

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Joshua: God's Faithful Giving Of The Promised Land To Israel

Part III: God's Dividing The Land For Israel's Inheritance, Joshua 13:1-21:45

B. Caleb's Inheritance: A Lesson In The Vast Personal Opportunity For Blessing In God's Plan (Joshua 14:1-15)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

In today's world, where the welfare of the group is often promoted at the cost of individual welfare (Brannon Howse, Religious Trojan Horse, 2012, p. 15-16), many feel they are hopelessly destined to be personally unfulfilled:

(1) Brian Zorn, a special-ed teacher in Mineola, New York, wrote in his op-ed, "Common Core Is Leaving My Students Behind" (The Wall Street Journal, June 16, 2015, p. A13) that the federal government's "No Child Left Behind" English language arts and mathematics exams "undermine my students' hard-won confidence and tell them they can't compete" in contrast to his extensive efforts as a teacher to improve their motivation and capacity to learn.

(2) Leslie Brody's piece, "Taking Aim At School Suspensions" in last year's June 3, 2014 journal, *Ibid.*, p. A15 told how "(s)trict discipline policies have led to the suspensions of millions of students yearly in the U. S. . . . a practice that makes them more likely to fall behind, drop out and end up in the juvenile justice system."

Yet, these "zero-tolerance policies" dating from the "1990s" were set up "in response to school violence and shootings," so public school administrators are in a difficult position as they seek to keep students from "disrupting class" so others might learn without also influencing borderline students toward juvenile delinquency, *Ibid.*

(3) Adults face such challenges, too: Heather Mac Donald's op-ed, "Explaining Away the New Crime Wave," *Ibid.*, June 15, 2015, p. A17, told how the "past nine months have seen unprecedented antipolice agitation" to where "(o)fficers in urban areas are encountering high levels of resistance and hostility when they try to make an arrest," so they are becoming less pro-active with the result that "violent crime" is "rising sharply in many cities," *Ibid.*

It seems that many individuals in minority groups in urban centers are doomed to miss out on a fulfilling life!

(4) However, even believers locally face the sense of personal hopelessness: several have recently told me of their discouragement in facing the seeming futility of their own lives as they struggle with personal spiritual defeat.

Need: *So, we ask, "What hope is there for individuals in today's world who feel they may remain unfulfilled?!"*

- I. When the Promised Land west of the Jordan River was divided by divine lot to the nine and one-half tribes (Jos. 14:1-5), Caleb approached Joshua with a petition about his personal inheritance, Jos. 14:6a.**
- II. Caleb's petition was couched in an amazing autobiography that gives hope for great personal fulfillment to one who humanly seems hopelessly destined never to be able attain such fulfillment, Joshua 14:6b-15:**
 - A. Caleb came from a heritage that humanly appeared to destine him to experience a great lack of God's blessing:
 1. Joshua 14:6b claims Caleb's father was a "Kenezite" (*qenizzi* in the Hebrew, B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 889), one of the Southern Canaanite nations that God had told Abraham in Genesis 15:19 KJV (there spelled "Kenizzites," but also *qenizzi* in the Hebrew text, *Ibid.*) would be dispossessed, Z. P. E. B., vol. Three, p. 782. Caleb's people were thus destined for total elimination in divine judgment, Deut. 20:16.
 2. As a member of what was also a Canaanite group of people, Caleb was additionally under the Noahic curse of Genesis 9:25 (with 10:18-19) that left his Kenezite nation destined to be enslaved to other nations.
 3. Caleb was thus also part of the "mixed multitude" that came up out of Egypt with Israel in the Exodus (Ex. 12:38), a troublesome party that sinfully complained about the manna, Num. 11:4-6; *Ibid.*, v. Four, p. 254.
 4. The name, "Caleb" (*keleb*, *Ibid.*, B. D. B., p. 476-477) literally meant "dog," a belittling name for a man that signaled he was a slave or even at times a temple prostitute, *Ibid.*, Z. P. E. B., vol. One, p. 686-687.
 - B. Yet, due to his wholehearted faith in God, Caleb's life was transformed into a highly blessed, fulfilling one:
 1. When God had Moses send spies from Kadesh-barnea to spy Canaan, He directed that each spy be a tribal leader (Num. 13:1-3), and Caleb was a leader of Judah, Num. 13:6 NIV. Though from a godless heritage, Caleb had so impressed Judah's people that he had become one of their leaders, a great achievement!
 2. As the spies returned from their mission, ten of them advised Israel not to fight the Canaanites though the spies Caleb and Joshua said they should attack them, Num. 13:26-14:9; Jos. 14:7-8. Caleb was especially wholehearted in making his recommendation of faith in God's power to give them victory, Joshua 14:7b.
 3. God thus promised Caleb and his seed the land he had trod in Canaan, Jos. 14:9; Num. 14:24; Deut. 1:36.
 4. Since it was God's plan that the land be gained by fighting and conquest (Jos. 1:1-6), in vast contrast to the faithless generation and ten spies who were judged to die in the wilderness (Num. 14:29-33), God

preserved Caleb's physical strength so he would be able to fight and conquer his inheritance, Jos. 14:10-11! Though he had been 40 years old when he spied the Promised Land, and he was 85 years old when the land was divided for inheritance, God had preserved his strength so he could still conquer his inheritance!

5. Accordingly, in great faith, Caleb asked Joshua for Hebron, the Anakim giant stronghold that Israel had so feared at Kadesh-barnea, Jos. 14:12, 15; Num. 13:32-33! Caleb's claim that God would be "with" him in Joshua 14:12 uses the **special** Hebrew word '*et*' for "with" that means "in close proximity with" as "Helper" (opposite the **general** word '*im*', Ibid., B. D. B., p. 85-87). In accord with Joshua's speech to Israel's military leaders on Joshua's "long day" in Joshua 10:1-23, 24-25 that God would enable them to defeat all the Canaanite foes to possess the land, Caleb believed that just as God had miraculously helped Israel that "long day" in stopping the sun and moon, in using hail to slay more Canaanites than Israel did, in striking their foes with confusion and in sustaining Israel to fight a long day (Jos. 10:1-24), God would also **in close proximity miraculously help** him defeat the giants of Hebron!
6. Joshua blessed Caleb (Jos. 14:13a), and granted him Hebron as his inheritance, and Caleb defeated the Anakim there, Jos. 14:14; 15:13-14. Hebron had been the home of Anak, the greatest of the Anakim (Jos. 14:15), and Caleb defeated this deceased giant's three great giant sons to win Hebron, Joshua 15:13-14!
7. However, Caleb's ministry and influence of faith brilliantly continued long after that (as follows):
 - a. Hebron was later selected as a city of refuge to which distraught, innocent people could flee for refuge, the opposite of its once-calamitous reputation as the home of the most feared Anakim, cf. Joshua 20:1-7.
 - b. Also, Hebron became a town for priests where the Word of God could be taught to Israel to promote the faith in God so practiced by Caleb, and Caleb still inherited the rich land around Hebron, Joshua 21:10-12.
 - c. Beyond this, Caleb challenged any man in Judah who conquered the nearby city of Kirjath-sepher the hand of his daughter Achsah in marriage, so his nephew Othniel took it and wed Achsah, Jos. 15:16-17.
 - d. Then, like father, like daughter: Achsah boldly asked her father Caleb for springs to go with her land inheritance, so Caleb richly rewarded her, giving her the upper and the lower springs, Joshua 15:18-19.
8. Nevertheless, Caleb's influence of faith so continued after his lifetime that it affects all future generations:
 - a. Learning from Caleb by faith to conquer Kirjath-sepher and gain springs, Othniel, supported by his wife, Caleb's daughter, Achsah, later became the first judge God raised up to deliver Israel, cf. Judges 3:7-11.
 - b. Othniel's ministry became the precedent for God's raising up other men to judge Israel until Samuel, the last judge, arrived to sustain Israel as her leader until Samuel anointed David as king, 1 Samuel 1:1-16:13.
 - c. David's dynasty in turn leads to Jesus, the ultimate King, Messiah and Savior (Matthew 1:1-17), so God used Caleb as a key link in a chain of leaders that affects all future generations of God's people, 1 Jn. 2:17.

Lesson: *Though from an ungodly, doomed heritage, Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite of the Canaanites by a wholehearted faith in God was sustained for 45 years to conquer the greatest of the great giants that faithless Israel had dreaded back at Kadesh-barnea, and he impacted future generations to follow the Lord to where God used him as a key link of leaders in Israel in a long chain of men that led to Jesus Christ our Lord!*

Application: *If we are dismayed at our woefully ungodly background or our present personal state in life, recall Caleb's biography, and (1) trust in Christ as our personal Savior from sin, John 3:16. (2) Then, like Caleb, regardless of our current state, may we wholeheartedly obey Scripture and follow the Lord to see Him richly reward us, making our lives eternally astoundingly effective in His eternal plan!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

In view of his Kenezite heritage, Caleb's gaining of Hebron as his inheritance would have been a colossal personal victory for him:

The Kenezites had originally dwelt in Southern Canaan near where the Anakim of Hebron lived, and since the land "ate up its inhabitants" (Num. 13:32) in the sense that its people always warred over the land's agricultural bounty (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Num. 13:32), the Kenezites and other Southern Canaanite peoples had been unable to oust the Anakim who possessed Hebron's lush land with its Valley of Eshcol from which Israel's spies had taken a huge bunch of grapes on a pole between two men, Num. 13:22-25 KJV; Ibid., Z. P. E. B., v. Two, p. 364.

However, what his **fathers** could **NOT gain apart from God in spiritual darkness, Caleb with God's help as a believing member of Israel's covenant community DID gain** -- he won Hebron of all places!

May we put our faith in Christ for salvation. Then, like Caleb, may we wholeheartedly follow the Lord in what He commands us in His Word to find Him sustain and equip us to conquer all spiritual giant foes!