



## Great is God's Power

I'm sure you will agree that our actions are determined by what we believe. Take, for instance, a young girl who believes she is fat and everyone sees her as a fat girl. Because she believes she is fat, she no longer has an appetite for food. She counts her calories carefully in order to lose weight. This girl is on the small side in comparison to others, and people comment on how skinny she is even to the point of being unhealthy. Yet when she looks in the mirror she sees a reflection of a fat girl. And it doesn't matter that her friends and her doctors tell her that she is unhealthy and will die if she does not eat, for she believes that she is fat. Her actions are determined by what she believes, even if what she believes is completely false.

The same is true for all of us. We all act on the things we believe. Because we believe food is necessary to live, we eat and because we believe that in order to enjoy many things of this life we need money, we work. But more important, what we believe about this world will determine the way we live. An environmentalist will live according to his view of the world and so our lives are determined by our view of the world.

The question people have struggled with is, "What is the right and proper view of life?" Many have tried to avoid this issue by saying that every point of view is a legitimate one; that they are all true. Yet it is impossible that two points of view completely opposed to one another can both be the truth.

### **An Old Testament story**

In the Book of Numbers which you will find in the Old Testament of the Bible, we read that the people of Israel had to decide between two points of view. They had to make a choice and the choice they made would determine whether they were going to enjoy life in a new land or death in the wilderness. They had to choose whether they would obey God or follow the fears of man. What they believed in their hearts about the Lord God would determine the choice they made. The same is true for us today. What we believe about God will determine the way we live.

In Numbers 14 the people of Israel have come to the end of their journey out of the land of Egypt and are camped in the wilderness on the border of the land of Canaan. The Lord God, in a wonderful and miraculous way had freed Israel from the Egyptians who had made Israel their slaves. God led them out of Egypt and He destroyed the Egyptian army in the Red Sea. He then took care of Israel as they travelled through the wilderness. And now after a long journey in which the Lord took care of all their needs, they had come to their destination. The Lord had promised that He was going to give them the land of Canaan.

### **Spying out the land**

But before they entered the land, Moses sent 12 spies, one man from each tribe in Israel. For 40 days they travelled through the country to scout out the land. When they came back they told the people all about the land. They said, "The land is rich and prosperous, it does flow with milk and honey!" They showed the people some of the fruit from the land. They even took along a cluster of grapes that was so large that it had to be carried on a pole between two men.

They also reported that the people were powerful and the cities all had great fortified walls. There were also giants living in the land, powerful people. Then one of the spies named Caleb silenced the people and said to them, "We should go into the land and take it for we certainly can do that."

But 10 of the other spies said, “No way. We cannot attack those people; they are stronger than we are. It is a dangerous land for the people in it are giants, we seemed like grasshoppers compared to them.”

This frightened the people, so that they grumbled against their leader Moses. They were angry and upset that Moses had led them all the way to Canaan only to find out that the people were too great for them to conquer. After all they were only a small people, very little in comparison to the mighty nations and peoples of Canaan. It would be better to go back to Egypt.

### **A wrong view of God**

What did the people believe about their God? They did not think much of Him. They were afraid of the mighty people in Canaan, but what about the Lord? Did the Lord not show them how great He was in Egypt when He freed them from slavery and He even destroyed Pharaoh and his great army in the Red Sea? Did the Lord not show his great might when He gave Israel water from the rock and when He sent manna (bread) from heaven? Throughout the journey in the desert the Lord showed Israel his greatness and mighty power. But they forgot his great might and care. They did not believe that God was mighty and great enough to give them the land of Canaan as He had promised. They did not live by faith in their God. Instead they feared the people of Canaan.

They had a wrong point of view about the Lord. And it was going to cost them dearly. This generation would die in the wilderness as a result of their lack of faith and the Lord would give it to the next generation.

### **A right view of God**

But there was also another point of view in Israel. It was the minority point of view, but it was the right one. Two of the spies, Caleb and Joshua told the people, “You are wrong to be afraid. What kind of God do you think that we have? He is great and mighty, and He is faithful to his promises. If the Lord is pleased with us, He will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey. Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them.”

Joshua and Caleb touched on the heart of the problem. The people did not have faith in the Lord their God. They did not trust the Lord, but were afraid of the people. True faith sees things differently; true faith sees and knows the truth. For the truth is that Israel does not need to be afraid, but the mighty nations in Canaan need to fear and tremble before the Lord God. For whose side is God on? He takes the side of his people. He said to Israel when they camped at Mt. Sinai, “I am the LORD your God, and you are my people.”

Who is God protecting? Not the nations of Canaan, but the people of Israel, for God said, “You are mine, I have chosen you to be my people.” There, in faith, they could trust that the nations in Canaan no longer had any protection. God was against them and He was for Israel. If they had lived by faith, they would not have been afraid, but with full confidence they would have entered into the land, trusting that the Lord would give it to them. They did not need to fear men, they needed to fear the Lord their God. The way they acted was determined by what they believed about the Lord.

### **What is your view of God?**

And so the way you live will also be determined by what you believe about the Lord. If you believe the Lord God to be the Almighty maker of heaven and earth, if you believe that He has the power to give you life and the power to take care of your life, then you will also look to the Lord God for his help every day. Truth does not come in many different forms as many claim today. Without the knowledge of God, you will live with fear. Without God, we will fear other men, we will be afraid about tomorrow, we will fear for our health, our wealth, we will fear for our life. But when you know God in all his power and might, and if you seek to serve Him with your whole life, you will no longer

fear men, nor will you be anxious about your own life, for you know that your life is secure in the hands of our almighty God.

What you believe about God, will determine your life. Therefore I would encourage you to take your Bible and read about the mighty work of God. As you discover the God of the scriptures, it will change your life forever.

Matt VanLuik

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