

Caleb's Reward

Joshua 14:1-15

Introduction

The book of Joshua tells the story of Israel's entrance into the Land (chapters 1-5); conquering the land (chapters 6-12) and dividing the land (chapters 13-24).

Caleb's faith is manifest in at least seven ways in the passage:

1. Caleb's claim for faith (v.6).
2. Caleb's consecration in his faith (v.8).
3. Caleb's confession of faith (v.10).
4. Caleb's courage of faith (v.11).
5. Caleb's company of faith (v.12a).
6. Caleb's confidence of faith (v.12b).
7. Caleb's compensation of faith (vv.13-14).

The Time Of Inheritance (vv.1-5)

Joshua 14:1–15 (NKJV) 1These 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.

2Their inheritance was by lot, as the Lord had commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes and the half-tribe.

You will note that the inheritance was by lot. The instructions given by Moses are found in Numbers 34:13-29. This would include Eleazar the High Priest, Joshua and representatives from each tribe. The lots were cast to determine God's will.

3For 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.

In Joshua it is mentioned four times that the Levites were to receive no inheritance in the land (see Joshua 13:14; 33; 14:3-4; 18:7). The Lord Himself was to be their portion (see Deuteronomy 18:1-8; 10:8-9; Numbers 18). The priests and their families were given portions of the sacrifices and both priests and Levites received special tithes and offerings that the people were commanded to bring.

It has been suggested that since the priests and Levites were wholly devoted to the Lord—they need not be encumbered by tribal political or governance issues. The priests and Levites were to be salt and light throughout the land.

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4For 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.

5As the Lord had commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did; and they divided the land.

The Commitment Of Faith (vv.6-15a)

6Then 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.

Caleb belonged to the tribe of Judah (Numbers 13:30). You will recall that both Joshua and Caleb were the only two among the twelve spies to bring a good report concerning the land. Caleb would be the first to receive the reward and Joshua would be the last (Joshua 19:49-51).

The general location was to be made by lot but the size of the territory was also determined by the size of the tribe. The men of Judah led the armies and had some 76,000 soldiers.

Caleb is a remarkable character in the Old Testament.

We often take a singular characteristic of notable Bible characters. We think of Moses as meek, or Abraham as the man who separates himself from the world, or David as the man after God's own heart or Joseph as the man who is pure, or John as the apostle of love or Peter as the apostle of zeal. What characteristic marks Caleb? We could certainly offer commitment as a guiding passion but we could just as easily assign Caleb the characteristic of faith.

The Claim Of Faith (v.6)

Caleb appeals to the Word of God spoken by Moses to both Joshua and Caleb in the previous generation. Faith's claims are always based on God's Word and God's promise!

Paul writes (Romans 10:17), "So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God" The context for Romans 10:17 is the **spoken** word rather than the written word. These are the words spoken by the Lord to Moses concerning Joshua and Caleb.

The claim of faith must be staked in the offices of God's promises. **"The thing the Lord said concerning me" is ever the language of faith.**

In the gold and silver fields of California and Colorado men and women would have to stake claims and then work those claims.

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7I 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.

The Consecration Of Faith (v.8)

8Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I wholly followed the Lord my God.

Exodus 28:41: “So you shall put them on Aaron your brother and on his sons with him. You shall anoint them, **consecrate** them, and sanctify them, that they may minister to Me as priests.”

Exodus 29:9 “And you shall gird them with sashes, Aaron and his sons, and put the hats on them. The priesthood shall be theirs for a perpetual statute. So you shall **consecrate** Aaron and his sons.”

The word translated “wholly” followed the Lord describes Caleb’s obedience. The word ‘wholly’ is the same word translated **consecrate**.

Caleb’s whole hearted devotion to the Lord is described in Deuteronomy 1:36; Numbers 14:24; Numbers 32:11; and here in Joshua 14:8, 9,14.

The contrast is between ‘my brethren’ (the other spies) ‘made the heart of the people melt.’ They brought a bad report. The giants were too many—and could not be conquered.

Caleb was faithful and still found himself in the wilderness with those who were unfaithful and unbelieving. Caleb had to listen to the gripes and complaints and watch them die in the wilderness. Caleb loved Moses and had to listen to the complaints and the murmurings brought by the people to Moses. **How in the world did Caleb ‘wholly follow the Lord’ in the midst of such carnality, immaturity, wickedness and weakness? It was in part because Caleb’s heart was in Canaan—and not just anywhere in Canaan—but in the mountains near Hebron. Caleb will endure the wilderness—because he had an inheritance—that God would give him and would not fail!**

This whole hearted devotion can be summed up in a single word—obedience.

We are obedient to Christ because of the indwelling presence of Christ in our lives (Gal.2:20). “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

It is not the kind of faith that sets aside grace (Gal.2:21). This faith is simple—whole hearted response to God’s Word.

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9So 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.'

The Lord promised a land. A land that had to be occupied by faith—but also by action. The children of Israel would have to step into the land. Walk in the land. Occupy the land. The promise was secured not by walking away—but by 'wholly' following the Lord God.

The peers of Joshua and Caleb did not wholly follow the Lord. Their lives were marked by compromise, rebellion, inconsistency. Only Joshua and Caleb remained committed and had the courage to see it through in the Lord.

The Confession Of Faith (v.10)

10And 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.

Caleb reminds Joshua of the promise made to them some 45 years ago earlier (see Numbers 14:24,30; Deuteronomy 1:34-36).

Caleb's confession of faith is 'behold—the Lord has kept me alive!' Caleb kept himself in the Lord in whole-hearted devotion and obedience. We are kept alive by God's grace so that we can bear testimony to God's faithfulness.

The Lord promised that he would keep Caleb alive during the years of wilderness wandering and that they would receive an inheritance in the land.

Caleb is 85 years old. But Caleb does not ask for some easy task appropriate for his age. Caleb does not ask for an inheritance that was easy or safe.

The Courage of Faith (v.11)

11As 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.

Caleb claims he has the strength to engage in battle. Caleb's strength is like the strength of Moses (see Deuteronomy 34:7). Caleb's health of body seemed linked to his spiritual health.

The secret of courage in the Christian life for warfare and witnessing is found in walking with the Lord.

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1 John 3:20-21; “Beloved if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. (21) Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.”

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. We fellowship with the Lord with a heart absent condemnation. We look into the faces of the people in this world and can offer a faithful testimony concerning the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Company of Faith (v.12a)

12Now 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.

Look at Caleb's remarkable request: ‘Now, therefore, give me this mountain’.

This is the mountain occupied by giants.

Do giants still occupy your inheritance? Caleb says; “give me this mountain”. There are giants. Caleb says; “I will drive them out by faith”. The giants were on his land and he would drive them out in the strength of the Lord. **Caleb still saw things through the eyes of faith. He refused to look simply at the way things were outwardly.**

The joy of the Lord was Caleb's strength. The past promise can lead to the present victory. The Lord promised me an inheritance. I am ready to claim that inheritance. Even if the inheritance is presently occupied by giants. Caleb felt he could do anything be anything if the Lord was present with him. If the Lord is with me the victory is sure.

This is bold faith and comforting faith and encouraging faith.

We are not naive. Not everyone can say with Caleb at 85 I am as strong as I was at 45. Wrinkled does not mean ruined.

What can we claim? We are never too old to find new conquests of faith **in the power of the Lord and His Spirit. We like Caleb can climb mountains and conquer giants if we wholly follow the Lord.**

Wiersbe writes; “No matter how old we become, we must never retire from trusting and serving the Lord” (*The Wiersbe Bible Commentary; OT Vol. 1; p.413*).

The Confidence of Faith (v.12b)

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(12b) “. . .It may be that the Lord will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the Lord said.”

Caleb's confidence was not wishful thinking or an idle boast or spiritual presumption.

Caleb had the same divine promise given to Joshua (3:10); “And Joshua said, “By this you shall know that the living God is among you, and the He will be with you, and the He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hives and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites:”

How do we know if we are dealing with faith or presumption? Faith acts on God's authority—by God's Word—presumption acts on its own authority—but faith always requires a “Thus saith the Lord” (Hebrews 11:29).

Self-confidence is man acting apart from or without God, but Biblical faith requires confidence in the Lord.

The Compensation of Faith (vv.13-14)

*13And Joshua blessed him, and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as an inheritance.
14Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel.
15And the name of Hebron formerly was Kirjath Arba (Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim).*

Caleb's faith is rewarded. He is blessed by Joshua and also given Hebron. The word Hebron means ‘fellowship’. Fellowship with the Lord is the compensation of faith! We walk by faith. 1 Corinthians 1:9; “God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

The Gift Of Rest (v.15b)

(v.15b) Then the land had rest from war.

Rest is more than just the absence of conflict. It is the powerful presence of peace.

The wandering Jew need no longer wander. The rest of Israel is a symbol of the spiritual rest that God gives the believer.

The rest is a rest of confidence, hope, security, purpose, fulfillment and satisfaction. Faith in Christ means the believer gets to rest in Christ.

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This rest makes a provision for all of life. What does it mean to the human soul to discover that God is real, that Jesus is the Lord, that there is a solution to the problem of sin and that heaven is a real place.

Conclusion

Scholars and Christians have found many wonderful ways to define faith. But all definitions in the end must include saying "yes" to Jesus. Faith is in part the mind saying "I believe there is such a thing as truth." Faith requires the consent of the will but will in the end believe and obey God's Word.

Remember the Believer's inheritance: We are in Christ.