

“A Man of a Different Spirit”

Joshua 13,14

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by C.W. Powell

“6 Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the LORD said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadeshbarnea.

7 Forty years old [was] I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadeshbarnea to spy out the land; and I brought him word again as [it was] in mine heart.

8 Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God.

9 And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children’s for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God.

10 And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while [the children of] Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I [am] this day fourscore and five years old.

11 As yet I [am as] strong this day as [I was] in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength [was] then, even so [is] my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in.

12 Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims [were] there, and [that] the cities [were] great [and] fenced: if so be the LORD [will be] with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said.

13 And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance.

14 Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel.

15 And the name of Hebron before [was] Kirjatharba; [which Arba was] a great man among the Anakims. And the land had rest from war.” (Joshua 14:6-15 AV)

The conquest of the land of Canaan has been mostly completed. The major military alliances had been defeated by the armies of Israel. The land was divided up by lot among the nine and one-half tribes of Israel—the other 2 ½ tribes had received their inheritance on the other side of Jordan--and mopping up action would be left to the individual tribes.

To understand the drama of the account we read a few moments ago, we need to go back some forty years to a time when Israel was still in the wilderness, having shortly come out of the Land of Egypt. They had come to Sinai, had received the law of God, and Moses, their lawgiver, had delivered to them the priesthood, the worship, and the organization that would make them a great nation, the chosen people unto the Messiah would come in the time appointed of the Father.

The account we are interested in is in Number 13, some forty years or so before the battle of Jericho and the conquest of the land. Israel had come up to the land of Canaan and it was time for them to enter in as God commanded them. Turn to Numbers 13.

Verses 1-16 gives us the names of twelve spies that were appointed from among the chief men of Israel, one from each tribe, among them, Joshua from the tribe of Ephraim, and Caleb, from the tribe of Judah. They were sent and found the land very rich and filled with great cities and great wealth.

They brought back to Moses samples of the riches of the land, including one cluster of grapes so huge that it took two men to carry it suspended between them on a pole. They also brought a most discouraging report:

“The cities are big a fortified with great and high walls. The people are very strong and there were giants there, the sons of Anak. Many years later, David, who would become king, killed Goliath and his mighty men would slay Goliath’s brother, the last of these giants.

Caleb evidently knew where the conversation was going, and he tried to put a more optimistic spin on the report: ”Let us go up at once,, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.”

The others spies would have none of it: “ We be not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we. We have gone to search the land, and it is that eats up the inhabitants. All the people are large and strong. And we also so the sons of Anak, of the giants, and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers.”

Of the twelve spies, only Caleb and Joshua were willing to believe that God would enable them to conquer the land. The people forgot the great miracles done in Egypt, the miracles in the wilderness, and gave over to their fears and dread..

They began to weep and cry in fear and anger. “We wish we were dead and that we had died in the wilderness. They spoke evil things of Moses and Aaron, and began to think of appointing a captain and going back to Egypt.

Moses and Aaron fell on their face before the Lord, who would have brought His wrath upon Israel except for their prayers. In praying for the people Moses is a figure of the Lord Jesus, of whom he is a type. God did not destroy Israel be sentenced them to forty years of wandering in the wilderness, until all of those men older than 40 had died and fallen in the wilderness.

All but two. Even Moses and Aaron, for other offenses against the Lord, would pass away before the armies of Israel would stand before the walls of Jericho. All the men older than 40 years of

age would die. Except two. Caleb and Joshua did not yield to the unbelief and rebellion and their lives were spared. Of that entire generation, only these two would be permitted to enter the land and claim their inheritance. Joshua would replace Moses and become one of the greatest generals in the history of the world. It is Caleb that we speak of this morning.

God gives him a most generous commendation in Numbers “But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land where into he went; and his seed shall possess it.” (Numbers 14:24 AV) Please note:

1. God promised to bring him into the land and he and his children would inherit and possess their land in Canaan.
2. He had followed the Lord fully. What a great commendation. No reservations, but full faith and allegiance to the promises of God.
3. He had another spirit with him. It was the work of the Holy Spirit that made the difference. Caleb was a man of faith and believed the promises of God.
4. Unbelief makes you feel like a grasshopper, because you look through the eyes of the giants; Faith makes you feel like a giant because you look at the giants through the eyes of faith in the promises of God. “Let us go up,” he said, “we are well able to overcome them.”
5. What a great example of faith and triumph.

But now let us fast forward forty some years ahead. Forty years of wandering the wilderness, seeing that generation drop away one at a time, seeing the loss of Aaron and Moses. Enduring the trials and tribulations, defeat in battle, the chastening of the Lord and Israel murmured and complained about manna, enduring the rebellion of Korah and many other trials and tribulations. But Caleb did not become discouraged according to the biblical record. He didn't go out on his own and abandon Israel as a hopeless cause, for he continued to believe the promises of God.

We come to the account that we read at the first, in Joshua 14.

1. He comes to Joshua and claims the promises of God. He had been sustained all these years by the promises of God.
2. He did not ask for special favor because of his years. God had been faithful to him, and he was still in good and excellent health, for war and for work.
3. He did not ask for an easy inheritance, but for Hebron, where the remnant of the sons of Anak were. In fact Hebron before had been called Kirjatharba, after a great man among the giants.
4. There is more information in Joshua 15:13 ff.
 - a. Caleb drove away three of the giants from Hebron and possessed the city and the land for his inheritance.
 - b. Caleb promised Kirjathsepher to whoever would drive out the giants. His nephew Othniel, who later would become a judge and deliverer in Israel too possession, overcame the giants, and was given Caleb's daughter in marriage. This account is also in the first chapter of the book of Judges.

What was the different spirit that Caleb had? Of course, we know it is the work of the Holy Spirit.

1. A spirit of meekness. "He fully followed the Lord." He was submissive, not proud and arrogant. The greatest impediment to godliness is our desire to be our own master and do what we think is right in our own eyes. You are I are no different from anyone else, and we all will have to face that reality. The Lord resists the proud but give grace to the humble. It was not arrogance that gave him assurance that they could overcome the giants and capture those great walled cities; rather, he trusted in the Lord and was willing to be obedient. Illustration; he did not join in with the rebels who had a change of mind ever bit as rebellious as their first refusal to follow the Lord. They said, hoping to avoid the punishment of the Lord, "We will go in." But they were soundly defeated, and many men of Israel died. Caleb was meek and humble before the Lord.

2. A spirit of patience. He waited patiently for the time appointed of God. He continued at his place of duty for 40 years, and did not set himself apart from Israel, continuing at his place and fulfilling his duty during all those dreary years of wandering the in wilderness.

3. A spirit of courage: He did not seek an easy way, even in his old age. Give me the land of the giants. Forty years before, he would have attacked the giants by faith, and he is willing to do it now. He did not think of his own safety but of the promises of God. He left an inheritance for his daughter and her husband Othniel and for his children after him, as God has promised.

4. A spirit of communion and good will. In spite of the unfaithfulness of the ten spies and the unbelief of the whole generation of Israel, Caleb did not complain against God and the children of Israel. As far as we can tell he maintained cheerful and confident. He was not angry with God, but submitted to His decree. It may very well have been that it was through the manly and faithful spirit of Joshua and Caleb that the next generation was prepared to do what their fathers refused to do.

5. I believe that there is only one other in the history of Israel in the Old Testament that manifests these manly and godly virtues, and that would be Joseph who was sold by his brothers into Egypt many years before. Joseph also did his duty, suffering hardship because of the sins of his own brethren, but he never accused God falsely nor abandoned faithful service to Him.

The greatest thing that I can think of to say about these things, a commentary on the life of Caleb comes to us from Galatians 6:

"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all [men], especially unto them who are of the household of faith." (Galatians 6:9-10 AV)

May God bless you.

Amen and Amen. May God bless you.