



*Caleb Brings
A
Good Report*

Numbers 14:38

*Of the twelve who had
explored the land, only
Joshua and Caleb remained
alive.*

Compiled By Dr. Harold Bollinger

Overview:

CALEB SHOWS THAT TRUTH CANNOT BE MEASURED BY NUMBERS

The voice of the minority is not often given a hearing. Nevertheless, truth cannot be measured by Numbers. On the contrary, it often stands against majority opinion.

Truth remains unchanged because it is guaranteed by the character of God. God is truth; what he says is the last word. At times, a person must even stand alone on the side of truth.

Caleb was not so much a man of great faith as a man of faith in a great God! His boldness rested on his understanding of God, not on his confidence in Israel's abilities to conquer the land.

He could not agree with the majority, for that would be to disagree with God.

We, on the other hand, often base our decisions on what everyone else is doing. Few of us are first-order cowards like the ten spies. We are more like the people of Israel, getting our cowardice secondhand.

Caleb was one of the two survivors of the Israelites permitted

To enter the land of promise

The People Murmur at the Account of the Spies

Numbers 14:29-30

You will all die here in this wilderness! Because you complained against me, none of you who are twenty years old or older and were counted in the census [30] will enter the land I swore to give you. The only exceptions will be Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

The Murmurers Forbidden to Enter the Promised Land

The Lord granted the prayer of Moses so far as not at once to destroy the congregation. But disbelief of the promise forbids the benefit. Those who despise the pleasant land shall be shut out of it.

The promise of God should be fulfilled to their children. They wished to die in the wilderness; God made their sin their ruin, took them at their word, and their carcasses fell in the wilderness.

They were made to groan under the burden of their own sin, which was too heavy for them to bear. Ye shall know my breach of promise, both the causes of it that it is procured by your sin, for God never leaves any till they first leave him; and the consequences of it, that will produce your ruin.

But your little ones, now under twenty years old, which ye, in your unbelief, said should be a prey, them will I bring in. God will let them know that he can put a difference between the guilty and the innocent, and cut them off without touching their children. Thus God would not utterly take away his loving kindness.

Numbers 14:38

Of the twelve who had explored the land, only Joshua and Caleb remained alive.

Death of the faithless spies

Here is the sudden death of the ten evil spies. They sinned in bringing a slander upon the land of promise. Those greatly provoke God, who misrepresent religion, raise dislike in men's minds toward it, or give opportunity to those to do so, who seek occasion.

Justly are murmurers made mourners. If they had mourned for the sin, when they were faithfully reprov'd, the sentence had been prevented; but as they mourned for the judgment only, it did them no service.

There is in hell such mourning as this; but tears will not quench the flames, nor cool the tongue

Numbers 26:63-65

So these are the census figures of the people of Israel as prepared by Moses and Eleazar the priest on the plains of Moab beside the Jordan River, across from Jericho.

Not one person that Moses and Aaron counted in this census had been among those counted in the previous census taken in the wilderness of Sinai. For the Lord had said of them, "They will all die in the wilderness." The only exceptions were Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

None Remaining of the First Numbering

The execution of the sentence passed on the murmurers, Numbers 14:29 is observable. There was not one man numbered now, who was numbered then, but Caleb and Joshua.

Here appeared the righteousness of God, and his faithfulness to his threatenings. Especially observe the truth of God, in performing his promise to Caleb and Joshua.

Death makes awful havoc of the human species, and causes surprising changes in families and nations; yet all is appointed in perfect wisdom, justice, and truth, by the Lord himself.

This should stir us up to think upon the hateful nature of sin, the cause of all these devastations. We should renew our repentance, seek forgiveness, value the salvation of Christ, remember how frail we are, prepare for the summons of death, and fill up our days in serving our generation according to the will of God.

Moses Reproves the Reubenites and Gadites

Numbers 32:11-13

'Of all those I rescued from Egypt, no one who is twenty years old or older will ever see the land I solemnly promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for they have not obeyed me completely.

The only exceptions are Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua son of Nun, for they have wholeheartedly followed the Lord.'

"The Lord was furious with Israel and made them wander in the wilderness for forty years until the whole generation that sinned against him had died.

The proposal showed disregard to the land of Canaan, distrust of the Lord's promise, and unwillingness to encounter the difficulties and dangers of conquering and driving out the inhabitants of that land. Moses is wroth with them.

It will become any of God's Israel to sit down unconcerned about the difficult and perilous concerns of their brethren, whether public or personal.

He reminds them of the fatal consequences of the unbelief and faint-heartedness of their fathers, when they were, as themselves, just ready to enter Canaan.

If men considered as they ought what would be the end of sin, they would be afraid of the beginning of it.

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Deut. 1:34-36

"When the Lord heard your complaining, he became very angry. So he solemnly swore, 'Not one of you from this entire wicked generation will live to see the good land I swore to give your ancestors, except Caleb son of Jephunneh. He will see this land because he has followed the Lord completely. I will give to him and his descendants some of the land he walked over during his scouting mission.'

Moses reminds the Israelites of their march from Horeb to Kadesh-barnea, through that great and terrible wilderness.

He shows how near they were to a happy settlement in Canaan. It will aggravate the eternal ruin of hypocrites that they were not far from the kingdom of God. As if it were not enough that they were sure of their God before them, they would send men before them.

Never any looked into the Holy Land, but they must own it to be a good land. And was there any cause to distrust this God? An unbelieving heart was at the bottom of all this. All disobedience to God's laws, and distrust of his power and goodness, flow from disbelief of his word, as all true obedience springs from faith.

It is profitable for us to divide our past lives into distinct periods; to give thanks to God for the mercies we have received in each, to confess and seek the forgiveness of all the sins we can remember; and thus to renew our acceptance of God's salvation, and our surrender of ourselves to his service.

Our own plans seldom avail to good purpose; while courage in the exercise of faith, and in the path of duty, enables the believer to follow the Lord fully, to disregard all that opposes, to triumph over all opposition, and to take firm hold upon the promised blessings.

Caleb Obtains Hebron

Joshua 14:6-15

A delegation from the tribe of Judah, led by Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite, came to Joshua at Gilgal. Caleb said to Joshua, "Remember what the Lord said to Moses, the man of God, about you and me when we were at Kadesh-barnea.

I was forty years old when Moses, the servant of the Lord, sent me from Kadesh-barnea to explore the land of Canaan. I returned and gave from my heart a good report, but my brothers who went with me frightened the people and discouraged them from entering the Promised Land.

For my part, I followed the Lord my God completely. So that day Moses promised me, 'The land of Canaan on which you were just walking will be your special possession and that of your descendants forever, because you wholeheartedly followed the Lord my God.'

"Now, as you can see, the Lord has kept me alive and well as he promised for all these forty-five years since Moses made this promise—even while Israel wandered in the wilderness. Today I am eighty-five years old.

I am as strong now as I was when Moses sent me on that journey, and I can still travel and fight as well as I could then. So I'm asking you to give me the hill country that the Lord promised me.

You will remember that as scouts we found the Anakites living there in great, walled cities. But if the Lord is with me, I will drive them out of the land, just as the Lord said."

So Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave Hebron to him as an inheritance.

Hebron still belongs to the descendants of Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite because he wholeheartedly followed the Lord, the God of Israel.

(Previously Hebron had been called Kiriath-arba. It had been named after Arba, a great hero of the Anakites.) And the land had rest from war.

Caleb Obtains Hebron

Caleb's request is, "Give me this mountain," or Hebron, because it was formerly in God's promise to him, and he would let Israel know how much he valued the promise.

Those who live by faith value that which is given by God's promise, far above what is given by his providence only. It was now in the Anakims' possession, and Caleb would let Israel know how little he feared the enemy, and that he would encourage them to push on their conquests.

Caleb answered to his name, which signifies "all heart." Hebron was settled on Caleb and his heirs, because he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel. Happy are we if we follow him. Singular piety shall be crowned with singular favour.

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Those Appointed to Divide the Land

Numbers 34:19

These are the tribes and the names of the leaders: Tribe — Leader

Judah — Caleb son of Jephunneh

The Divine Threatenings, the Intercession of Moses

Numbers 14:11-19 review

Moses made humble intercession for Israel. Herein he was a type of Christ, who prayed for those that despitefully used him. The pardon of a nation's sin, is the turning away the nation's punishment; and for that Moses is here so earnest. Moses argued that, consistently with God's character, in his abundant mercies, he could forgive them.

Leader of the Israelites after Joshua's death

Hebron and Other Cities Taken

Judges 1:9-20 review

The Canaanites had iron chariots; but Israel had God on their side, whose chariots are thousands of angels, Ps 68:17. Yet they suffered their fears to prevail against their faith.

About Caleb we read in Jos 15:16-19. The Kenites had settled in the land. Israel let them fix where they pleased, being a quiet, contented people. They that molested none, were molested by none. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth

Assistance in Dividing Canaan

Numbers 34:19

These are the tribes and the names of the leaders: Tribe — Leader

Judah — Caleb son of Jephunneh

God here appoints men to divide the land to them. So sure must they feel of victory and success while God fought for them, that the persons are named who should be entrusted with the dividing of the land.

Leader of the Israelites after Joshua's death

Judges 1:11-12

From there they marched against the people living in the town of Debir (formerly called Kiriath-sepher).

Then Caleb said, "I will give my daughter Acsah in marriage to the one who attacks and captures Kiriath-sepher."

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Descendants of Caleb

1 Chronicles 4:15

The sons of Caleb son of Jephunneh were Iru, Elah, and Naam. The son of Elah was Kenaz.

In this chapter we have a further account of Judah, the most numerous and most famous of all the tribes; also an account of Simeon.

The most remarkable person in this chapter is Jabez. We are not told upon what account Jabez was more honourable than his brethren; but we find that he was a praying man.

The way to be truly great, is to seek to do God's will, and to pray earnestly.

Life Application

Our search for right and wrong usually starts with questions such as “What do the experts say?” or “What do my friends say?” The question we most often avoid is “What does God say?” The principles we learn as we study the Bible provide a dependable road map for life.

They draw us into a personal relationship with the God whose Word is the Bible. The God who gave Caleb his boldness is the same God who offers us the gift of eternal life through his Son, Jesus. That’s truth worth believing!

Key verse: “But because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it” Numbers 14:24.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Verse Concept: Matthew Henry's Concept Bible Commentary.