have recognized a situation where *Yahweh* excels in protecting and providing for His chosen ones.

Yahweh had already defeated the most powerful man in the entire world at the time, the Pharaoh of Egypt. He decimated the country of all their wealth and annihilated the most powerful army in the world, completely! He provided daily food and water for the 2 to 3 million people and their animals in the middle of a wilderness. *Yahweh* even appeared to the children of Israel on top of Mt. Sinai and audibly declared the law for all to hear. He gave the people the Ten Commandments carved in stone by the hand of *Yahweh*!

So, did the Israelites really believe in *Yahweh*? They believed in the miracles that He had done (though they probably gave the credit to Moses). They ate of the manna and drank the water, but did they really believe in *Yahweh*? Were they even capable of seeing Him with their spiritual eyes?

Let's see what transpired after the spies refused to go in and conquer the land.

Numbers 14:1-4

Then all the congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night. And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?" And they said to one another, "Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt."

Having just been informed that the Promised Land indeed flowed with milk and honey but that it was inhabited by giants living in well fortified cities, the Israelites had their eyes fixed on themselves and the giants. They completely forgot how *Yahweh* had provided for them throughout the wilderness wanderings and how He has caused them to prevail against the Amalekites at Rephidim. It's amazing how quickly their lack of faith has turned their hopeful expectation into fear.

Then, rather than taking their cares and fears to *Yahweh*, the Israelites blamed Moses and Aaron. We see from these verses how firmly their eyes were fixed in the earthly realm. They could not see past the visible to behold the invisible God.

And – instead of facing the future in faith, the people looked to the past in despair ("If only we had died"). They fixated on the known (no matter how bad it had been) rather than facing the unknown future in the hands of *Yahweh*. Still looking to the known past, the people recognized that *Yahweh* had brought them through great adversity in the recent past. However, they were unable to translate that into belief that He would continue to protect them and provide for them in the future. Their faith seemed to be based on miracles that they could see rather than on the invisible God who cared for them each step of the way.

Not only had the Israelites forgotten what *Yahweh* had done for them in the past, their focus was so fixed on the earthly realm that they assumed the worst would happen (“to fall by the sword”). All they could see were their adversaries, the mighty giants, not their Almighty God. Only twelve Israelites had seen the giants, yet all the people believed in them and their fortified cities. They had all seen the manifestation of Yahweh and they had all heard His voice, yet only two of them believed in Him.

In the minds of the Israelites, the worst thing that could happen to them was, “that our wives and children should become victims.” The word “victims” is translated from the Hebrew word *baz*, which means “booty, prey, plunder, or spoils of war.” The Israelites were so convinced that they were about to be overcome by the giants that they assumed that their wives and children would be captured and turned into slaves. (I wonder: would being slaves to the Canaanites be any worse than being slaves to the Egyptians?)

It seems that they had forgotten what their lives were like back in Egypt under the cruel bondage of their Egyptian task masters. They had also forgotten how *Yahweh* performed miracle after miracle at the hands of Moses and Aaron in order to release them from the Egyptians. Their focus was still on earthly things as they assumed that it was the leadership of Moses and Aaron that brought them out of Egypt rather than the loving power of their Almighty God. Since they could not focus on the heavenly (spiritual) realm, they assumed that all they had to do was to find new leaders who would take them back to Egypt. Clearly, they were not thinking rationally. They totally ignored some of their most basic needs if they should return to Egypt. Who would provide food and water for them? Who would show them the way home? Who would protect them against the wilderness dangers as they traveled back? And, most importantly, they never even considered how they would convince the Egyptians to take them back after they had plundered and destroyed the country?

Numbers 14:5

Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the people of Israel.

We are not told specifically whether they fell on their faces and prayed or simply fell on their faces, humbling themselves before the people to show their lack of malicious intent. Whatever the case, we are given some further insight into these events by Moses as he recounted the details of this event to the Israelites when they were about to cross over the Jordan some forty years later:

“Yet you would not go up, but rebelled against the command of the LORD your God. And you murmured in your tents and said, ‘Because the LORD hated us he has brought us out of the land of Egypt, to give us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us. Where are we going up? Our brothers have made our hearts melt, saying, “The people are greater and taller than we. The cities are great and fortified up to heaven. And besides, we have seen the sons of the Anakim there.”’ Then I said to you, ‘Do not be in dread or afraid of them. The LORD your God who goes before you will himself fight for you, just as he did for you in Egypt before your eyes, 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.’ Yet in spite of this word you did not believe the LORD your God, 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. (Deuteronomy 1:26-33)

Numbers 14:6-9

And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes and said to all the congregation of the people of Israel, “The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceedingly good land. If the LORD delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey. Only do not

rebel against the LORD. And do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection is removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them.”

Now that Moses and Aaron have pleaded their case to the children of Israel, urging them to trust *Yahweh*, Joshua and Caleb respond. These two were the only ones of the spies who brought back an honest report. Upon hearing the words of Moses they tore their clothes. This was an ancient sign of intense grief. Both Joshua and Caleb believed God, and they were appalled at the rest of Israel’s lack of faith.

Not only did Caleb and Joshua tear their clothes, they then spoke to all the rest of the Israelites. First, they testified about the quality of the land. Even the other ten spies had testified the same thing. This land was a good and fruitful land. Keep in mind that these Israelites had only experienced two types of land: the land of Goshen which was flat and watered by the Nile River, including its annual flooding which, though it made the land rich, would limit the types of crops that could be grown there, and the wilderness which they had been traveling through for the past two years (see Timeline of the Exodus from Egypt). The Land of Canaan was an entirely different land from either of these, with rich pasture lands for the flocks and herds as well as fertile farm land suitable for raising all kinds of crops and for growing a great variety of fruit trees. It truly was a land of plenty for all who would live there.

Joshua and Caleb had faith in *Yahweh*. Although it is stated as a condition, **If the LORD delights in us**, it was obvious to these two that *Yahweh* had already shown His special favor regarding the children of Israel, so there was no question about His delight. All they had to do was follow Him in faith!

Now these two spies get to the crux of their message. Don’t be afraid of the people of the land, that is, the giants. Joshua had led an army of inexperienced fighters against the trained army of the Amalekites at Rephidim and had prevailed because of God’s blessing. Joshua and Caleb possessed faith. They believed that God would do as He said He would.

The final conclusion of their message to the people was: with *Yahweh* on their side, there was no one that the Israelites should be afraid of.

Numbers 14:10-12

Then all the congregation said to stone them with stones. But the glory of the LORD appeared at the tent of meeting to all the people of Israel. And the LORD said to Moses, “How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them? I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they.”

The response of the unbelieving Israelites was swift and cruel. They wanted to silence those who would stand up and proclaim a message of faith in *Yahweh*. Keep in mind that up to this point in time, stoning was only used as the penalty for the highest kind of sinful crime. Yet, here they do not accuse Joshua and Caleb of any wrongdoing, for there was none, they simply wanted to silence them because they did not like what was being said.

The description in the text, **“Now the glory of the LORD appeared,”** seems to indicate that the brightness of God suddenly burst forth from the pillar of cloud over the tabernacle. God’s response to the unbelieving Israelites was just as swift as their response had been to the two faithful witnesses.

Yahweh’s anger burst forth because the people to whom He had shown such love and care had rejected Him. In truth, the Israelites were rejecting the message of Joshua and Caleb, but since these two were acting obediently to their God it was all the same as if the Israelites were rejecting *Yahweh* Himself.

The reason for the people’s rejection of *Yahweh* was because they did not believe Him. Even though they had seen numerous miraculous signs and wonders performed by Him on their behalf, they still did not

believe. Here we can see a truth that lasts throughout the ages. Those who believe God's message and act on that belief are beloved of God. But those who refuse to believe, though they see miraculous signs, will incur His wrath. Seeing is not necessarily believing, but believing is seeing.

As a result of the unbelief of the people, *Yahweh* said to Moses, "I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they" – This is the second time that He has threatened to eradicate the entire nation of Israel and to start over with Moses. The previous time was when Moses was on Mt. Sinai with *Yahweh* while Aaron made a golden calf that all the people worshipped as their god, giving the idol credit for having brought them out of Egypt. (see [Exodus 32:7-10](#))

Numbers 14:13-16

But Moses said to the LORD, "Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for you brought up this people in your might from among them, and they will tell the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that you, O LORD, are in the midst of this people. For you, O LORD, are seen face to face, and your cloud stands over them and you go before them, in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. Now if you kill this people as one man, then the nations who have heard your fame will say, 'It is because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land that he swore to give to them that he has killed them in the wilderness.'

Notice Moses' reaction to *Yahweh's* threat against the Israelites. He resists the temptation to become the father of a mighty nation. He is not focused on himself or what he could gain. Also notice that Moses does not plead for the people. He pleads for God's reputation and glory.

Moses begins his argument by proclaiming that the Egyptians will hear about how *Yahweh* destroyed His people. The Egyptians no doubt have great hatred for the Israelites and especially for their God. After all, the Israelites and their God had destroyed the land of Egypt, destroyed their army, and plundered their land. Moses is aware that the Egyptians had been following their exploits throughout the wilderness. The Egyptians were aware that the God of the Israelites had been present among them and talked to them and had watched over them as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

The next part of Moses's argument is that killing all the Israelites would demonstrate to the people around them that *Yahweh* was not great and strong enough to bring His people into the land that He had promised to them. After all, a God who could not fulfill His promises to His people was not a very powerful God at all, was He?

Numbers 14:17-19

And now, please let the power of the Lord be great as you have promised, saying, 'The LORD is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but he will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, to the third and the fourth generation.' Please pardon the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of your steadfast love, just as you have forgiven this people, from Egypt until now."

Once again, we see that Moses' entire focus was on the greatness and reputation of *Yahweh*, not on himself or the children of Israel. He obviously had a strong faith in who *Yahweh* is and what He is capable of. Moses declared, "The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression." Notice that he focuses on *Yahweh's* patience and mercy. Without these, none of us would survive and none of us would experience His grace.

Moses also recognizes that God must judge sinners and their sins, "but He by no means clears the guilty." This is the great mystery and dichotomy of our God. How can He be merciful and forgiving while at the same time judging sinners and their sin? The answer lies in the Messiah; Jesus Christ, who lived a perfect,

righteous life then offered it up for our sins, the Righteous One for the unrighteous so that we, the unrighteous, might have the righteousness of the Righteous One credited to us.

Only after focusing on the goodness and greatness of *Yahweh* and the need to preserve His reputation does Moses finally plead for the people. And - notice that he does not ask for forgiveness because the people deserve it (which they don't) but because mercy is one of the attributes of *Yahweh*.

Numbers 14:20-24

Then the LORD said, “I have pardoned, according to your word. But truly, as I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD, none of the men who have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have put me to the test these ten times and have not obeyed my voice, shall see the land that I swore to give to their fathers. And none of those who despised me shall see it. But my servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit and has followed me fully, I will bring into the land into which he went, and his descendants shall possess it.

Notice two significant things in *Yahweh's* response to Moses. The first is how quickly God pardoned the sins of the people. Since God is everywhere present at all points in time, at the same time as Moses' request for pardon, *Yahweh* was able to behold the blood of the Messiah being shed on the cross to pay for the sins of the people. The second thing to notice is that the pardon was granted as a result of Moses' intercessory prayer. James tells us that the fervent prayer of a righteous man has great effect as we pray for each other:

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. (James 5:16)

Yahweh told Moses, “all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD.” *Yahweh's* purpose in creation was to bring praise to Himself and to display His glory. One day in the future all the inhabitants of the earth will behold the glory of God. His glory will illuminate the new earth when all is recreated:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ... And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. (Revelation 21:1-2, 23)

Since God's ultimate goal is to display His glory and these Israelites were among a select few who had already seen His glory, they should have recognized their exalted position and should have humbled themselves before *Yahweh*. Instead, they rebelled against Him.

What does *Yahweh* mean by the expression, “these ten times.” Some commentators believe that this is not a reference to a specific number of times that the Israelites challenged or resisted God. Instead, they say that the number ten represents completeness. Hence, it would imply that the Israelites completely rejected *Yahweh*. However, there are others who believe that the ten times refer to:

1. At Pi-Hahiroth, before the crossing of the Red Sea, when the Egyptian army approached: (see Exodus 14:10-12)
2. At Marah, where they encountered the bitter waters: (see Exodus 15:23-24)
3. In the Wilderness of Sin when they had no more food to eat: (see Exodus 16:2-3)
4. In the Wilderness of Sin after God had provided manna and told them not to try to save it for a second day: (see Exodus 16:19-20)
5. In the Wilderness of Sin after they were told to gather twice as much manna as normal on the sixth day and not to gather any on the Sabbath: (see Exodus 16:27-28)
6. At Rephidim where there was no water (see Exodus 17:1-3)

7. At Mt. Sinai when Aaron made the golden calf that they all worshipped: (see [Exodus 32:7-8](#))
8. At Taberah, when the people complained after having left Mt. Sinai: (see [Numbers 11:1-3](#))
9. At Kibroth Hataavah, when the people complained about only having manna to eat: (see [Numbers 11:4-6](#))
10. At Kadesh-Barnea where the people refused to enter the land because of the giants: (see [Numbers 14:1-3](#))

Because of their repeated rejection of *Yahweh* and their refusal to believe and obey Him, He declared that none of the people who were just recently numbered ([Numbers 1:45-46](#)) would ever see the Promised Land. Instead, they would die in the wilderness. These were men 20 years of age and up. So, those who were under twenty years old would one day be permitted to see the Promised Land. The exception to the over twenty rule was Caleb who would eventually be allowed to enter the Promised Land and his descendents would eventually settle the area around Hebron (Kiriath Arba). The word translated “inherit” can also be translated “expel.” This would also be an acceptable description for Caleb not only was given the land of Kiriath Arba, but he personally defeated the three giants and expelled the people. (See [Joshua 15:13-14](#))

Numbers 14: 25

Now, since the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwell in the valleys, turn tomorrow and set out for the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea.”

The Hebrew word translated “valley” is *ēmeq*, which means “valley” but it also is used of “lowlands” or the area at the foot of mountains. The Amalekites occupied all of the land from the mountains of Canaan to the border of Egypt, including all the wilderness area that the Israelites had travelled through during the previous two years. The Canaanites mentioned here were probably the Amorites that are mentioned in verse forty-four. These two tribes had probably been alerted concerning the presence of the Israelites and may have come down from the hills, waiting in ambush for the Israelites. Hence, God warned the Israelites to retreat into the wilderness from which they had recently arrived.

Numbers 14:26-30

And the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, “How long shall this wicked congregation grumble against me? I have heard the grumbings of the people of Israel, which they grumble against me. Say to them, ‘As I live, declares the LORD, what you have said in my hearing I will do to you: your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness, and of all your number, listed in the census from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against me, not one shall come into the land where I swore that I would make you dwell, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.

Moses is now given the message from God to deliver to the people explaining that those who were numbered will not enter the Promised Land but would die in the wilderness; all except Joshua and Caleb.

Numbers 14:31-35

But your little ones, who you said would become a prey, I will bring in, and they shall know the land that you have rejected. But as for you, your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years and shall suffer for your faithlessness, until the last of your dead bodies lies in the wilderness. According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, a year for each day, you shall bear your iniquity forty years, and you shall know my displeasure.’ I, the LORD, have spoken. Surely this will I do to all this wicked congregation who are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall come to a full end, and there they shall die.”

There is a bit of irony here. The Israelites had complained that their wives and children would become plunder and made slaves by the Canaanites. Instead, *Yahweh* tells the people that these would be the ones to enter the land of Canaan. Those who rejected *Yahweh's* instructions would die in the wilderness. The length of time of wandering in the wilderness before entering the land would be forty years, one year for each day that the spies had been spying out the land.

The Israelites had been shepherds in Egypt where there was plenty of pastureland. Now they would be shepherds in the wilderness where pastureland would be scarce. The word translated “faithlessness” is a Hebrew word that actually refers to fornication or whoredom. It is a pronouncement on the faithless Israelites that they had pursued other gods, including their own fleshly desires, rather than following the God who had covenanted Himself to them.

Numbers 14:36-39

And the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned and made all the congregation grumble against him by bringing up a bad report about the land—the men who brought up a bad report of the land—died by plague before the LORD. Of those men who went to spy out the land, only Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive. When Moses told these words to all the people of Israel, the people mourned greatly.

The ten lying spies who brought back a bad report of the land all died immediately from a plague. There are some who believe that they contracted this plague from the land. Joshua and Caleb were protected from the plague by *Yahweh*. If, indeed, the plague which the false spies died from was contracted while spying out the land it would indicate that God’s divine protection was upon these two. If, on the other hand, the source of the plague was God Himself, then it shows His displeasure with the ten and His pleasure with the two. In either case we see that God’s blessing represents a hedge of protection whereas God’s displeasure is swiftly followed by His judgment.

Numbers 14:40-43

And they rose early in the morning and went up to the heights of the hill country, saying, “Here we are. We will go up to the place that the LORD has promised, for we have sinned.” But Moses said, “Why now are you transgressing the command of the LORD, when that will not succeed? Do not go up, for the LORD is not among you, lest you be struck down before your enemies. For there the Amalekites and the Canaanites are facing you, and you shall fall by the sword. Because you have turned back from following the LORD, the LORD will not be with you.”

The area between Kadesh-barnea and the mountains of Hebron (Kiriath-Arba) contains a series of low hills and shallow valleys. So, the expression “heights of the hill country” is most likely referring to the top of one of the low hills around Kadesh. This is probably the place where Moses stood to talk to the people.

The Israelites then reconsidered their position regarding going into the land. Before, they had turned away from Moses and from God, now they have repented. As a result of their repentance, they said, “we will go up to the place which the LORD has promised, for we have sinned” Having repented, the people now were ready to do what *Yahweh* had instructed them to do several days earlier. Previously they had refused to go up into the land and *Yahweh* had killed the ten false spies and Moses had informed them that they would wander in the wilderness until they died. Having seen and heard of *Yahweh's* judgments, the people now wanted to go up into the Promised Land instead of dying in the wilderness. They wanted to obey, not out of faith, but out of fear.

Moses’s response (“why do you transgress the command of the LORD”) was to show them that it was too late to go up into the land because this was no longer the desire of *Yahweh*. And he warns the people that if they try to go up against the Amalekites and Canaanites they will be defeated because this is no longer

the will of *Yahweh*. This is clear evidence that the people were still following their own selfish desires rather than the desire of their God. Though on the surface it may appear that their actions were the result of their repentance, these actions were contrary to the will of God and so were just as rebellious and sinful as their initial refusal to go up into the land. As a result, Moses warns them that if they persist in following their own will rather than *Yahweh's* will, they will not succeed because *Yahweh* will not fight with them.

Numbers 14:44-45

But they presumed to go up to the heights of the hill country, although neither the ark of the covenant of the LORD nor Moses departed out of the camp. Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down and defeated them and pursued them, even to Hormah.

“presumed” – from the Hebrew word *awphal*, meaning “to swell.” It describes someone who is swelled up with self pride and arrogance. This is evidence that the people were acting out of their own self confidence rather than humbly submitting to God’s direction for them. They were looking at the situation with their fleshly eyes instead of their spiritual eyes.

Self-will and arrogance can be so blinding! Throughout the past two years, Moses had been leading the children of Israel, following *Yahweh's* direction. Since the giving of the Law and the building of the tabernacle at Sinai, the ark of the covenant represented God’s presence just as much as had the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. Had the people been focused on their God instead of themselves it would have been obvious to them that they were heading off without the support of *Yahweh*. They were fighting their own battles instead of letting *Yahweh* fight them.

As a result, the Amalekites, “drove them back as far as Hormah” The word translated “drove” means, “to hit, to kill, or to slaughter.” The indication is that they were not simply chased, but they were being killed all along the way.

So What?

Lift up your eyes!

The Israelites based their relationship with God on what they could see and feel, physically. As a result they were unable to see the invisible God for who He is, what He had done for them, and what He would continue to do for them if they would just believe Him. Throughout the Bible we see God’s people being instructed to “lift up your eyes.” Whereas, this can be read in the physical sense of looking off into the distance or looking skyward, the use of this expression has a spiritual significance as well. “Lift up your eyes” means “use your spiritual eyes.” That is, use the eyes of your faith or look with conviction and expectation that God **will** do what He said He would do. Let’s look at some of the examples of this expression:

The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. (Genesis 13:14-15)

Abram (later called Abraham) had just graciously offered Lot the choice of which land he wanted. This would be his for the raising of his flocks. Abram would then take his flocks in the other direction because their combined herds had grown so large that they could not coexist. Lot chose the well watered land of the Jordan Valley, leaving Abram the mountainous country in which it would be more difficult to care for his flocks. However, because of his unselfish action, Abram was instructed by God to lift up his eyes and look at the land in all directions because God was giving it all to Abram. In order for Abram to truly

appreciate the land before him, he had to look at this land with faith, believing that God really was giving it all to him. He had to use his spiritual eyes.

David likewise recognized that his provision and protection came from God. He believed this truly. It was his faith that allowed him to see God's help coming as he wrote:

I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. (Psalms 121:1-2)

To you I lift up my eyes, O you who are enthroned in the heavens! (Psalms 123:1)

David looked to God with his eyes of faith, not his earthly eyes. Only with his eyes of faith could he behold the God who lives in the heavens. David used his spiritual eyes.

Isaiah, as he penned the well known and inspiring fortieth chapter of his writings, described the creation work of our Holy God. Once again, anyone can see the product of God's creation, but only when viewed with our eyes of faith can we recognize that God truly created all that we see. Those who do not have eyes of faith must make up preposterous theories of how everything came into being, because they cannot see them with eyes of faith.

To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name; by the greatness of his might and because he is strong in power, not one is missing. (Isaiah 40:25-26)

And, Jesus taught that we must look with our spiritual eyes if we are to see how ripe the fields of humanity are for the message of salvation by grace through faith:

Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. (John 4:35)

In His message regarding His second coming, Jesus instructed the Jews to look with their spiritual eyes for the coming of the Messiah from the heavens:

"And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." (Luke 21:25-28)

The children of Israel did not use their spiritual eyes as they listened to the ten spies give their false report. The people could only see the giants inside their fortified cities. They couldn't see the angelic host and the chariots of fire that God had ready to defend and protect His children if they would simply believe Him and obey Him. Without spiritual eyes, the future is fearful.

How are your eyes today? When you look around today do you see the gigantic enemies arrayed in battle formation against you? Do you dwell on the problems? Is your focus on what you can't accomplish, or do your spiritual eyes see victory in the midst of the battle? If all you can see are problems, troubles, frustration, and failure, then perhaps you are not lifting up your eyes of faith. Instead of worrying and getting up-tight because things are not going the way you want them to go, lift up your eyes of faith and seek out our Heavenly Father.

Stand Up and be Counted!

Joshua and Caleb stood up as witnesses to the goodness and power of *Yahweh*. They did so in the presence of those who did not like their message. They did so, not for their own advancement and glory,

but to demonstrate the greatness of *Yahweh*. Their message was based strictly on faith. They didn't care what others might think about them, what they might say about them, or what they might do to them. Joshua and Caleb were called by God to perform a task. They did so to the best of their ability. And when they returned, they gave a truthful report of what they had seen. They knew the next task that God wanted them to do would be difficult. They knew that the "odds" were against them from a human perspective. But they lifted up their spiritual eyes and saw that with God all things are possible.

Peer pressure is hard to resist. Everyone around them was proclaiming loudly against what Joshua and Caleb knew to be right. They could have just slipped into the background. They could have just nodded their heads in agreement. They could have just kept their mouths shut. But they didn't! They knew what God wanted them to do and they wanted to do it. They tore their clothes to demonstrate their utter disgust at what the masses wanted to do. They spoke up. They spoke with conviction. They proclaimed the goodness of *Yahweh* and witnessed to His past faithfulness. They declared without any doubt that if *Yahweh* was for them, none could stand against them. They urged the people to be obedient to God and to step out on faith. And what was the result? The people sought to stone them to death! But - *Yahweh* intervened.

I wonder how many of us are willing to stand face to face with a hostile crowd, one that openly defies the living God, and proclaim His goodness and glory. How many of us would put our earthly life on the line because we are so convinced of our eternal salvation should our earthly life be forfeited. I am reminded of the martyrdom of Polycarp who, in the second century, was killed because his faith was unwavering. When threatened with being burned at the stake if he would not recant his faith, Polycarp courageously replied,

"Eighty and six years I have served Him, and He has done me no wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King and Savior? You threaten me with a fire that burns for a season, and after a little while is quenched; but you are ignorant of the fire of everlasting punishment that is prepared for the wicked. But why do you tarry? Bring forth what you will."

Is your faith this strong? Are you willing to lay it all on the line in the presence of a hostile crowd like Joshua and Caleb did or like Polycarp did? Is your love for God so great that you would proclaim His lordship over you no matter what the cost? Will you follow Him wherever He asks you to go, even if it means giving up everything you hold dear in this life? According to **Numbers 1:46** there were 603,550 Israelite men over the age of twenty who refused to obey *Yahweh*, but there were two of them who said, "Let's go fight the giants!"

Now, as we go into communion, let's lift up our eyes and see our God, *Yahweh*, with our spiritual eyes.