



# REASON TOGETHER CHURCH

## REASON TOGETHER STUDY

### GIANTS IN THE BIBLE

#### PART THREE OF EIGHT



# WHO WERE THE ANAKIM?

NUMBERS 13:22-33 | DEUTERONOMY 1:28 | JOSHUA 11:21-23

The people were great and tall. The promise of God was greater.



## SERMON & PASTOR'S COMMENTARY

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# WHO WERE THE ANAKIM?

**Sermon Transcript**

*The Mountain Fear Could Not Keep*

Numbers 13:22-33 | Deuteronomy 1:28 | Joshua 11:21-23

**Dr. Thomas W. Hawksley**

Reason Together Church

**Giants in the Bible | Part Three of Eight**

Aloha.

Welcome to Reason Together Church.

If you are worshipping with us for the first time, we are especially glad you are here.

You will not be singled out.

You will not be asked to stand or introduce yourself.

We simply want you to know that you are welcome.

If you would like us to stay in touch, our guest card asks only for your first name and your email address.

After the service, please join us at the Reason Together Cafe.

The coffee is free.

The conversation is free.

And we offer free refills on both.

We do not pass an offering plate at Reason Together Church.

Guests are not expected to give, and members of another church should give through their home church.

For those who are led to support this ministry, there is a giving box in the back.

Bring your questions.

Open your Bible.

Let us Reason Together the Word of God.

Let us pray.

Our Heavenly Father,

Thank You for bringing us together.

Thank You for giving us Your Word.

As we study people whose name frightened a generation, help us distinguish what Your Word says from what imagination has added.

Give us honesty about the dangers we face, humility about the things we do not know and faith to remember that no enemy is greater than You.

Show us where fear has distorted our thinking.

Teach us to follow You wholly as Caleb did.

Most of all, lead every heart to Jesus Christ, the faithful Son and risen Savior.

In the name of Jesus we pray.

Amen.

Our primary Scripture readings are Numbers chapter 13, verses 22 through 33, Deuteronomy chapter 1, verse 28 and Joshua chapter 11, verses 21 through 23.

I will be reading from the King James Version.

Numbers 13 begins our encounter with the Anakim at Hebron.

Verse 22 says:

"And they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron; where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the children of Anak, were."

The spies returned to Israel and reported in verse 28:

"Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there."

Caleb answered in verse 30:

"Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it."

But the other men said in verse 31:

"We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we."

Then verse 33 says:

"And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."

Deuteronomy 1:28 remembers the result:

"Our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people is greater and taller than we; the cities are great and walled up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there."

Joshua 11:21 and 22 records what later happened:

"And at that time came Joshua, and cut off the Anakims from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel: Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities."

"There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained."

Who were the Anakim?

Were they ordinary human beings?

Were they descendants of the Nephilim?

How tall were they?

Why did their name frighten Israel?

And how did the same people who stopped one generation become the people Caleb was willing to confront?

The Anakim were real.

Their stature was real.

Their cities were real.

The danger was real.

But the promise of God was greater.

The story begins before the spies ever reached Hebron.

God said in Numbers 13:2:

"Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel."

Listen to the order.

God did not say, Search the land, and if the inhabitants are weak enough, perhaps I will give it to you.

He said, Search the land which I give unto the children of Israel.

The promise came before the investigation.

The spies were not sent to decide whether God was able.

They were sent to examine the land God had already promised.

Moses told them to observe the people.

Were they strong or weak?

Were they few or many?

Were the cities open camps or fortified strongholds?

Was the land rich or poor?

Did trees grow there?

What kind of fruit did it produce?

There was nothing sinful about gathering that information.

Biblical faith is not ignorance.

Planning is not unbelief.

Recognizing danger is not unbelief.

Counting the cost is not unbelief.

But information must be interpreted.

God sent them to investigate the land.

He did not send them to investigate whether He could keep His promise.

The spies traveled through the south and reached Hebron.

Hebron was an old and important city in the hill country.

Archaeology has uncovered impressive ancient fortifications there.

Archaeology cannot tell us that a particular wall belonged to the Anakim.

It cannot identify the wall Caleb later approached.  
 But it helps us understand why an ancient hill-country city could appear formidable.  
 Hebron also carried a deeper history.  
 Abraham had lived near Hebron.  
 Abraham had built an altar there.  
 Near Hebron, Abraham purchased the cave of Machpelah.  
 Abraham and Sarah were buried there.  
 Isaac and Rebekah were associated with that family burial place.  
 Jacob and Leah were associated with it.  
 Hebron stood within the land God had promised to Abraham and his descendants.  
 Numbers does not tell us that the spies visited the cave.  
 We should not add that to the story.  
 But we should notice the geography.  
 At Hebron, the spies saw the children of Anak.  
 And they forgot the promise made to Abraham.  
 They saw what occupied the land.  
 They forgot who had promised the land.  
 The Anakim had occupied Hebron.  
 They had not canceled the promise.  
 Numbers names three people at Hebron.  
 Ahiman.  
 Sheshai.  
 Talmai.  
 They were called the children of Anak.  
 The Hebrew name Anak became the name of a people, the Anakim.  
 Joshua later says that Arba was the father of Anak.  
 That presents Anak as an ancestor.  
 The words children and sons can also mean descendants or members of a clan.  
 Ahiman, Sheshai and Talmai may have been direct sons, later descendants or leaders of Anakite families.  
 The Bible does not tell us enough to decide.  
 The name Anak may be related to a Hebrew word involving the neck or a necklace.  
 Some have suggested that it means long-necked.

That is possible, but it is not certain.

We should not build a doctrine of extraordinary height from an uncertain name.

We do not need to.

Scripture later calls the Anakim great and tall.

It tells us enough.

It does not give us their measurements.

It never says that every Anakite had the same height.

It never tells us that Ahiman, Sheshai and Talmai were ten, twelve or fifteen feet tall.

It tells us that they were unusually tall compared with the Israelites who saw them.

The spies continued through the land.

They cut down a cluster of grapes so large that two men carried it on a staff.

They brought pomegranates and figs.

They returned after forty days.

And they said:

"We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it."

God had described the land accurately.

The spies held evidence of His faithfulness in their hands.

They carried the fruit of the promise while speaking as though the promise could not be fulfilled.

Then came one dangerous word.

"Nevertheless."

"Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land."

The strength of the people was real.

The walls were real.

The children of Anak were real.

But nevertheless began to place the difficulty against the promise.

Everything before nevertheless confirmed what God had said.

Everything after nevertheless began to explain why Israel should not obey.

We have our own nevertheless statements.

God has commanded me to forgive, nevertheless the hurt is deep.

God has commanded me to tell the truth, nevertheless dishonesty appears easier.

God has commanded me to be faithful, nevertheless obedience may cost something.

God has commanded His church to carry the Gospel, nevertheless people may reject us.

The difficulty may be real.

It does not possess the authority to cancel the command of God.

Caleb stilled the people.

He did not deny the facts.

He did not say the walls were imaginary.

He did not say the inhabitants were weak.

He did not say the Anakim were short.

He said:

"Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it."

Numbers 14 explains why Caleb believed that.

He said that if the LORD delighted in them, the LORD would bring them into the land.

He said that the protection of the inhabitants had departed.

He said, "The LORD is with us: fear them not."

Caleb was not practicing positive thinking.

He was reasoning Biblically.

Ten spies compared Israel with the Anakim.

Caleb compared the Anakim with the LORD.

The ten said, They are stronger than we.

On the human level, that may have been true.

God never promised victory because Israel was stronger.

He promised victory because He would go before them.

Then the ten crossed the line from observation to unbelief.

They said:

"We be not able to go up against the people."

They had measured the people.

They had measured the cities.

They had measured themselves.

They had left God out of the measurement.

Their report included the strength of the enemy, the height of the Anakim and the weakness of Israel.

It omitted the power of God.

The next verse calls it an evil report.

It became evil because it contradicted what God had revealed.

It portrayed obedience as impossible.

It implied that God had led Israel to a place where He could no longer protect them.

Fear began rewriting the evidence.

The land that flowed with milk and honey became a land that ate up its inhabitants.

The Anakim who lived in particular locations became a report that all the people were of great stature.

The Israelites did not merely say that they felt small.

They claimed to know exactly how the Anakim viewed them.

Fear exaggerated.

Fear generalized.

Fear presumed.

Then fear presented itself as realism.

Numbers 13:33 says:

"And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants."

The KJV uses the English word giants twice in that sentence.

Both occurrences translate the Hebrew word Nephilim.

This is the only passage that explicitly connects the sons of Anak with the Nephilim mentioned in Genesis 6.

That statement must be taken seriously.

It must also be read where Scripture placed it.

It comes from the spies inside the report Scripture has called evil.

There are several ways faithful interpreters have understood it.

Some believe the Anakim were genealogical descendants of a later or continuing Nephilim population.

Some believe Nephilim had become a terrifying classification for warriors of exceptional size and reputation.

Some believe the spies were exaggerating or misidentifying the Anakim.

We should not pretend the verse is absent.

We should not pretend it answers questions it never addresses.

The Bible gives us a connection.

It does not give us a complete genealogy.

It does not explain how a Nephilim line passed through the Flood.

It does not describe a second rebellion of heavenly beings.

It does not give us permission to create secret bloodlines.

The Anakim were genuinely tall.

That truth does not depend solely upon the frightened spies.

Moses later calls them great and tall.

But the precise nature of their connection with the Nephilim remains uncertain.

Then the spies said the words that have been remembered ever since:

"We were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."

Notice what came first.

"We were in our own sight."

They knew how they saw themselves.

They assumed how the Anakim saw them.

No battle had begun.

No Anakite army had attacked the camp.

No wall had been assaulted.

No Israelite soldier had fallen.

But Israel was already defeated in its own sight.

Fear magnified the enemy.

Fear minimized Israel.

Fear removed God.

This passage is sometimes turned into a lesson about self-esteem.

Israel did not need to persuade itself that grasshoppers were powerful.

Israel needed to remember whose people they were.

The answer to feeling like a grasshopper is not to pretend that you are a giant.

The answer is to remember that you belong to God.

They became grasshoppers in their own sight when God became small in their thinking.

The fear did not remain inside ten men.

The spies were leaders.

They were heads among the tribes.

Their position gave their words influence.

Their agreement made unbelief sound wise.

Numbers 14 says the congregation lifted up its voice and cried.

The people wept through the night.

They murmured against Moses and Aaron.

They wished they had died in Egypt.

They wished they had died in the wilderness.

They accused God of bringing them out so their families would die.

They proposed choosing another leader and returning to slavery.  
 One fearful leader can discourage many people.  
 Ten respected leaders speaking together can make unbelief sound responsible.  
 Parents must be careful what fear they give their children.  
 Pastors must be careful what fear they give their churches.  
 Teachers must be careful what fear they give their students.  
 Leaders must tell the truth about difficulties.  
 They must never describe those difficulties as though God were absent.  
 The people claimed they were protecting their children.  
 God said those children would enter the land their parents rejected.  
 The parents who used their families as a reason to disobey would die in the wilderness.  
 Fear sometimes disguises itself as responsibility.  
 Responsible caution submits to God.  
 Unbelief uses caution to avoid submission.  
 After God announced judgment, the people changed their minds.  
 They rose early and tried to enter the land.  
 Moses warned them not to go.  
 The LORD was not among them in that action.  
 They went anyway.  
 And they were defeated.  
 First they refused to move when God said go.  
 Then they moved when God said do not go.  
 Both actions were unbelief.  
 Faith does not mean always moving forward.  
 Faith means obeying God.  
 Move when He says move.  
 Wait when He says wait.  
 Stop when He says stop.  
 Trust Him when the outcome remains beyond your control.  
 Forty years later, Moses spoke to a new generation.  
 He did not tell them that the Anakim were imaginary.  
 Deuteronomy 1 remembered them as greater and taller than Israel.  
 Moses said the spies had discouraged the heart of the people.

But Moses also reminded Israel of what the LORD had done.  
 God had fought for them in Egypt.  
 God had carried them through the wilderness as a father carries his son.  
 God had gone before them in fire by night and cloud by day.  
 Israel had more evidence of God's faithfulness than it had evidence of Anakite strength.  
 The problem was selective memory.  
 They remembered how tall the Anakim were.  
 They forgot how faithfully God had carried them.  
 Deuteronomy 2 supplies another answer.  
 The Emim had once lived in Moab.  
 They were great, numerous and tall like the Anakim.  
 They were counted as Rephaim.  
 The Zamzummim had once lived in Ammon.  
 They also were great, numerous and tall like the Anakim.  
 God had destroyed them before the Ammonites.  
 The Anakim were not an invincible exception.  
 Other peoples comparable to them had already been displaced.  
 This also helps us understand their classification.  
 The Anakim were counted among the historical Rephaim.  
 These were living peoples with territories, cities and descendants.  
 This is not the poetic use of rephaim for the departed dead.  
 The Anakim were related to the broader Rephaim category.  
 That does not mean every Rephaite was an Anakite.  
 And it does not make Nephilim and Rephaim interchangeable Hebrew words.  
 Deuteronomy 9 preserves a saying about their reputation:  
 "Who can stand before the children of Anak!"  
 Moses did not answer by saying that Israel was taller.  
 He did not say the Anakim were harmless.  
 He said:  
 "The LORD thy God is he which goeth over before thee; as a consuming fire he shall destroy them."  
 The wrong question was, Can Israel stand before Anak?  
 The right question was, Can Anak stand before the LORD?  
 Moses did not make the Anakim smaller.

He restored God to the center of Israel's vision.

When Israel finally entered the land with God, the people called unconquerable were conquered.

Joshua 11 says Joshua cut off the Anakim from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir and from Anab.

Their control of the hill country ended.

The same people who stopped Israel at Kadesh-barnea did not stop God from fulfilling His promise.

Joshua says they were destroyed utterly with their cities.

The next verse also says that some remained in Gaza, Gath and Ashdod.

The passage defines its own scope.

The Anakim were removed from Israelite territory.

It does not require us to claim that every person with Anakite ancestry became extinct.

The remnant survived in coastal cities.

Those cities later became major Philistine centers.

Gath later became known for formidable warriors.

Goliath came from Gath.

Other warriors from Gath were associated with Rapha.

That makes a historical relationship possible.

But the Bible never calls Goliath a son of Anak.

It never supplies a genealogy from Anak to Goliath.

We may recognize the geographical connection without turning possibility into fact.

Archaeology confirms the importance of ancient Hebron, Gath and Ashdod.

It has not uncovered a cemetery that can be labeled Anakite.

It has not verified enormous skeletons belonging to the children of Anak.

Ancient bones may help estimate a person's height.

Without inscriptions or a secure identifying context, bones cannot announce the Biblical clan to which a person belonged.

Viral photographs do not become evidence because they are shared many times.

Respect for Scripture does not require us to attach weak claims to it.

God's Word does not need a fabricated skeleton to make it trustworthy.

Joshua tells us what happened nationally.

Caleb shows us what faith looked like personally.

In Joshua 14, Caleb approached Joshua and remembered the promise Moses had made him.

Caleb had been forty years old when he searched the land.

Now he was eighty-five.

Forty-five years had passed.

Caleb had walked through a wilderness he had not chosen.

He had lived among consequences caused by the unbelief of others.

He had watched a generation disappear.

The promise had been delayed.

His faith had not died.

Joshua repeats the description that Caleb wholly followed the LORD.

Caleb wholly followed the LORD when the majority opposed him.

Caleb wholly followed the LORD when obedience was unpopular.

Caleb wholly followed the LORD while the promise was delayed.

Caleb wholly followed the LORD through the wilderness.

Caleb wholly followed the LORD when he was forty.

Caleb wholly followed the LORD when he was eighty-five.

Then Caleb said:

"Now therefore give me this mountain."

He did not request an easy inheritance.

He requested the mountain where the Anakim remained.

He acknowledged that the cities were great and fenced.

He did not choose Hebron because the Anakim had become weak.

He chose Hebron because God had promised it.

Forty-five years earlier, Hebron sent a nation retreating into the wilderness.

Now Caleb looked at the same Hebron and said, Give me this mountain.

The mountain had not become easier.

Caleb had not become younger.

God had not changed.

But we must not turn Caleb's request into a promise that Christians may choose anything they want and require God to give it to them.

Caleb was not naming a personal ambition and declaring it his.

He was acting upon a promise God had already given.

Faith does not invent promises.

Faith believes what God has actually said.

Caleb also spoke with humility.

He said:

"If so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out."

He did not say, I am stronger than the Anakim.

He did not say, I have waited long enough, so God owes me.

He did not say, My courage guarantees victory.

He said, If the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able.

Caleb did not believe that he had become a giant.

He believed that the LORD would be with him.

Joshua blessed Caleb and gave him Hebron.

Then Joshua 15 returns to the three names from Numbers 13.

Sheshai.

Ahiman.

Talmai.

Caleb drove them out.

Whether those were the same long-lived individuals or names preserved in ruling families, the effect of the narrative is unmistakable.

At the beginning, Israel repeated those names in fear.

At the end, Scripture recorded those names in defeat.

The place of fear became the inheritance of faith.

The Anakim had occupied the land.

They had not canceled the promise.

What does this teach us?

Faith does not deny reality.

The diagnosis may be serious.

The financial hardship may be real.

The family conflict may be painful.

The ministry opposition may be strong.

The grief may be deep.

Faith does not require a false statement about any of those things.

Faith tells the truth about the difficulty while continuing to tell the truth about God.

Ask what God has actually said.

Ask what you know and what you are assuming.

Ask whether you have confused a possibility with a certainty.

Ask whether fear has made you claim to know how other people see you.

Ask whether you are magnifying the obstacle while minimizing God's faithfulness.

Ask whether your caution is obedience or an excuse for disobedience.

And remember what God has already done.

Before you decide that God will fail you tomorrow, remember how faithfully He has carried you until today.

There is another warning.

God does not promise to remove every Anakim before we obey Him.

God could have removed the Anakim before the spies entered the land.

Instead, Israel encountered them inside the land of promise.

Their presence did not mean God had abandoned His Word.

Difficulty is not automatic evidence that you have left the will of God.

Ease is not automatic evidence that you are within the will of God.

Sometimes obedience leads directly toward the place where faith will be tested.

But we should not leave this story merely saying, I will be more like Caleb.

If we are honest, most of us can also recognize ourselves in the ten spies.

We have doubted God's Word.

We have questioned His goodness.

We have allowed fear to govern obedience.

We have remembered the enemy and forgotten the Lord.

We have refused to move when God commanded.

We have moved presumptuously without seeking Him.

We do not merely need a better attitude.

We need forgiveness.

Israel's unbelief brought judgment and death in the wilderness.

Our sin separates us from God.

The wages of sin is death.

But Jesus Christ came as the perfectly faithful Son.

Israel failed in the wilderness.

Jesus entered the wilderness and remained obedient.

Israel distrusted the Father.

Jesus trusted the Father completely.

Israel turned away from the land.

Jesus set His face toward Jerusalem and the cross.  
 Israel deserved judgment.  
 Jesus bore judgment for sinners.  
 Caleb conquered Hebron.  
 Jesus conquered sin, death and the grave.  
 Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.  
 He was buried.  
 He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.  
 Salvation does not come from making ourselves courageous enough.  
 Salvation is the gift of God received through faith in Jesus Christ.  
 You may have spent years living under fear.  
 You may recognize yourself more readily in the ten spies than in Caleb.  
 You may know that you have doubted God and chosen your own direction.  
 You do not need to pretend that you have always been faithful.  
 Come to the One who was faithful for you.  
 Turn from your sin.  
 Believe that Jesus Christ died and rose again.  
 Call upon Him to save you.  
 He will forgive your sin.  
 He will give you new life.  
 He will reconcile you to God.  
 He will give you an inheritance that cannot be taken away.  
 Who were the Anakim?  
 They were the descendants or clan of Anak.  
 They lived especially around Hebron and the southern hill country.  
 They were great and tall.  
 They were counted among the historical Rephaim.  
 The spies associated them with the Nephilim.  
 Their cities were strong.  
 Their reputation frightened Israel.  
 Joshua removed them from most of the land.  
 Some survived in Gaza, Gath and Ashdod.  
 Caleb expelled their leaders from Hebron.

Their name eventually disappeared from Biblical history.

But the Anakim were not Israel's greatest problem.

Israel's greatest problem was unbelief.

One generation saw the Anakim and forgot the promise.

Caleb remembered the promise and returned for the Anakim.

Do not pretend that the Anakim are small.

Do not pretend that you are a giant.

Look honestly at what stands before you.

Listen carefully to what God has said.

Remember what God has already done.

Then follow the LORD wholly.

The Anakim may occupy the mountain.

They cannot cancel the promise of God.

Let us pray.

Our Heavenly Father,

We confess that we have often measured our circumstances without remembering You.

We have magnified what we fear and minimized Your faithfulness.

We have sometimes called unbelief wisdom and presumption faith.

Forgive us.

Teach us to see honestly, think Biblically and obey humbly.

Help parents, pastors, teachers and every Christian leader speak truth without spreading fear.

Give us faith that lasts through delay and follows You wholly.

Thank You for Jesus Christ, the faithful Son who died for our sins and rose again.

Draw those who do not know Him to repentance and saving faith today.

Strengthen every believer to trust Your Word and depend upon Your presence.

We pray in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

Before we leave, remember that Caleb did not conquer Hebron because he finally became greater than the Anakim.

He entered because the LORD was with him.

Whatever stands before you this week, do not exaggerate your strength.

Do not deny your weakness.

Do not minimize the difficulty.

And do not leave God out of the conclusion.

Ask what God has said.

Remember what God has done.

Obey what God has commanded.

Trust Him with what you cannot control.

The obstacle may be real.

The fear may be real.

But the faithfulness of God is also real.

Aloha Nui Loa.

REASON TOGETHER CHURCH

# WHO WERE THE ANAKIM?

**Biblical Commentary**

*Anak Hebron Fear and Faithful Possession*

Numbers 13:22-33 | Deuteronomy 1:28 | Joshua 11:21-23

**Dr. Thomas W. Hawksley**

Reason Together Church

**Giants in the Bible | Part Three of Eight**

## Commentary in Brief

The Anakim appear as a historical clan or population concentrated in the southern hill country, especially Hebron. Biblical narrative describes them as unusually tall and formidable without supplying measurements. Numbers 13 records the spies connecting them with the Nephilim, while Deuteronomy counts them among the historical Rephaim.

The principal interpretive issue is not whether the Anakim existed or were intimidating. The narrative independently identifies their presence and later confirms their stature. The issue is how much weight should be assigned to the genealogy and grasshopper language spoken inside an evil report. The text permits confidence about Anakite stature while requiring restraint about an unexplained Nephilim descent.

The canonical movement is from feared presence to removal and inheritance. The name that discouraged Israel at Kadesh-barnea reappears when Joshua clears the hill country and when Caleb receives Hebron. The theological contrast is between assessment without God and obedience grounded in God's promise.

## Numbers 13:1-20 The Mission of the Spies

The chapter begins with divine initiative. The Lord tells Moses to send men to search the land "which I give unto the children of Israel." The participial or ongoing force of giving presents the land as God's gift before the reconnaissance begins. The spies are not commissioned to decide whether the gift is possible.

Moses asks questions appropriate to military and agricultural reconnaissance. The people may be strong or weak, few or many. Cities may be camps or fortresses. The land may be rich or lean. Trees and fruit will reveal agricultural conditions. Scripture therefore does not oppose faith to observation, planning or accurate reporting.

The theological failure develops when data are treated as the final authority. The spies possess a divine word that must govern their interpretation. Their task requires empirical observation within covenant confidence.

## Numbers 13:21-22 Hebron and the Children of Anak

The journey extends from the wilderness of Zin to Rehob near the entrance of Hamath, describing an extensive reconnaissance. Verse 22 then narrows attention to the ascent through the south toward Hebron. The three named figures, Ahiman, Sheshai and Talmi, are called yelide ha-anaq, those born of or descended from Anak.

This notice belongs to the narrator's description before the spies deliver their report. It therefore provides independent narrative support for Anakite presence at Hebron. Even if the later speakers exaggerate, the interpreter cannot dismiss the Anakim as an invention created only in their speech.

The parenthetical statement that Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt emphasizes antiquity or comparative prestige. Its exact chronological basis is not explained. The note does not connect the Anakim with Egypt and should not be used to date Anak's ancestry.

Hebron is also associated with Abraham, the covenant promise and the family burial place at Machpelah. Numbers does not explicitly invoke those events here, but the Pentateuchal reader recognizes the irony. A place marked by divine promise becomes the place where Israel doubts fulfillment.

## Numbers 13:23-27 Fruit and Confirmation

The cluster from Eshcol, along with pomegranates and figs, fulfills the requested agricultural investigation. The report begins with agreement: the land flows with milk and honey. The fruit is material confirmation of the Lord's prior description.

The episode demonstrates that evidence alone does not create faith. The ten spies see and carry the same fruit as Caleb and Joshua. Their disagreement concerns the controlling interpretation, not access to different facts.

## Numbers 13:28-31 From Report to Verdict

The adversative "nevertheless" introduces the strong population, fortified cities and descendants of Anak. None of these observations must be false. Moses requested precisely this information. Later texts confirm both strong cities and unusual Anakite stature.

Caleb stills the people before Moses and uses emphatic language urging immediate ascent and possession. His confidence is explained more fully in Numbers 14:7-9, where the land is good, the Lord can bring Israel in, the inhabitants' protection has departed and the Lord is with Israel.

Verse 31 supplies the decisive counterclaim: "We be not able." The men reason from the comparative strength of Israel and the inhabitants. Caleb reasons from the Lord's promise and presence. The text does not commend denial of human weakness. It condemns a conclusion in which divine power has no operative place.

## Numbers 13:32 The Evil Report

The noun *dibbah* can denote a damaging report, rumor or defaming account. Its qualification as evil signals the narrator's judgment upon what follows. The land is now said to devour its inhabitants, a striking tension with the abundant fruit just displayed.

"All the people" are called men of great stature even though the reconnaissance has distinguished multiple ethnic and geographical groups. The rhetoric moves from particular formidable people to an all-encompassing image of impossibility. The verse may combine fact, fear and exaggeration rather than require every clause to be wholly invented or wholly literal.

## Numbers 13:33 Nephilim and Grasshoppers

The Masoretic Hebrew uses *nephilim* twice: "There we saw the Nephilim, the sons of Anak, from the Nephilim." The KJV translates both occurrences as giants. This is the only explicit Biblical statement joining Anakites with the Nephilim of Genesis 6:4.

A literal genealogical reading is possible, but the canon does not explain how that line continued after the Flood or narrate a second origin. A reputational reading understands Nephilim as the strongest frightening category available to the spies. A third view treats the claim as part of their exaggeration or

misidentification. Inspiration guarantees that the spies' words are recorded accurately. It does not require the reader to accept every utterance of unbelieving speakers as the narrator's factual conclusion.

The grasshopper statement is comparative rhetoric, not anthropometric evidence. "In our own sight" discloses self-perception. "And so we were in their sight" claims knowledge the spies could not easily verify concerning every Anakite. Fear has moved from sight to assumption.

The theological problem is not low self-esteem in isolation. Israel's diminished self-perception follows the disappearance of God from its reasoning. The answer is not to imagine Israel as physically gigantic. It is to recover covenant identity and divine presence.

## **Numbers 14:1-10 Fear Becomes Rebellion**

The whole congregation receives the report and weeps. Murmuring turns against Moses and Aaron, then against the Lord's purpose. The people reinterpret redemption from Egypt as a plan to kill them and propose returning to slavery.

Joshua and Caleb tear their clothes, reaffirm the goodness of the land and locate confidence in the Lord's delight and presence. "They are bread for us" reverses the report that the land devours inhabitants. The inhabitants will not consume Israel. Under God's promise, Israel will consume their strength as food.

The congregation's willingness to stone the faithful witnesses demonstrates that unbelief is not mere nervousness. It hardens into rebellion against God's Word and hostility toward those who call for obedience.

## **Numbers 14:20-45 Judgment and Presumption**

The generation that saw divine signs yet refused belief will die in the wilderness. Caleb is distinguished by another spirit and by following the Lord fully. The children whom the parents claimed to protect will enter the land their parents rejected.

When Israel later attempts to ascend, Moses warns that the Lord is not among them. Their movement is not repentance expressed in obedience. It is another refusal to accept the current word of God. The chapter thus condemns both refusal to go with God and presumption to go without Him.

## **Deuteronomy 1:19-33 The Remembered Failure**

Moses retells the event to the next generation. The brothers made Israel's heart melt by describing people greater and taller, cities fortified to heaven and sons of the Anakim. "Walled up to heaven" is conventional hyperbole for imposing fortification and should not be converted into a literal wall measurement.

Moses answers with salvation history. The Lord will fight as He did in Egypt. In the wilderness the people saw the Lord carrying them as a man carries his son. Fire and cloud marked His guiding presence. Unbelief persists not because God supplied no evidence but because fear selected which evidence to remember.

The father image is especially important. Israel interprets the Lord as bringing families to destruction. Moses interprets the wilderness through the care of a Father who carried His son. The dispute concerns God's character as well as His power.

## Deuteronomy 2:10-12 The Emim

The Emim formerly occupied Moab. They were great, numerous and tall like the Anakim and were counted as Rephaim. Moab called them Emim. The wording supports a broad classification with regional names rather than absolute identity among all groups.

The comparison establishes the Anakim as the known standard for stature and formidability. It also embeds their story within divine government of national territories. Comparable peoples had already been displaced.

## Deuteronomy 2:19-23 The Zamzummim

The Ammonite notice parallels the Moabite notice. Zamzummim were counted as Rephaim and described as great, numerous and tall like the Anakim. The Lord destroyed them before the Ammonites, who succeeded them.

The passage does not authorize Israel to seize Ammonite territory. God's sovereignty includes grants to nations other than Israel. For the Anakim study, the important conclusion is that extraordinary reputation does not place a people beyond providential removal.

## Deuteronomy 9:1-3 Who Can Stand Before Anak

The new generation must cross Jordan against nations greater and mightier, cities fortified to heaven and the children of Anak. Moses confirms the human challenge instead of dismissing it.

The saying "Who can stand before the children of Anak!" captures public reputation. Moses answers by placing the Lord before Israel as a consuming fire. The sentence shifts the subject of confidence from Israelite capability to divine action.

The passage should not be used to promise effortless victory in every personal enterprise. It belongs to a specific covenant command and land promise. Its enduring theological principle is that revealed obedience must include the reality of God rather than calculate as though human strength were ultimate.

## Joshua 11:21-23 Removal and Remnant

Joshua cuts off the Anakim from Hebron, Debir, Anab and the hill country of Judah and Israel. The verb and herem language present decisive military removal. Their cities cease to function as Anakite strongholds within the land.

Verse 22 qualifies the geographical extent: Anakim remain in Gaza, Gath and Ashdod. "None left in the land" and "only in" the coastal cities belong together. The passage claims elimination from Israelite territory while preserving an external remnant.

The closing statement that Joshua took the whole land is a summary of campaign success according to the Lord's command. Later allotment narratives describe local possession and remaining resistance. Ancient conquest summaries can report decisive control without claiming that no further settlement action remained.

## Joshua 14:6-15 Caleb and the Delayed Promise

Caleb recalls the mission from Kadesh-barnea and contrasts his heart with the brothers who made Israel's heart melt. Moses promised the land on which Caleb's feet had walked because he wholly followed the Lord.

Forty-five years have passed. Caleb attributes his preservation to the Lord: "the LORD hath kept me alive." His statement of continuing strength does not erase dependence. Life, strength and opportunity are gifts preserved by God.

Caleb asks for the mountain where the Anakim and fortified cities remain. "If so be the LORD will be with me" expresses humble dependence rather than skepticism about the promise. Caleb believes he will be able because the Lord will be present.

Hebron becomes his inheritance because he wholly followed the Lord. The narrative reverses Numbers 13. The location that symbolized national retreat becomes the inheritance of persevering faith.

## Joshua 15:13-14 Arba and the Three Descendants

Kirjath-arba is explicitly explained as the city of Arba, father of Anak, and identified with Hebron. The wording presents a personal ancestor even if Arba or Anak also carried wider clan significance.

Caleb drives out Sheshai, Ahiman and Talmi, called children of Anak. The same three names appeared in Numbers 13:22. They may be long-lived individuals or names representing continuing houses. The text does not resolve that detail. Its narrative purpose is clear: the figures first associated with fear are removed in fulfillment of the promise.

## Judges 1:10 and 20 Judah and Caleb

Judges says Judah went against the Canaanites at Hebron and names Sheshai, Ahiman and Talmi among those smitten. Verse 20 says Hebron was given to Caleb and that he expelled the three sons of Anak.

Corporate agency commonly credits a tribe with actions accomplished through its leaders and clans. Joshua can summarize the national conquest, Judges can describe Judah's campaign and the allotment tradition can emphasize Caleb. The passages need not describe three unrelated expulsions.

## Joshua 11:22 and the Philistine Cities

The three places of survival later belong to the Philistine pentapolis. Tell es-Safi, widely identified with Gath, became a large fortified Iron Age city. The geographical continuity makes later assimilation possible.

Goliath is from Gath and is described as exceptionally tall, while 2 Samuel 21 and 1 Chronicles 20 associate other Gittite warriors with Rapha. Scripture does not call Goliath an Anakite and does not provide a descent from Anak. The proper label is reasonable historical possibility, not Biblical fact.

## Archaeological Commentary

Excavations at Tel Hevron demonstrate a long occupation history and impressive Bronze Age defenses. The Israel Antiquities Authority reports meager remains for the Late Bronze and Iron I levels in excavated areas. These findings illuminate settlement and fortification but do not identify a population by Biblical clan name.

The proposed Egyptian Iy-anaq correspondence may preserve a similar ancient name, yet its location and relationship to Biblical Anak remain uncertain. It says nothing about stature. Papyrus Anastasi I references to tall Shasu, as sometimes translated, do not name the Anakim and occur in a satirical scribal work.

Archaeology has not produced verified giant skeletons attributable to Anakim. Estimated height from bones is possible, but ethnicity and clan identity require context that is currently absent. Restraint is not skepticism toward Scripture. It is accuracy about what material evidence can establish.

## Theological Synthesis

The Anakim are neither imaginary obstacles nor the central actors of the story. They reveal the competing interpretations of Israel and Caleb. Israel sees itself, sees Anak and concludes inability. Caleb sees the same situation within the Lord's promise and concludes obedience.

The text does not teach that believers can secure every desired outcome through sufficient confidence. Caleb possesses an explicit promise. Numbers 14 also shows that bold action contrary to God's present command is presumption. Biblical faith listens before it acts.

The Gospel conclusion arises from Israel's failure. The congregation should not assume it occupies Caleb's role. Human beings repeatedly distrust God's Word and goodness. Jesus is the faithful Son who succeeds in the wilderness, obeys unto death and rises to grant forgiveness and an imperishable inheritance to those who believe.

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