

Coming Soon

Numbers 13:1 through 3; 17 through 20; 23 through 25 (NKJV)

Pastor Rich Saunders Jr. • Echo Church

Sunday, August 23, 2026 • Year 1 • Month 8 • Week 4

THE TEXT

Numbers 13:1 through 3; 17 through 20; 23 through 25 (NKJV)

1 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel; from each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a leader among them. 3 So Moses sent them from the Wilderness of Paran according to the command of the LORD, all of them men who were heads of the children of Israel.

17 Then Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said to them, Go up this way into the South, and go up to the mountains, 18 and see what the land is like: whether the people who dwell in it are strong or weak, few or many; 19 whether the land they dwell in is good or bad; whether the cities they inhabit are like camps or strongholds; 20 whether the land is rich or poor; and whether there are forests there or not. Be of good courage. And bring some of the fruit of the land. Now the time was the season of the first ripe grapes.

23 Then they came to the Valley of Eshcol, and there cut down a branch with one cluster of grapes; they carried it between two of them on a pole. They also brought some of the pomegranates and figs. 24 The place was called the Valley of Eshcol, because of the cluster which the men of Israel cut down there. 25 And they returned from spying out the land after forty days.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Numbers 13

VERSES 1 THROUGH 3 — GOD SENDS THEM TO SEE

Numbers 13:1 through 3 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel; from each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a leader among them. So Moses sent them from the Wilderness of Paran according to the command of the LORD, all of them men who were heads of the children of Israel.

Israel is standing between deliverance and possession. God has already brought them out of Egypt, and now they must learn how to go in. This is the same generation that watched the plagues fall, walked through the Red Sea, ate the manna, and followed the fire. So the question is not whether God can do it, because their history has already answered that. The real question is whether they can trust the God who brought them this far with what comes next.

Notice the tense. God calls it the land which He is giving, present and settled, before they ever investigate it. They are not going in to decide whether God should give it to them. They are going in to preview what He has already promised. Sometimes God will let you see something before He lets you possess it, because the glimpse is not always possession. Sometimes the glimpse is preparation. So do not confuse a preview with the final product.

VERSES 17 THROUGH 18 — GO UP THIS WAY

Numbers 13:17 through 18 Then Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said to them, Go up this way into the South, and go up to the mountains, and see what the land is like: whether the people who dwell in it are strong or weak, few or many.

Moses sends them to look carefully, because God is not afraid of investigation. Biblical faith is not blindness. God does not say, Do not look. He says, Go look. All twelve spies will see the same land, the same fruit, and the same giants. The disagreement will never be over what they saw. The disagreement will be over what what they saw meant. Faith does not change what you see. Faith changes what gets the final say about what you see.

VERSES 18 THROUGH 20 — MOSES GIVES THEM QUESTIONS

Numbers 13:18 through 20 And see the land, what it is; and the people that dwell in it, whether they are strong or weak, few or many; whether the land they dwell in is good or bad; whether the cities they inhabit are like camps or strongholds; whether the land is rich or poor; and whether there are forests there or not. Be of good courage. And bring some of the fruit of the land. Now the time was the season of the first ripe grapes.

Moses hands them a research assignment. Look at the people, the land, the cities, the soil, and the vegetation. He wants real information, because promise does not eliminate planning. You can trust God and still do research. You can believe the promise and still study the terrain. God said, I am giving you the land, and Moses still said, Tell me about the land. Faith asks, What did God say? Wisdom asks, What am I walking into? Mature believers learn to do both.

VERSE 20a — BE OF GOOD COURAGE

Before Moses ever mentions the grapes, he addresses their courage. Seeing what God has for you can be intimidating. Sometimes the fear does not come from seeing something bad. Sometimes the fear comes from finally seeing how big the promise really is. You prayed for expansion, and then you saw what expansion requires. The land can be good and still be intimidating. Sometimes the size of the blessing exposes the size of your courage.

VERSE 20b — BRING SOME OF THE FRUIT

Moses does not just want a report. He wants evidence. He wants the people who have not seen it yet to taste where they are going. Sometimes God gives you fruit before He gives you the field. You do not own the vineyard yet, but He gives you grapes. That first opportunity, that first client, that first healed relationship may be the fruit. So do not despise the fruit just because you do not own the vineyard yet. The fruit is evidence that the land exists.

VERSE 20c — THE SEASON OF THE FIRST RIPE GRAPES

This is not throwaway detail. God did not simply let them hear that the land was fruitful. He sent them at the exact time the fruit could be seen. God knows when to let you see the evidence. He gives encouragement at the precise moment your faith needs something tangible to hold. Not everything is fulfilled yet, but He gives you enough to keep moving.

VERSE 23 — THE CLUSTER AT ESHCOL

Numbers 13:23 Then they came to the Valley of Eshcol, and there cut down a branch with one cluster of grapes; they carried it between two of them on a pole. They also brought some of the pomegranates and figs.

The cluster is so large that it takes two men to carry it. This is not merely saying there were grapes. This is saying that what God said about the land was true. They entered the valley as investigators, and they left carrying evidence. There are moments where God gives you something to carry back from a place you have not possessed yet. You saw what healthy leadership looks like, so carry the grapes. Do not just come back impressed. Come back changed.

VERSE 24 — THEY RENAME THE PLACE

Numbers 13:24 The place was called the Valley of Eshcol, because of the cluster which the men of Israel cut down there.

The encounter with the fruit was significant enough to rename the place. Certain experiences become landmarks. That is where God showed me. That is where my vision expanded. Sometimes you need an Eshcol, a place you can look back on when the journey gets difficult and say, I know what I saw.

VERSE 25 — FORTY DAYS

Numbers 13:25 And they returned from spying out the land after forty days.

Forty is a significant number in Scripture, often tied to testing and preparation. Here it matters especially, because Israel's later forty years in the wilderness are connected to these forty days in Numbers 14:34, one day for one year. So these forty days become a pivotal period in Israel's history. They went to examine their future, but what they do with what they saw will determine how quickly they enter it. Everybody saw the fruit. Everybody saw the giants. But not everybody came back with the same conclusion.

Every believer knows this in season. God gives you a glimpse of something good, and now you have to decide what you will do with what you have seen. Before this story becomes about giants, it is about grapes. Before God lets Israel confront what stands against the promise, He lets them see evidence that the promise is worth pursuing. So before we deal with the opposition in the land, let us deal with the revelation of the land.

MOVEMENT ONE

God Will Let You See It Before You Possess It

Numbers 13:1 through 3

Israel is standing at a transitional moment. They are no longer slaves in Egypt, but they are not yet settled inhabitants of Canaan. This story happens in the space between deliverance and possession. God has brought them out, and now they have to learn how to go in.

This generation has seen the plagues. They have seen Passover. They have seen the Red Sea open and Pharaoh's army defeated. They have seen manna appear and water come from the rock. They have seen God in cloud and fire. So when they arrive at Canaan, the question is not, Can God do it? Their history has already answered that. The real question is, Can we trust the God who brought us this far with what comes next?

Notice the language. God calls it the land which He is giving to the children of Israel. Before they investigate it, God has already declared His intention concerning it. They are not going in to decide whether God should give it to them. They are going in to get a preview of what He has already promised. Sometimes we approach the promises of God as though we have been asked to vote on whether they are possible. God did not send them in to make a decision about His promise. He sent them in to get a preview of His promise.

PR THOUGHT

You may not own it yet. But God may be letting you see it because He is expanding your capacity to believe for it.

There are seasons when God lets you see something before He lets you possess it. You see the opportunity. You meet somebody operating where you believe God is taking you. You walk into a room that stretches your imagination. Do not confuse the glimpse with possession. Sometimes the glimpse is preparation. God says, I want you to see where you are going before you are ready to live there.

MOVEMENT TWO

Study What God Shows You

Numbers 13:17 through 20

Moses does not tell them to wander. He gives them a research assignment. Go up this way. See what the land is like. Look at the people, whether they are strong or weak, few or many. Look at the land, whether it is good or bad. Look at the cities, whether they are like camps or strongholds. Look at the soil, whether it is rich or poor. Look at the vegetation, whether there is wood there or not.

God is not afraid of investigation. Biblical faith is not blindness. God does not say, Do not look. He says, Go look. Faith does not require you to ignore reality. Faith determines how you interpret reality. All twelve spies will see the same land, the same fruit, the same cities, and the same giants. The disagreement will not be over what they saw. The disagreement will be over what what they saw meant.

PR THOUGHT

Faith does not change what you see. Faith changes what gets the final say about what you see.

You can acknowledge reality without surrendering to reality. The bills are real. The diagnosis is real. The opposition is real. The giants will be real. But visible reality does not get the final word when God has already spoken.

Notice this too. Promise does not eliminate planning. They know God has promised the land, and Moses still gathers information about the land. You can trust God and still do research. You can have faith and still develop strategy. You can believe the promise and still study the terrain. Faith asks, What did God say? Wisdom asks, What am I walking into? Mature believers learn how to do both.

And before Moses ever mentions the grapes, he says, Be of good courage. Seeing what God has for you can be intimidating. Sometimes you become afraid, not because you saw something bad, but because you finally saw how big the promise actually is. You prayed for expansion. Then you saw what expansion requires. The land can be good and still be intimidating.

PR THOUGHT

Sometimes the size of the blessing will expose the size of your courage.

MOVEMENT THREE

Bring Back the Fruit

Numbers 13:20; 23 through 24

Then Moses says, Bring some of the fruit of the land. He does not merely want a report. He wants evidence. Do not just tell us what you saw. Bring something back. Let the people who have not seen it yet taste evidence of where we are going. For forty days these men become more than scouts. They become eyewitnesses of the future God has promised.

So they come to the Valley of Eshcol, and they cut down one cluster of grapes so large that two men carry it between them on a pole. The text is not merely saying there were grapes. The text is saying that what God said about the land was true. God had called it a land flowing with milk and honey. Now the promise has produce. They entered the valley as investigators. They left carrying evidence.

Sometimes God gives you fruit before He gives you the field. You do not own the vineyard yet, but He gives you grapes. You do not possess the whole promise yet, but He gives you evidence. That first opportunity may be fruit. That first client may be fruit. That first healed relationship may be fruit. That first person changed by your ministry may be fruit. Do not despise the fruit just because you do not own the vineyard yet. The fruit is proof that the land exists.

PR THOUGHT

You may not have the whole promise yet. But do not ignore the fruit that is already proving God told you the truth.

And notice, the timing was the season of the first ripe grapes. That is not throwaway information. God did not just let them hear that the land was fruitful. He sent them when the fruit could be seen. God knows when to let you see the evidence. Not everything is fulfilled yet. But He gives you enough to keep moving.

The place was even renamed the Valley of Eshcol because of the cluster they cut down there. Their encounter with the fruit was significant enough to change how the place was remembered. Sometimes you need an Eshcol in your life. A place you can look back on when the journey gets hard and say, I know what I saw.

MOVEMENT FOUR

Do Not Let the Preview Become the Peak

Numbers 13:25

They returned from spying out the land after forty days. Forty is a significant number in Scripture, often tied to testing, transition, and preparation. And in this story the forty days become especially weighty, because Israel's later forty years in the wilderness are directly connected to these forty days. One day for a year. That means these forty days were never just a road trip. They became a season of preparation and a pivotal period in Israel's history.

They went to examine their future. But what they do with what they saw will determine how quickly they enter it. Everybody saw the fruit. Everybody saw the land. Everybody saw the cities. Everybody saw the giants. But not everybody came back with the same conclusion.

Here is the challenge. They were never supposed to merely visit Canaan. They were supposed to live there. God did not bring Israel out of Egypt so they could become tourists in Canaan. The preview was supposed to create anticipation for possession. So do not become satisfied visiting places God intends you to occupy. Do not make a monument out of a preview. Do not spend your life talking about what you once saw. At some point you have to go back and possess it.

Before Numbers 13 becomes a story about giants, it is a story about grapes. Before God lets them confront what stands against the promise, He lets them see evidence that the promise is worth pursuing. The grapes are the preview. Canaan is the coming attraction. This week we talk about the grapes. Next week we have to talk about the giants, because the same land that produces fruit also contains fights. And mature faith has to decide whether what God promised is worth what we have to confront to possess it.

PR THOUGHT

Sometimes God will give you a sample of tomorrow so you have enough faith to keep walking today.

SUNDAY DECLARATION

I will not confuse the preview with the possession. God has already promised the land, and the fruit in my hand is proof that His word is true. I refuse to make a monument out of a glimpse. I am carrying evidence from a future I have not fully entered yet, and I am going back to possess what God has shown me.