

Caleb Claims His Special Portion of the Land

Joshua 14

Joshua 14 - *"These are the areas which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel distributed as an inheritance to them. ² Their inheritance was by lot, as the LORD had commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes and the half-tribe. ³ For Moses had given the inheritance of the two tribes and the half-tribe on the other side of the Jordan; but to the Levites he had given no inheritance among them. ⁴ For the children of Joseph were two tribes: Manasseh and Ephraim. And they gave no part to the Levites in the land, except cities to dwell in, with their common-lands for their livestock and their property. ⁵ As the LORD had commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did; and they divided the land. ⁶ Then the children of Judah came to Joshua in Gilgal. And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him: "You know the word which the LORD said to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh Barnea. ⁷ I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as it was in my heart. ⁸ Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I wholly followed the LORD my God.*

⁹ So Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children's forever, because you have wholly followed the LORD my God.' ¹⁰ And now, behold, the LORD has kept me alive, as He said, these forty-five years, ever since the LORD spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old. ¹¹ As yet I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in. ¹² Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the LORD spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fortified. It may be that the LORD will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the LORD said."¹³ And Joshua blessed him, and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as an inheritance. ¹⁴ Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel. ¹⁵ And the name of Hebron formerly was Kirjath Arba (Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim). Then the land had rest from war."

Background Notes

The second half of the book of Joshua began in chapter 13. The subject of the second half of the book is the settling of the land of Canaan by the children of Israel. The seven-year conquest of Canaan was over, and the Land had to be possessed and settled.

In Joshua 13 we had the division of the land on the east side of the Jordan River between the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh. These were the tribes that were reluctant to follow God's will and cross over and settle on the west side of the Jordan River. (We read about this in Numbers 32.) They thought that the east side of the Jordan River had better grazing land, and they were worried about protection for their families. They were convinced that they would be more protected on the east side of the Jordan River. They were wrong, but God allowed them to have their wish.

Like many Christians today, those 2 ½ tribes settled for God's permissive will rather than for God's perfect will. Let me ask you -- are you possibly twisting God's arm about something that you want? Be careful, because God may allow you to have what you ask of Him, even though it is not His perfect will. There is such a thing as the getting the permissive will of God rather than the perfect will of God.

In Joshua 14 we have the introduction to the division of the land on the west side of the Jordan River, to be distributed among the remaining 9 ½ tribes. The mention of Eleazar the priest (v1) in reference to the division of the land is right in line with what God had declared back in Numbers 34:16-18 - *"And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "These are the names of the men who shall divide the land among you as an inheritance: Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun. And you shall take one leader of every tribe to divide the land for the inheritance."*

From verse 6 to the end of the chapter we have the account of Caleb receiving his special portion of the land in the tribal area of Judah.

Doctrinal / Teaching Points

1. There are mountains to be reclaimed in the Land.

In verse 6 we read that Caleb came to Joshua and said, *"You know the word which the LORD said to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh Barnea."* Caleb, of course, was referring back to that time in Numbers 13 when he and Joshua were two of the men Moses sent to spy out the land of Canaan. Joshua and Caleb were the only spies who were faithful to the Lord. They reported that Israel would be able to take the Land, with God's help. The other ten men said that Israel would not be able to conquer the Land. Unfortunately the people of Israel believed the bad report, and as a result they wandered in the wilderness for 38 more years until all that unbelieving generation died. Joshua and Caleb were the only ones from that generation who entered the Land because they trusted the Lord fully.

Now Caleb, at the age of 85 years, was claiming the special portion of the land that was given to him and his descendants by Moses himself. This special portion of land was Hebron and the surrounding hill country. Hebron, remember, was where Abraham dwelt for some time. Abraham built an altar in Hebron. Hebron was where the patriarchs were buried.

Notice Caleb's bold claim in verse 12: *"Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the LORD spoke in that day..."* As far as Caleb was concerned, you see, this land was God's Land, but it was under enemy control. It had to be reclaimed for the Lord.

What a lesson for us! There are mountains to be reclaimed in the land. In the spiritual picture that God has given to us in the book of Joshua, the Land is that unseen world of spiritual realities, including truth. There are a lot of mountains in that land that are under enemy control; we need to claim these mountains for the Lord and possess them!

Let's take the "mountain" of "origins," for example. The truth is that God created this universe, and God created man. Man didn't evolve from some lower creature. That's the truth -- but in the realm of spiritual realities this mountain of origins is now under enemy control. Satan and his world system have captured this mountain and have exchanged the truth for lies. Many people have been brainwashed with the idea that everything came about from nothing through some kind of "Big Bang," and humans evolved over millions of years from fish and frogs. Talk about kissing your brains good-bye! Folks, we need to reclaim this mountain -- and we can with God's help and strength!

We need to get the truth out about origins. Praise the Lord, Christians are reclaiming this mountain. If you do an internet search and key in words like "origins" or "Big Bang" or "Star Birth" or "Evolution" -- guess what? You will hit a number of Christian websites and publications! We are reclaiming this mountain of origins, but there's a lot more of this mountain left to conquer!

Another example: take the problem of man. The Bible teaches that man is essentially bad because he's born with a sinful nature. Satan's lie is that man is basically good. With enough education he can climb out of his environment that has made him bad, because he's basically good. What a lie! This is a "mountain" in the land of spiritual realities that's under enemy control. We need to reclaim this mountain so that the biblical truth of man's real problem can be exposed. Let's be like Caleb! "Give me this mountain..." Remember, there are mountains to be reclaimed in the Land.

2. There are giants to be removed from the Land.

Verse 12: *"Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the LORD spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fortified. It may be that the LORD will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the LORD said."*

The Anakim were giants, but that was no problem for Caleb! He drove them out in the strength of the Lord, including Arba the greatest of the giants (v15). There's a spiritual lesson for us. The land is the Lord's, but some of the land is under enemy control. The giants are the enemy forces and forms of spiritual opposition that control certain areas of the land.

Let's go back to that illustration about origins. The mountain itself is the truth about origins. In the realm of spiritual realities and truth, God is the Creator of everything. The enemy giants that control this mountain of origins at the present time are the big forces, such as secular education and the culture and the media that are used by Satan to maintain the lies and distortion of the truth about origins. Our job is to do what we can, in the Lord's strength, to cut these giants down to size, remove them from the Land and reclaim the mountains of truth.

A few weeks ago I read about a couple of prominent museums that were forced to change their displays on the evolution of man from apes because enough Christians wrote in to say that there was no real fossil evidence to back up the displays. Now that's cutting the giants down to size! Christians are also fighting to get creation back into the classroom. Let's keep at it! There are giants to be removed from the Land.

Practical Application

Let's all say, "I want to be like Caleb."

Remember when Michael Jordan was in his prime, the saying was, "I want to be like Mike!" Well, here's a better goal: "I want to be like Caleb!" Look at verses 10-12: *"...here I am this day, eighty-five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in. Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the LORD spoke in that day... it may be that the LORD will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the LORD said."* What a great statement! Just think about it -- eighty-five years old! No mid-life crisis for Caleb, no retirement for Caleb, no jealousy of Joshua for Caleb! What a model for us to follow.

At age 85, my father was still preaching almost every Sunday. We sent him Joshua 14:10-12 on his eighty-fifth birthday card. My dad was a Caleb. He died at eighty-seven, but he was strong right to the end, like Caleb. I want to be like Caleb, don't you? Your greatest achievements in life can come during your "senior" years!

Right now I'm working on a thirty-year project to preach through the whole Bible for radio and internet. At the rate I'm recording now, and if the Lord gives me life and strength, I should finish when I'm about 85 years old -- about the age of Caleb. Of course we don't know what the Lord has in store for each one of us -- in fact, the Rapture may be at any time, maybe this year! But in the meantime, let's all say, "I want to be like Caleb."