

Deuteronomy 9:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

A people great and tall, the children of the Anakims, whom thou knowest, and of whom thou hast heard say, Who can stand before the children of Anak!

Analysis

The Anakim were legendary giants, creating fear throughout Israel (Numbers 13:33). The rhetorical question 'Who can stand before the children of Anak?' expresses human impossibility. This verse heightens the contrast with verse 3's answer: God goes before as consuming fire. Human obstacles that appear insurmountable are trivial to God. The emphasis on the Anakim's size and reputation ('whom thou knowest... heard say') shows Israel's fear was based on credible information, not imagination. Yet faith calculates based on God's power, not enemy strength. Caleb later claimed Hebron (Anakim territory) in faith (Joshua 14:12), demonstrating that God's power overcomes what seems unconquerable.

Historical Context

The Anakim inhabited Hebron and surrounding hill country (Numbers 13:22, 28, 33). Their height and strength were proverbial—the spies' report terrified Israel ('we were in our own sight as grasshoppers,' Numbers 13:33). Archaeological evidence shows some Philistine/Sea Peoples warriors were exceptionally tall (Goliath, 1 Samuel 17:4). Whether the Anakim were genetically distinct or simply a warrior caste of large men, they represented formidable military opposition. Joshua later destroyed the Anakim from the hill country (Joshua 11:21-22), though remnants remained in Philistine cities.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 – Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What 'giants' (fears, obstacles, entrenched sins) loom large in your perspective that need to be viewed through the lens of God's power?
2. How does focusing on enemy strength rather than God's sufficiency paralyze your faith and obedience?
3. What past victories over 'impossible' obstacles should encourage you to trust God with current challenges?

Interlinear Text

אָשָׁר	אָתָּה	בְּנֵי	בְּנֵי	גָּדָל	עַתְּקִים	כִּי	כִּי	כִּי	עַמּוֹם
A people	great	and tall	the children	of the Anakims					
H5971	H1419	H7311	H1121	H6062					
					H834				H859
whom thou knowest		H859		and of whom thou hast heard		H4310		say Who can stand	
H3045				H8085				H3320	
before	the children	of Anak							
H6440	H1121	H6061							

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 13:22 (Parallel theme): And they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron; where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the children of Anak, were. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)

