

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

עַם	גָּדוֹל	וְרָם	בְּנֵי י	עֲנָקִים	אֵשֶׁר	אֵת ה
A people	great	and tall	the children	of the Anakims	H834	H859
H5971	H1419	H7311	H1121	H6062		
	יָדָעְתָּ	וְאֵת ה	שִׁמָּה עָתָה	מִי	יִתְיַצֵּב	
whom thou knowest	H859	and of whom thou hast heard	H4310	say Who can stand		
H3045		H8085		H3320		
לִפְנֵי י	בְּנֵי י	עֲנָקִים:				
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 Talmi, the children of Anak, were. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)

