

GRASS HOPPER COMPLEX (Part 1)

(Scripture Numbers 13:17-20)

Numbers. 13:17-20. 17When Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, he said to them, Go up there into the [c]Negev; then go up into the hill country. 18See what the land is like, and whether the people who live in it are strong or weak, whether they are few or many. 19And how is the land in which they live, is it good or bad? And how are the cities in which they live, are the people in open camps or in fortifications? 20And how is the land, is it [d]productive or unproductive? Are there trees in it or not? And show yourselves courageous and get some of the fruit of the land.” Now the time was the season of the first ripe grapes.

Introduction: Today’s story is an interesting story, but I may have to do it in two parts, and I will do the first part today, and finish the second part next Sunday. All of us wrestle with complex - either inferiority complex or superiority complex. It is a rarity to see people who are confident of themselves, yet humble. Today we will learn about a new complex, grasshopper complex. Children of God should not have any of this complex. This is a fascinating story, and we can learn a lot about human psychology and faith, if we pay close attention to it.

Numbers 12:16.16Afterward, however, the people moved on from Hazeroth and camped in the wilderness of Paran.

Israelites came close to the south border of the promised land, and were ready to enter.

Numbers 13:1-3. 1Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 Send out men for yourself to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am going to give the sons of Israel; you shall send a man from each of their fathers tribes, everyone a leader among them.” 3So Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran at the [a]command of the LORD, all of them men who were heads of the sons of Israel.

Here, it says that the Lord commanded them to spy the Canaan land. But Moses says in Deut. 1:22,” Then all of you approached me and said, ‘Let us send men ahead of us, so that they may spy out the land for us and bring back to us word of the way by which we should go up, and the cities which we should enter.’”

So, this idea of spying originated from the tribes of Israel first, and Moses seemed to like it and he brought it to the Lord, and the Lord approved it and said,” Go ahead.”

The Israelites did not pay attention to the Lord –
The Lord did say that the promised land is a fertile land flowing with milk and honey. But they didn’t believe.

God said that He will go before them and send hornets and plague to destroy those Canaanites so that Israelites may occupy that land. Yet the Israelites took the battle upon themselves and tried to develop military strategies so that they may conquer them through their flesh and blood rather than through the Spirit of Almighty God.

So, the Lord simply let them go so that they may learn from their own mistakes! Sometimes, we tend to think that our ways are smarter than God's ways, and we start moving in that direction, and the Lord may allow us to go through our mistakes so that we may return to Him for the perfect plan in our lives.

We may have to allow our children to learn from their own mistakes also. We cannot keep telling them, no, no, no. We have to let them find their way. Prodigal son was bent on going away from his father and enjoy his free life. But then he was smart enough to realize his mistakes and came to his senses. He repented of his sins and remembered his father's love and returned to his father's house.

Twelve leaders were chosen, one from each tribe, and they were more like Navy seal or Green Beret! The cream of the crop!

Numbers 13:17. 17When Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, he said to them, Go up there into the [c]Negev; then go up into the hill country.

Negev is the southern part of Israel, and the hill country is around Hebron area.

Numbers 13:18-20. 18See what the land is like, and whether the people who live in it are strong or weak, whether they are few or many. 19And how is the land in which they live, is it good or bad? And how are the cities in which they live, are the people in open camps or in fortifications? 20And how is the land, is it [d]productive or unproductive? Are there trees in it or not? And show yourselves courageous and get some of the fruit of the land." Now the time was the season of the first ripe grapes.

These 12 spies were to bring specific detail such as -

- what is the land like?
- is it a good productive land or thorny desert land?
- are the people strong or weak,
- whether they are few or many,
- are their cities are fortified, or open land.

They were even told to bring some sample of their fruits also.

This mission was totally unnecessary. God had told them already that it is a fertile country, a land of milk and honey. He had already told them that He would fight their battle. It does not matter if a city is fortified or open city. It does not matter how strong one is, God can take care of them. Sometimes, we do not like to trust God, and try to accomplish things ourselves. In other words, we create our own mess out of our own stupid plans, as we shall see in this story!

Numbers 13:21-24. 21So they went up and spied out the land from the wilderness of Zin as far as Rehob, [e]at Lebo-hamath. 22When they had gone up into the Negev, [f]they came to Hebron where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi, the [g]descendants of Anak were. (Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)

Numbers 13:23,24. Then they came to the Valley of Eshcol, and from there they cut off a branch with a single cluster of grapes; and they carried it on a pole between two men, with some of the pomegranates and the figs. 24That place was called the Valley of [j]Eshcol, because of the cluster which the sons of Israel cut off from there.

The spies entered from south and came to Hebron where Abraham and Sarah's graves there. Grapes were very big in that area. So were the people who lived there.

Numbers 13:25,26. 25When they returned from spying out the land, at the end of forty days, 26they went on and came to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, [k]in the wilderness of Paran at Kadesh; and they brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land.

The spies went around for forty days, and then they returned back with evidence of juicy fruits.

Numbers 13:27-29. 27So they reported to him and said, We came into the land where you sent us, and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. 28Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large. And indeed, we saw the [l]descendants of Anak there! 29Amalek is living in the land of the Negev, the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan."

They reported the good news first, that the land does flow with milk and honey. Then they used the word, nevertheless! Anytime someone uses the word "nevertheless" or "but", you better watch out. There could be some serious problem! They talked about the giants living in that land, and the people are numerous! Yes, the land flows with milk and honey, but the giants will crush us!

Numbers 13:30,31.

30Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will certainly prevail over it." 31But the men who had gone up with him said, We are not able to go up against the people, because they are too strong for us."

Caleb was a brave man. He must have had strong faith in the living God! He said that the Israelites could prevail against these giants, and they should go and conquer the land. But the other ten leaders said that those people are too strong for us. We cannot prevail over them.

We come to know through Numbers 14:6 that Joshua also stood with Caleb.

Numbers 13:32,33. 32So they brought a bad report of the land which they had spied out to the sons of Israel, saying, The land through which we have gone to spy out is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are people of great stature. 33We also saw the [n]Nephilim there (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we were like [o]grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.”

The ten spies tried to override Caleb through their exaggeration. A land that devours its inhabitants. Is it due to plague or hornets as the Lord had promised? Or the famine of land? Famine? I do not think so. That contradicts the statement that it is a land that flows with milk and honey. Or because of civil wars among various tribes? Possible. My interpretation is mindless killing of each other. We witness it in Baltimore, Chicago, Detroit - people killing one another mindlessly. They are destroying one another and wasting each other's life. We witnessed that in Wild West stories also. One cowboy shot and killed his companion because he was snoring! We devour one another because of our racial hatred, because of our political beliefs. Our nation will become horrible if it continues this hatred path. God has called us to stand in the gap and save this nation. Are we going to save our nation through peace, reconciliation, forgiveness, and restorative justice or we will take up AR 15 to kill each other? Time will tell.

Nephelims are mentioned Gen 6:4. The angels coveted the women and had children through them, and these children were powerful, and they were the giants listed here.

The 10 spies felt like grasshoppers in their own sight (inferiority complex) and looked like grasshoppers in the sight of those giants also!

This is what I call grasshopper complex. Measuring ourselves with others and thinking that we are inferior in education, wealth, health, profession, power etc. Others may also think that we are inferior before them. While the confident people boast in their own strength, the weak walk in shame, and with poor self-esteem. Are we accurate in measuring ourselves, and others through our sinful eyes?

Not really! Your opinion and my opinion do not count. What matters is that how we look in the sight of God! Our strength and confidence come from Christ alone. We can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Phil. 4:13). Paul says, I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day. (2 Tim. 1:12). Our confidence should be through Christ alone.

If we believe that God can do anything, then we must believe it whole heartedly, and we must be confident that God will make it happen if it is according to His will and purpose.

There is no such thing called “self-confident” among Christians. We should never rely on our own self and wisdom. We are always “Christ confident” in everything!

Galatians 2:20. We (which is our self) are crucified with Christ. Our self has died through baptism. Nevertheless, we live, yet not us, but Christ lives in us. The life we lead is through the faith of Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us!

After baptism our 'self' dies, but Christ becomes our sole self, and we live for Him and Him alone!

Our confidence is in Christ alone, and He could slay any giant through Christ and save us!

Remember David and the Goliath story.

There was a Philistine giant, a real giant, Goliath. He was like nine feet plus, taunted the army of Israel every day.

1 Samuel 17:10,11. 10Then the Philistine said, I have defied the ranks of Israel this day! Give me a man, so that we may fight together." 11When king Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and very fearful.

1 Samuel 17:24. 24When all the men of Israel saw the man, they fled from him and were very fearful.

The Israelites were very afraid because they forgot about their God who could save them. But David was very confident of not himself but of his living God who could deliver him.

1 Samuel 17:26b. For whom is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he has dared to defy the armies of the living God?"

1 Samuel 17:46,47. 46This day the LORD will hand you over to me, and I will strike you and remove your head from you. Then I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild animals of the earth, so that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, 47and that this entire assembly may know that the LORD does not save by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD'S, and He will hand you over to us!"

Note what David said. He didn't say, "I will deliver you. He said, "The Lord will hand you over to us!" He also said," the LORD does not save by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD'S, and He will hand you over to us!

David's confidence was not on himself, but on God. He was not confident on his abilities, but on Almighty God Himself!

Israelites did not learn this valuable lesson. They failed to see God's presence in their life. They forgot all the mighty miracles God did for them in Egypt, in Red Sea, in the wilderness. They became very afraid!

Numbers 14:1. 1Then all the congregation [a]raised their voices and cried out, and the people wept [b]that night.

How do you like to hear over 2 million people crying all night long. It was not a silent night, or holy night. It was a horrible, wailing night for the whole Israel! Thanks to those 10 spies who left out God in their breaking news! They cried as though God had abandoned them, and He was leading them toward their destruction.

How we accuse our God falsely through our lack of faith!

I will continue this story next week. What can we learn from this part of story?

Conclusion:

Don't jump the gun. Don't make your own plans. Wait on the Lord for His plan, and His order.

Do not try to complicate your life by making unnecessary plans without God's guidance. It can hurt you very much.

Are you having a grasshopper complex about yourself? Do you look small before others? We must all look alike because we are all children of God.

The 10 spies removed God totally from their analysis. Had they included God in their analysis, they would have joined Caleb and Joshua.

Remember, grasshopper complex is from the devil, and it is not from our Lord Jesus Christ!

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