

# FAITHFUL FOLLOWER: PRACTICAL MEDITATIONS ON THE LIFE OF CALEB

by Unknown

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*Jim Hyland traces the life of Caleb as a model of wholehearted devotion to God, drawing practical lessons for faithfulness in every season of life.*

51 Chapters

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## Faithful Follower: Practical Meditations on the Life of Caleb

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## Preface

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The contents of this book can be summed up as practical applications from the life of Caleb. He was a man who trusted, endured, and conquered. He fully followed the Lord, believed God's promises, and valued his inheritance. From a slave in Egypt, to a wanderer in the wilderness; from a brave and faithful spy, to overcoming the enemy and taking possession of his inheritance in the land of Canaan, the story of Caleb is one of faith, vision, and courage. He toiled rigorously in the shadows of the pyramids, traversed the hot sandy wilderness, and eventually dwelt in the lush hill country of Judah. He lived to see the promises of God fulfilled in his own life, his people established in the land, and tremendous blessing in his family. He experienced and knew the joy of obedience and reliance on Created with Bible Mapper Lead on, almighty Lord,

As we contemplate this ancient record it should surely stir our hearts and lead us to act as Caleb did — in the energy of faith taking possession of that which God has declared He has given to us in Christ. No foe can withstand the man of God who presses forward in power of the Spirit and in obedience to the Word. Such a faith was Caleb's and in this he is an example for us all. We are too apt to take the line of least resistance, to be content with that which seems the easiest thing instead of valiantly going on in faith to lay hold of the best that God has for us, no matter what difficulties may seem to make it impossible for us to overcome the foe and to enter into and enjoy our allotted portion.

Saviour, we long to follow Thee,  
Daily Thy cross to bear,  
And count all else, whate'er it be,  
Unworthy of our care,  
O teach us so the power to know  
Of risen life with Thee;  
Not we may live while here below,  
But Christ our life may be.

Little Flock Hymn Book #278

"Exalt Christ...Say little, serve all, pass on. This is true greatness, to serve unnoticed and work unseen. Oh the joy of having nothing and being nothing, seeing nothing but a living Christ in glory, and being careful for nothing but His interests down here." J. N. Darby. On one occasion the Bible expositor, and writer of many Scriptural commentaries, William Kelly, was asked, "What makes one Christian more spiritual than another?" His reply was, "Their appreciation of the person of Christ."

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound!

That saved a wretch like me:

I once was lost, but now am found:

Was blind but now I see.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares

I have already come:

'Tis grace that brought me safe thus far,

And grace will lead me home.

## J. Newton

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In 1 Chronicles 4:13-15 we find the descendants of Caleb the son of Jephunneh and of his brother Kenaz. But here now, in this portion, this genealogy is truncated.

“There is a great difference between knowing about Jesus and knowing Him...If we only know of Jesus as a good man, a great example, it is no help to us. Those who know Him know Who He is. When we know Him everything is different and we are living in a new world — a new atmosphere. Heaven begins on earth for us. Those who know Him know that Jesus is everything to them. They can bear witness because they have been living with Him...If we live in Him He will reveal Himself to us and we shall bear witness — not for a day or a night only...”

Lead on to victory:

Encouraged by Thy blessed word,

With joy we follow Thee.

We follow Thee, our Guide,

Who didst salvation bring:

We follow Thee, through grace supplied

From heaven's eternal spring.

Till of the prize possessed,

We hear of war no more,

And, O sweet thought! forever rest

On yonder peaceful shore.

Little Flock Hymn Book #3124.1

God, while he As we contemplate Jehovah lifted up His rod —

Oh Christ, it fell on Thee!

Thou wast forsaken of Thy God;

No distance now for me.

Thy blood beneath that rod has flowed:

Thy bruising healeth me.

-Little Flock Hymn Book #13

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Conqueror

Are you dear saint, a conqueror,

A soldier for the Lord?

Do you, by faith now overcome,

Through Christ, our great reward?

Have you the enemy thus met,

Through Him who meets each need?

And found in Him a sure resource,

By which you can succeed?

A conqueror each saint can be,

By Jesus' power alone,

And overcome with victory,

Through Christ the Living Stone:

By Him we live, by Him we move,

In Him, is all we need,

To meet the enemy and win,

And by His might succeed.

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-Little Flock Hymn Book #137

Lead on, almighty Lord,  
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Little Flock Hymn Book #312

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Daily Thy cross to bear,  
And count all else, whate'er it be,  
Unworthy of our care,  
O teach us so the power to know  
Of risen life with Thee;  
Not we may live while here below,  
But Christ our life may be.

Little Flock Hymn Book #278

results of disobedience and unbelief. He was a man who had, what is referred to in this day and age as, stick-to-itiveness. In other words, he possessed persistence and determination; qualities that were channeled for the glory of God, an appreciation and holding fast of the truth, and the blessing of others.

Caleb has always been one the writer's favorite Bible characters. It is with prayerful consideration that the remarks and meditations of this book will endear him to the readers heart, and more than that, draw the affections out to Christ, that each one of us, like this dear man of old, might be able to honestly say, at the end of our wilderness journey: "I wholly followed the Lord my God" (Joshua 14:8).

## Introduction

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“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16).

Scripture not only teaches by precept and commandment, by doctrine and illustration, but by example as well. The Word of God abounds with stories of men and women, young people, and those of all ages and walks of life ... real people who were placed in all kinds of real situations and who faced all sorts of obstacles and difficulties in their path of faith and service. These narrations are more than just interesting stories and historical facts. It is true that they are interesting stories, and they are indeed historical facts, but they are far more than that. These histories are recorded very carefully by divine inspiration for our instruction and encouragement, often as a warning, and certainly for correction and admonishment as well. They show us how the characters acted and reacted; whether wisely or unwisely; whether in dependence on the Lord or in their own strength. They teach us the blessedness of obedience and the folly of disobedience, the joy of following the Lord, and the sorrowful reaping of choosing our own way. We need to familiarize ourselves with these accounts, and as we do we will find that they were people who faced all the same kinds of difficulties and obstacles that we face today, albeit in slightly different settings. From these stories we learn that it has never been easy to live for God's glory and follow the Lord in any period of history. We also learn that it is possible to do so, no matter how dark the day, difficult the circumstances, or great the opposition, because we have One who never changes. Indeed, we have the same God that Caleb and the other host of Old Testament saints had, and we have an even better portion in Christ, and the fulness of Christianity.

Many of these accounts are brief and focus only on a certain period or aspect of the person's life. Others are more detailed, and may even chronicle events spanning from their birth to their death. Whether we are told much or little, what is recorded by the Spirit of God is for our learning and profit. “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4).

One of these most instructive stories is the account of Caleb. Over and over again we have enjoyed the narrative of this faithful servant of God, and the commendation of Joshua 14:14, which tells us, “that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel.” With this in mind we will examine his life, and the circumstances surrounding his experiences, with the prayer that every reader will be strengthened and encouraged to press on in the path of faith and service, by this Old Testament character, who, no doubt falls into the category of those who are referred to as, “so great a cloud of witnesses” (Hebrews 12:1); and is unquestionably alluded to in the earlier reference of those “who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises” (Hebrews 11:33).

There are at least seven things that faith does!

Faith...

- Believes the incredible. “Even as Abraham believed God” (Galatians 3:6).
- Sees the invisible. “By faith Moses...endured, as seeing Him who is invisible” (Hebrews 11:23,27).
- Attempts the impossible. “Without faith it is impossible to please Him” (Hebrews 11:6).
- Overcomes the overwhelming. “When my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I...I will trust in the covert of Thy wings. Selah” (Psalm 61:2, 4).
- Surmounts the insurmountable. “He is a buckler to all them that trust in Him...Thou also hast lifted me up on high above them that rose up against me.” 2 Samuel 22:31, 49.
- Faces the formidable. “Who through faith...were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens” (Hebrews 11:33-34).
- Accomplishes the unthinkable. “If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you” (Matthew 17:20).

These seven things we will see exemplified in the life of Caleb.

In his commentary on Joshua, H. A. Ironside expressed it in the following quote:

## Relevance

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“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come” (1 Corinthians 10:11).

There is no question as to the importance and relevance of taking up, not only an Old Testament portion, but something from the history of the wilderness experiences of the children of Israel. This is confirmed by the above verse. In the opening verses of 1 Corinthians 10, the Apostle Paul gives a very brief outline of the wilderness journey regarding the Israelite's failure, God's governmental ways with them, and His faithfulness in spite of their unfaithfulness. Then he sums it up in this way, and tells us why God has so meticulously given us so many details, and devoted so many pages of the Bible to this subject. This statement from 1 Corinthians 10:11, then confirms to us the importance of meditating on, and learning from, the history and experiences of Caleb whose life spanned the whole forty-year wilderness experience. Remember, these things are written for “our admonition.”

## The Setting

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“Thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee” (Deuteronomy 15:15).

Before embarking on the story of Caleb, it is important to get the setting. The children of Israel have just been redeemed by the blood of the Passover Lamb, and delivered by the power of God from the bondage of Pharaoh and Egypt, a very apt and graphic picture of Satan and this world.

Hopefully every reader has come under the good of the work of Christ and has been washed in His blood, of which the Passover is a most precious type. “Christ our passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Corinthians 5:7). We need to realize too, that the Lord Jesus “gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father” (Galatians 1:4). It is the work of the cross that has separated us from this world that is under judgment. Now, as a sanctified, or “set apart” people we are no longer under the authority of Satan, the “god” and “prince” of this world. We no longer belong to this world system. We now belong to heaven and we are under the Lordship of the One who has loved us enough to die for us, has saved from our sins, and provided a wonderful home in the Father’s house at the end of the wilderness journey. No wonder the Apostle Paul could write, “but God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Galatians 6:14). Other than the fact that we are still physically here on this planet, never again will we be part of this sad, sin-sick, cursed earth, and its social, political, and religious system, which goes on in independence of God, and in indifference to His Son. We are citizens of heaven, and this world has no claim over us, just as Pharaoh and the Egyptians had no claim on, or authority over, the Israelites once they had crossed the Red Sea. They were assured of this before they even went through the waters. “And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will show to you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever” (Exodus 14:13). The claims of God were met on the Passover night, and they were further delivered from the claims of the enemy the night they passed through the Red Sea. Redemption and deliverance in this aspect were complete and final.

No more on Egypt’s coast to stand,

No more a slave in Pharaoh’s land;

No more to toil at his demand,

Or beaten by the cruel hand.

Forever saved, no more to smart,

Forever freed and set apart,

Forever, for Jehovah’s heart,

And liberty to us impart.

The children of Israel never got back to Egypt as far as their position as the people of God. When they crossed the Red Sea they never set foot on Egyptian soil again. As has already been stated, never again were they under the authority of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. However, we do read, "and in their hearts [they] turned back again into Egypt" (Acts 7:39). Just so, a believer will never be part of this world again, but we can, and perhaps often do, return in our hearts. How frequently do we find our affections more world-centered than Christ-centered? We yearn and long after the things of the world, trying to satisfy the hunger of our hearts by those things which we perhaps once indulged in, or never have, in our unsaved days partaken of, by the mercies of the Lord, yet think that they would be sweet and palatable. Like Israel, who murmured and said, "We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic" (Numbers 11:5). Having been in Egypt several times I can well understand, from a natural standpoint, their hankering after those things, as they are certainly very tasty. In fact I have never eaten melons as sweet and refreshing as the melons of Egypt. However, the point is, none of it gives lasting satisfaction. The world-system offers so much that seems good and satisfying, but only leaves us depraved and with a gnawing emptiness in our soul in the end.

So, as a redeemed and delivered people, the children of Israel are about to start on the wilderness journey. We find the story of Caleb woven through some of their experiences, and carefully documented by the Spirit of God, through the instrumentality of God's servant Moses, who was used to write the first five books of the Bible, or what is often referred to as the Pentateuch.

## In Company With Joshua

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“Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh” (Numbers 14:6).

Relatively speaking we are told very little concerning the life of Caleb. I say relatively speaking, because we find that there are two men, who at this point in their history are inseparable: Joshua and Caleb. Regarding Joshua, there are pages and pages of the Holy Scriptures taken up with the details of his life and work, but not a great deal regarding the life and work of his faithful companion Caleb.

Perhaps the reason that we are told so much about Joshua, is that he is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. His name means Jesus, and he is, in type, a picture of the Lord in the aspect of Hebrews 2:10. “For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” It was Joshua who was later raised up by God, as their captain, to lead the children of Israel through the Jordan and into the good of their inheritance. Our Captain, the Lord of Glory, is the One who is seeking to lead us into the good of what is ours, in and through Himself, as a result of the work that He accomplished on the cross of Calvary.

The lesson we learn from this is that Caleb, as a man of God, was content to go on quietly in the shadow and company of another. Are you and I satisfied to go on quietly in the shadow and company of our Joshua, the Lord Jesus Christ? The schools of men teach us to make much of self; get a name; make your mark in the world; put yourself forward; leave your stamp on society, etc. Self-assertion is what is ingrained in us in this present age of humanism, but the Bible teaches us to make much of Him and not draw attention to ourselves. Are we happy to walk in the path of faithfulness and service where He has put us, and to do everything for His glory, that others might see Christ in us and be attracted to Him? The hymn-writer, J. G. Deck, penned these words:

Joshua and Caleb seem inseparable. They are constant companions, with one mind, one heart, and one purpose. This is our proper place, and should characterize us in relationship with our Joshua. Notice too, it is not Caleb and Joshua, it is Joshua and Caleb. That is the proper order. Our Joshua, the Lord Jesus Christ, should always be first and foremost! “That in all things He might have the preeminence” (Colossians 1:18).

John the Baptist, in bearing witness of the Lord declared, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30). What a lesson these two servants of God teach us, one from the Old Testament and the other from the New Testament. Nothing of self, and all of Christ! The Apostle Paul said, “For me to live is Christ” (Philippians 1:21). The athlete says, “For me to live, is sports;” the executive says, “For me to live is business;” the entrepreneur say, “For me to live is innovation;” the musician says, “For me to live is music;” and so on. But the Christian should say, “For me to live is Christ.”

I read of a young college student who had a card hanging in his room bearing the inscription,



## **“I am willing to be third.”**

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When pressed to tell the meaning, he refused for a while, but after a time said, “My mother taught me to put Christ first, others second, and self last; so I am willing to be third.

Many years ago my father taught me this simple acronym for joy:

Jesus first,

Others next,

Yourself last.

Another youth had on his desk, a two word motto,

## **“Yes Lord!”**

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He wanted to make sure he always said “yes” to the Lord, putting Him first, so that he could walk with a sense of His presence, and His approval.

Another Christian I knew, had, in his office, by a corner of his desk, where only he could see it, this text printed on a card,

## **“Teach me to do Thy will” (Psalm 143:10)**

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He wanted to make sure he not only knew the Lord’s will, but that he did it as well.

These are examples of modern day Calebs.

If someone asked you what you really wanted out of life, what would it be? A random survey of young and old might reveal many things, and even surprise us a little. But, once again, what would you say? Money, fame, fun, friends, job security, good health...

It seems that the Apostle Paul considered this question after he was saved, and answers for himself in Philippians 3:8. “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.” The one thing he wanted out of life was more of Christ and Christ’s approval. Could we honestly say that? Paul didn’t just say it, he meant it, and his life proved it. To win someone, is to gain their approval. A politician tries to win people over to his way of thinking and party platforms, so that he can gain their votes on election day. A young man tries to win a young lady’s heart so that she will say yes to his marriage proposal. The retailer spends time and money advertising so that he will win customers. But are we seeking to “win Christ?” Is it really His approval that we desire more than anything else? It is not wrong to desire acceptance and win approval, but the question is, whose acceptance and approval do we really want?

No wonder Caleb was later used in a remarkable way for the blessing of his family as well as others, and no wonder he had power to eventually overcome and take possession of his inheritance. We too can only be a blessing and testimony, and have power and fruit in our lives, in the measure in which we walk in the company of the Lord, making everything of Him, and nothing of self. To give Him first place in our daily lives is the only true source of joy, and everything else that is of eternal value.

Walking with Jesus,

Walking with Jesus each day;

Nothing of self – all of Jesus,

His beauties let us display.

Speaking of Jesus,

Speaking of Jesus each day;

Not of ourselves, but of Jesus,

His glory seeking alway.

Perhaps the way another has already expressed it, sums up the subject best of all:

This is true spirituality!

How much does the person of Christ mean to your heart? The more we learn of Him from the Word, the more real and precious He will become. Can we truly say, “Christ is everything,” (Colossians 3:11, JND Translation)?

## Our Inheritance

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“An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:4).

There was an inheritance waiting for the children of Israel. It was on the other side of the Jordan River from the Sinai desert. The Lord had said, “I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey” (Exodus 3:8).

Often Canaan is thought of, and even referred to in hymns, as a picture of heaven, or that which comes after death. In other words, something we do not come into the good of in this life. But actually Canaan is a picture of that which we can, and should, have an enjoyment of now. It corresponds with the vast panorama of blessings that are ours in Christ; those heavenly blessings of which we read in Ephesians 1:3, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”

Israel's inheritance was earthly, and consequently it was proper for them to go in and conquer by the sword. The fact of the matter is, that because they did not wholly carry this out, the descendants of those enemies became, and still are a plague in Palestine to this very day. For us, our blessings are heavenly, and so we do not fight with physical weaponry. Yet, while we do not, as Christians, have a physical warfare, it is nonetheless a very real warfare. Satan and his hosts, are very real enemies, seeking to hinder us from enjoying what is ours in Christ. “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12). We are in a war zone, and we won't be out of it until we leave this world in exchange for the peace and rest of heaven and the unhindered enjoyment of the Father's house.

With such a powerful host arrayed against us, we might then ask, “How can we walk with power, and in the enjoyment of our inheritance, while in enemy territory?” The wonderful truth is, that like God's people in the Old Testament, we do not have to face the enemy in our own strength, or with our own devices. Indeed, if we try to, we will be soundly defeated. We are no match for Satan and his forces! Second Corinthians 10:4, tells us, “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.” For us we have “The whole armor of God” (Ephesians 6:11). May the Lord then give us the spiritual energy to carry out the further instruction of Ephesians 6:13, “Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” Timothy was reminded to be “a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Timothy 2:3).

It is significant that the real conflict for Israel never started until they crossed the Jordan, and went in to possess the land. It is true they had a battle with Amalek in the wilderness (a picture of Satan's working on the flesh, and seeking to hinder our walk with God through this wilderness world), Exodus 17:8-15, but there were quite a number of enemies they had to face in Canaan. In

the measure in which a believer today seeks to enjoy his spiritual blessings, and walk in the good of his heavenly portion, the enemy will be right there, in one way or another, to hinder and discourage. Satan does not want us to live in the enjoyment of heavenly things. He is adamantly opposed to everything that is of God and Christ.

For Israel, their enemies were “the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites” (Joshua 3:10). In this technological age it may be things like the kilobits, megabits, gigabits, terabytes, and so on. While we may need these gadgets and electronic devices, (computers, cell phone, Blackberries, etc.) with their amazing abilities, to keep us connected and in touch for school, work, and business, yet they are the very commodities that can keep us from enjoying Christ, and heavenly things, if we are not careful. We can become distracted, and encumbered with the gadgetry of this present age. Hours are spent, or even wasted, when our time could be better used in laying hold of our heavenly inheritance. Video games and DVD’s, for instance, can cause hours of uselessness to pass so quickly that we don’t even realize they are gone, never to be recovered. Television brought the world into our homes, the Internet takes us out to the world. All these things desensitize us, absorb our minds, and weaken our faith. These are just some of the things that hamper us from enjoying our portion in Christ. It may be many things, even necessary things that are not wrong in themselves, but if we are not careful, become encumbrances and hindrances. How clever Satan is!

How many times detracted,  
Absorbed with work or play,  
Our thoughts become distracted,  
Our focus drawn away;  
The blessings we’ve been given,  
They to our souls grow dim,  
And we lose sight of heaven,  
And all we have in HIM!  
So many times detracted,  
From that which is our own,  
Our hearts become distracted  
From Christ, and Christ alone:  
All that we have in Jesus,  
Blurred by a passing whim,  
And we lose sight of glory,  
And we lose sight of HIM!

So do not be detracted,  
From Jesus Christ the Lord,  
Do not become distracted,  
And lose your bright reward;  
He'll fill your cup of pleasure,  
O'erflowing to the brim,  
You will have hope and vision,  
And all your joy in HIM!

Sad to say there are many Christians, who, although redeemed and delivered, and on their way to heaven, never, practically speaking, cross the Jordan and enjoy their heavenly portion in this life. They never know the joy of taking hold of their inheritance and spiritual blessings as a present possession. Don't let the enemy rob you of enjoying that which is yours in Christ!

## Unbelief

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“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel. Of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them. And Moses by the commandment of the Lord sent them from the wilderness of Paran” (Numbers 13:1-3).

As the story of Caleb unfolds we find that the Lord has instructed Moses to appoint men to go in and scout out the land of Canaan. If Numbers 13 was all that we had to go on we might well think that it was really the Lord's mind for them to send in these spies. However, a careful reading of Deuteronomy 1, shows that it was not the mind of the Lord. His initial instruction and desire for them was that they would go up immediately in faith and take possession of their inheritance. If they had done so they would never have had to lift a sword on the inhabitants of the land, for His promise was that He would go before and drive out their enemies. This was His directive will for His people, but because of their unbelief He allowed them to send in the spies in His permissive will. Listen to what Moses says in that chapter: “The Lord your God which goeth before you, He shall fight for you, according to all that He did for you in Egypt before your eyes; and in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the Lord thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place. Yet in this thing ye did not believe the Lord your God” (Deut. 1:30-32).

Often in Scripture we see God allowing things in His permissive will that are not according to His directive will. This He does when there is a low moral or spiritual condition amongst His people. Remember though, when we do not follow His directive will there is always a loss in one way or another. A further example is the quails he sent when they begged Him for flesh. We read, “And He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul” (Psalm 106:15). Again, in His permissive will He allowed something that really was not for their good. This is why we never want to implore the Lord for something that may not be according to His mind, and that may not be for our blessing and benefit. He may allow it, but there will be some negative reaping. We always want to pray in the spirit of the Lord Jesus, as the dependent man, “Nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done” (Luke 22:42).

Another example of God's allowing something in His permissive will is in the matter of divorce. Notice what the Lord said in reply to the Pharisees' question on this subject. “And they said, Moses allowed to write a bill of divorce, and to put away. And Jesus answering said to them, In view of your hard-heartedness he wrote this commandment for you; but from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be united to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh: so that they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate” (Mark 10:4-9, J.N.D. Translation). Divorce was never the mind of God under any circumstance, but He allowed it because of the condition of the hearts of the people at that time.



It is sad to see at this point in the story of Caleb, that the hearts of God's people were filled with unbelief. When I was growing up we were often reminded by an older brother in Christ, that it was possible to be "unbelieving believers." All through their wilderness history unbelief surfaced time and time again. "Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not His word: but murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord" (Psalm 106:24-25).

This really was the difficulty with the Apostle Thomas, after the Lord rose from the dead. We often speak of doubting Thomas, but it was much more than that. Thomas said, "Except I shall see...I will not believe" (John 20:25). Thomas was real, he was a true disciple! However, there was a time in this life, when he too was an "unbelieving believer." The Lord had to say to him, "Be not faithless, but believing" (John 20:27).

Confidence and courage always go hand in hand. This is exemplified in the life of so many men and women in the Bible, such as, Abraham, Deborah, Gideon, Nehemiah, Esther, and of course Caleb. In sad contrast unbelief and cowardice always seem to exist and commiserate together.

So many times we are exhorted to "trust in the Lord." He is so worthy of our confidence, and will never disappoint our faith. He is able for the big steps of faith as well as the small ones, and for the great challenges of life, as well as the everyday routine and daily grind. Let's remember the words of Solomon: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5). His father David had earlier written, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass" (Psalm 37:5).

The story is told of two Christian women who were chatting together one afternoon over a cup of tea. One said to the other, "I have got a very comforting text which helps me much. It is, 'What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee' (Psalm 56:3)." The other Christian replied, "I have got a better text than that: 'I will trust, and not be afraid.' (Isaiah 12:2)."

The conclusion of the matter as far as Israel's history at this time, is summed up in the following verse: "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief" (Hebrews 3:19). What a sad summation indeed!

Unbelief in a believer's life,  
Is a sad and sorry lot,  
It clouds his vision of the goal,  
And makes his soul distraught.  
Unbelief in a believer's life,  
Causes his spirit to cower,  
And makes him fret and worry so,  
To frown, and sigh, and glower.  
True belief in a believer's life,  
Makes the spirit glad indeed,

To do God's will and please the Lord,  
From self and fear all freed.  
True belief in a believer's life,  
Is like the summer breezes;  
Refreshing to the weary heart,  
It every promise seizes.

## Privilege & Responsibility

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“All those men were heads of the children of Israel” (Numbers 13:3).

The twelve men who were appointed for the task of spying out the land were men in responsible positions. They were heads of their tribes and leaders amongst God’s people. Now it is true that as believers we are all responsible. We read, “...to every man his work” (Mark 13:34); and also, “...everyone of us shall give account of himself to God” (Romans 14:12). Yet there are those who are more responsible: those that God has raised up in a place of leadership and influence, whether it is in the local assembly, or on a wider sphere. Such must be always especially watchful and circumspect. The truth is, they are often the greatest target of Satan, in that he understands that if he can trip up those in a place of leadership and influence, not only do they miss the path themselves, but they usually take others with them, and may cause many to stumble and be led astray. They may even be restored to the path later on themselves, but sad to say, they rarely bring their followers back. No doubt Paul had this in mind when he addressed the Ephesian elders for the last time, and exhorted them, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers” (Acts 20:28). Then also to Timothy, who had a place of prominence as an apostolic delegate in the early church, he says, “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee” (1 Timothy 4:16). The work of the enemy has always been to try and get intelligent, pious, influential, individuals to go along with him in his schemes. Usually they are those who are gifted, have natural ability and charisma, and know their Bibles well. This is how he so often successfully accomplishes his purposes of duping and dividing the people of God.

As a side note, it is important to pray for those that are leaders, shepherds, or elders among God’s people. Another great work of the enemy has been to get us occupied with the faults and idiosyncrasies of such so that our ears become closed to their ministry, counsel, advice, and guidance. Yet, if we are bringing them before the throne of grace in prayer and supplication, it gives us a whole different perspective through the eyes of Christ, and it is for them a protective and preventative measure. Perhaps many a leader amongst the flock of God would be spared a fall if we were more diligent in praying for them!

## A Favored Tribe

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“Of the tribe of Judah...” (Numbers 13:6).

Caleb was not only one of God’s people, and not only was he a head and ruler of his tribe, but he was from a very favored tribe as well. Judah, was the tribe, where later on, within its boundaries, God placed His name, and promised to dwell with His people collectively. It then became the joy and exercise of every godly Israelite to “do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem” (1 Kings 12:27). It was also the kingly tribe from which the Lord Jesus came as “the Lion of the tribe of Juda” (Revelation 5:5). Just listen to the blessing of Judah recited by Jacob his father in Genesis 49:8-10. “Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father’s children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion’s whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.” Yes, it was a very privileged tribe!

Perhaps you have been brought up in such a place of privilege? A place where the Word of God is honored and bowed to, a place where the authority and Lordship of Christ is recognized and owned, a place where the Lord’s supper is celebrated at the Lord’s table every Lord’s Day, and where the privilege of being gathered to the Lord’s name, in accordance with Matthew 18:20, is valued. “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.” The question is, do we value it? Is it precious to our hearts?

## He Beheld

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“Caleb the son of Jephunneh” (Numbers 13:6).

It is also notable, that Caleb's father's name was, Jephunneh. As has been often pointed out, names and their meanings in Scripture, many times, carry a great deal of significance. The name Jephunneh means, He beheld. Now we don't want to go too far with our applications and illustrations, but perhaps in the meaning of Jephunneh there is a lesson for us. I simply suggest that, in application, Caleb was raised in a home where he beheld the truth from a God-fearing father.

I realize that there may be some readers who have not been brought up in a Christian home, and it is wonderful when spiritual eyes are opened, by the Spirit of God, sometimes through the instrumentality of others (either when we are young or even later in life), “to behold the beauty of the Lord” (Psalm 27:4). But many, like myself, have grown up in homes, where our fathers showed us these things from the earliest days of our childhood. They read the Bible to us, prayed with us, and gave testimony to what they believed by a godly, joyous, consistent walk. They also brought us to meetings on a weekly basis, where the Bible was read and the truth ministered. What a place of blessing and privilege to be reared in, but what a responsibility too. Again Paul exhorted Timothy, “but continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:14-15). Timothy had been brought up hearing the Word of God, and Paul's desire was that he would continue to value and walk in the good of it.

While we value being brought up in a place of favor and blessing, yet the time had come in Caleb's life when he would have to take a stand for the truth on his own. And so it is with all of us. While we should esteem a godly heritage, the day comes when we must buy the truth for ourselves. As we are told in Proverbs 23:23, “Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.” We never rightly value something until we buy it for ourselves. The gospel is free to the recipient, and we are thankful it is, but we must buy the truth. If one of my children wants something and I give them the money to buy it, or I buy it for them myself, they may have some appreciation for it. However, if I encourage them to save their allowance or spending money, and buy it themselves, now they have a greater appreciation because they know the true value and cost of the item.

Whether we are brought up in the truth, or whether we are brought to the truth, as has been said, we must buy it for ourselves. And more than that, we must hold fast to it firmly or we will lose it. Not only is every individual tested, but every generation that is brought up in the truth and a place of privilege is tested collectively as well.

Someone has put it this way:

- The first generation buys the truth, often at great cost.

- The second generation enjoys it.
- The third generation often (not always) squanders it.

I am thankful for a father who planned his life, and the life of his family, around the Lord, meetings for worship, ministry, and prayer, and according to the Word of God.

## The Land

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“So they went up, and searched the land from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath. And they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron; where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the children of Anak, were. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs. The place was called the brook Eshcol, because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence. And they returned from searching of the land after forty days. And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land. And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it” (Numbers 13:21-27).

What a wonderful land it was! It was all God had declared it to be and more. Furthermore, it was all theirs if they would take possession of it. And so it is with us! We have so much in Christ, and yet how little we really enjoy it and make it our own. Later on when they were about to finally cross the Jordan River and enter the land, the Lord told them, “Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses” (Joshua 1:3). It was all theirs, and yet what a small portion they actually took possession of, even after they did eventually get there. At the end of Joshua’s life we read, “there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed” (Joshua 13:1).

It was all theirs, but the enjoyment of the fruit of it depended on their faith and obedience. All the blessings are ours, in Christ, but how much do we really take hold of it in our souls, and walk in the practical good of? Most of us have to confess, very little.

To this day Israel has never taken full possession of all that God has mapped out for them, and they never will until the Lord intervenes on their behalf, puts down their enemies, takes His kingdom, and establishes them in the good of what He intended them to inhabit and enjoy. Because of their unbelief, sin, failure to exterminate their enemies, and lack of energy, not only have they never taken full possession of their inheritance, but they have never had true, full, and lasting peace. Ultimately they rejected the Prince of Peace, and the King of Righteousness, and every day the news reports abound with the sad consequences. However, by grace, there is a wonderful promise at the end of the Old Testament, which will be fulfilled in a soon coming day. “Unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings” (Malachi 4:2).

## An Evil Report

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“Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan...And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight” (Numbers 13:28-29, 32-33).

On their return, ten of the spies, brought up an “evil report.” They admitted that it was indeed a “good land” and they even brought some of the fruit of the land back, in the form of a cluster of grapes so large that it had to be carried on the shoulders of two men. However, because of a lack of faith, they became occupied and overwhelmed by two apparent obstacles that seemed insurmountable and formidable. Those who should have been encouraging the people to go up and take possession of the land, were the very ones who, with two exceptions, were so filled with unbelief themselves that they succeeded in dissuading and dismaying the whole congregation of Israel. They were not unlike the Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees, who took the place of leadership amongst God’s people, in the days when the Lord Jesus was here on earth. They were the very ones who should have been standing for rectitude and righteousness, recognizing who this heavenly personage was, and pointing the people to their Messiah. Yet they were the very ones of whom he had to say, “But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in” (Matthew 23:13).



## High Walls

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“The cities are great and walled up to heaven” (Deuteronomy 1:28).

The first difficulty was the “high walls.” Not only were they high, but without faith they seemed right up to heaven. Isn’t that the way we often look at things? We tend to measure the obstacles in comparison with ourselves, and our own strength. We feel that the situations are just too great, and that we will never be able to overcome. This is because we look at it from a human standpoint. It is true that we can never overcome in our own strength. “Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall” (Isaiah 40:30). Natural strength, even of youth, is not enough to meet the problems of life today. In fact, there are many young people giving up, feeling that the pathway of faith is just too great.

Now we don’t want to underestimate the “high walls.” Caleb and Joshua, the only two that brought a good report, didn’t ignore the fact that there were such walls. The difference was, that they saw them in relationship to the Lord. They knew that the walls were high, but they also knew that heaven was higher still. King David said, “By my God have I leaped over a wall” (Psalm 18:29). A few verses further he says, “He maketh my feet like hinds’ feet, and setteth me upon my high places” (Psalm 18:33).

Have you ever seen a hind (deer) when it comes to a fence or wall, give a spring with its back legs, and jump over the barrier as if it weren’t there? The Lord can help us to do that! There is no wall so high that we cannot surmount it with the strength that comes from Himself. As Paul said, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13). There is One who is greater than all the problems, tests, and trials, and greater than any and every roadblock that the enemy continually seeks to throw in our way.

## Giants

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“And there we saw the giants” (Numbers 13:33).

Secondly, there were giants so great, that in comparison, the ten spies, felt as “grasshoppers...in their sight” (Numbers 13:33). Don’t we feel like that so often? We compare ourselves with the enemy, and we are immediately disheartened and afraid. Truly we are no match for Satan and his hosts, but David, whom we have just cited in the previous section, also noted something else in Psalm 18:29. “For by Thee have I run through a troop.”

So we learn that we are never going to see the removal of the difficulties, or the work of the enemy cease, as long as we are here in this life. But we can overcome and enjoy our portion in Christ, by rising above the obstacles, and running the Christian race in the strength of the Lord and with the resources He has given us. “But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Isaiah 40:31).

There is a vast host of Satan and his emissaries arrayed against us, but remember, we have “The Lord of Hosts” on our side. “Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4). A missionary who had served the Lord for many years on the foreign mission field, and who lived to be over one hundred, reminded me the last time I visited him, “Remember, we can still be overcomers, not be overcome.” As I reflected on what I knew of his life and service, I realized from his personal testimony that he was right. “And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4). Faith overcomes, conquerors, and triumphs, no matter what the opposition.

In the book of Malachi we find a feeble little company of the Lord’s people seeking to go on for His glory and encouraging one another in the midst of dark days, morally, spiritually, and circumstantially. They might have felt that it was impossible to continue on with the enemy so arrayed against them, but twenty-four times in those four short chapters we find Jehovah referred to as “the Lord of Hosts.” For instance in Malachi 3:17, “And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels.” Yes, we always have the “Lord of Hosts” on our side, no matter how strong or how numerous the enemy may be. In fact, the title “Lord of Hosts” appears over one hundred and twenty five times in the Old Testament.

## Anak

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“The sons of Anak, which come of the giants” (Numbers 13:33).

“Anak” means ornaments. Weren’t these giants just ornaments in the sight of the Lord? An ornament is an object simply for show or display, but has no power of itself, or lasting quality. If you have some ornaments on a shelf and you brush your hand across the shelf, those ornaments have no power over your hand. No, they fall to the floor and smash in pieces. Hadn’t the Lord said that He would take His hand and drive out their enemies from before them? Were these giants able to stand in the face of such power? Of course not! They were simply ornaments in the sight of the Lord, who had promised to smash them with a swoosh of His strong hand.

From another passage we learn that there were, “three sons of Anak” (Joshua 15:14). The Apostle John tells us, “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:16). Satan uses these three things in different ways and at different times in our lives to keep us from taking possession, in our souls, of our inheritance, and to rob us of the enjoyment of all that is ours in Christ:

- The lust of the flesh...often in youth.
- The lust of the eyes...often in middle-age.
- The pride of life...often in old-age.

All three can affect us at any time.

No doubt these three giants, and their cohorts, were a ferocious, formidable trio, but are we governed by faith or fear? To faith, there was no hesitation on the part of Caleb, to urge his brethren to go up immediately, counting on the Lord to fight for them, and to conquer on their behalf. J. G. Deck wrote,

“Mid mightiest foes most feeble are we —

But trembling before our great Leader they flee;

The Lord is our Banner, the battle is His,

The weakest of saints more than conqueror is.

## Stilled

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“And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we” (Numbers 13:30-31).

What a good work! To still the people, not stir them up, is what is needed more than ever in these difficult days, referred to in Scripture as “perilous times” (2 Timothy 3:1). Are we still-ers or stir-ers? There is so much to stir up, agitate, and discourage the Lord’s people today. Let’s be counted amongst those who seek to calm and encourage.

Notice that Caleb didn’t compromise. He was a man of integrity, and we never want to have love and peace at the expense of righteousness and truth. The order is, “follow righteousness, faith,” and then, “charity [love], peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2 Timothy 2:22). Caleb was faithful, and didn’t waver from what he saw as the truth, but nevertheless he “stilled the people.” There is a way to be faithful without causing contention or strife. There is a way to admonish the saints without scolding them. There is a way to pour oil on things, and keep our brethren from grating and grinding on each other without compromise. If we carry our spiritual oil can filled with the gentle, loving, long-suffering, spirit of faithfulness, we are a modern-day Caleb. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Galatians 5:22-23).

In sad contrast we read of the other ten spies, “Our brethren have discouraged our heart” (Deuteronomy 1:28). Little did they realize as they brought up their “evil report” and stirred up the congregation, that it would be put down in God’s eternal record, that they discouraged the hearts of their brethren. When situations arise amongst our brethren, what does the Lord write after our names? Can He jot in His Book of Remembrance that we “stilled the people?” Are we encouragers, or are we discouragers?

Later on we are reminded of this instance again, when Caleb says: “My brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt” (Joshua 14:8). We need a buildup amongst our brethren, not a meltdown.

Strengthen your brethren,

Strengthen your brethren each day;

Build up God’s people, encourage

Each weary one, in the way.

Satan is busy,

Satan is busy each day,

Trying to trip up your brethren,

Discouraging saints in the way.

Hold up the weary

Hands that have fallen today,

Strengthen the knees that are trembling,

Those feet turned out of the way.

Our God is able,

Our God is able, alway:

Able and willing to help us,

Encourage ourselves in the way.

As we have noted in the opening verse of this section, faith affirms, "We are well able." Fear and unbelief counter, "We be not able."

## Failure

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“And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes” (Numbers 14:6).

In rending or tearing their clothes, Joshua and Caleb identified with the failure that had come in amongst the Lord’s people. Later on in the history of Israel, we read, “And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil” (Joel 2:13). Recognizing our failure and identifying with it in contrition and repentance has always been the way of blessing. It does not mean that we literally tear our clothes, but we need to have rent or torn hearts, that feel the seriousness of our state, and the dishonor that it brings to God, owning our own part in it.

Caleb might have stood apart with the attitude that He and Joshua were the only faithful ones. He might have felt that he was the only one who had “wholly followed the Lord.” But no, feeling very keenly what had just happened, he owns his part and takes the humble place.

We can never stand aloof from the failure, ruin, and general condition of deterioration that characterizes the Christian testimony in the “last days.” Those who are used in blessing in times of declension and breakdown are those who take their place with their brethren, in confession and contrition. Never do they compromise or make a concession when it comes to the principles of God’s Word, but by their humility and willingness to be spent for their brethren, they are used by the Lord in remarkable ways. It is not always in connection with great revivals, but for the encouragement and strengthening of a remnant, and the restoration of individuals.

We see many examples of this in the Old Testament. Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Daniel, and a host of others. The Lord still has his Calebs today, and how thankful we can be for those who are faithful in the midst of unfaithfulness, and who continue to go on with the people of God, and be a blessing to their brethren.

In Exodus 17, all the congregation of the children of Israel spoke of stoning Moses. Moses might have felt it was no use to continue with such a rebellious company of ingrates, but “the Lord said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel” (Exodus 17:5). They were God’s people, He still loved them, and He was going to bless them through His servant. Think of all that Moses would have missed if he had not continued on with them, even though they often criticized, blamed, verbally abused him, and on other occasions spoke of stoning him.

The Apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, and in seeking to be faithful with them regarding the sin and failure in the assembly there, noted: “And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved” (2 Corinthians 12:15). This is the avenue of usefulness and blessing, and the means of being able to “strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die” (Revelation 3:2).

These are indeed days of much failure and great ruin, but we can go on for the Lord's glory. Just so we find that Caleb not only identifies with his brethren and the failure, but he also goes on wholly following the Lord. The "last days," are characterized by individual faithfulness, and just as it was in the case of Caleb, so there is a special blessing and portion for those who are willing to honour the Lord and stand for the truth in such circumstances. "For them that honor Me I will honor" (1 Samuel 2:30).

## Misunderstood

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“But all the congregation bade stone them with stones” (Numbers 14:10).

To stand against the crowd is a great test of how real and genuine our faith is, and how much we value the truth. Caleb was more than willing to take that stand, even in the face of death. To stand with the Lord, and not with popular opinion and general consensus, has never been easy in any age. Are we willing to take a stand even if it means standing alone?

“But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled” (1 Peter 3:14). Caleb suffered, not for some wrongdoing, but because he stood for that which was right. This is the hardest kind of reproach to bear, especially when it comes from our brethren, and those closest to us. It is the path of least resistance to go with the crowd and just drift along, but what would happen if the salmon never swam up stream? There would soon be no more salmon, for their propagation depends on their making it to their spawning grounds. There is always a cost when we fail to take a stand for the Lord and the truth, a cost that is not worth the price.

All Caleb’s brethren turned against him and Joshua. Have you ever felt that way? Perhaps you did something for the Lord and no one appreciated it. Maybe you tried to be faithful in a certain situation, and you were misunderstood, and worse yet, ridiculed and reproached, even by brethren closest to you. Never mind, just leave it with the Lord, as He is the one that has the record down properly. He places a proper value on what is done for Him. It should be His approval and commendation that we rightly seek and covet. When Mary of Bethany poured out her ointment at the feet of the Lord Jesus, all the disciples spoke against her. But the Lord gave His approbation by saying, “Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on Me” (Mark 14:6). Too many times Christians are more concerned with what others think than with what the Lord thinks.

The Apostle Paul was questioned and misunderstood by the Corinthian brethren. They questioned his authority as an apostle, his ministry, his gift, and even his ability to present the truth, and so on. But he says to them, “Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him” (2 Corinthians 5:9). He had to say at the end of his life, regarding his first appearance before Nero, “No man stood with me, but all men forsook me” (2 Timothy 4:16). He had taught things that had stirred up the hatred of the Jews, and things contrary to the heathen Roman system, and had to answer for his life, and that alone. We read of the Lord, “Reproach hath broken My heart; and I am full of heaviness: I looked for some to take pity, but there was none” (Psalm 69:20). Then again in Psalm 102:7, “I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the housetop.” The truth has never been popular and never will be. Furthermore, those who have stood for the truth have never been popular, and never will be either. As we have said, the hardest kind of reproach to accept is from our fellow-Christian, and especially those with whom we are in fellowship and with whom we break bread from week to week. They are those whom we are closest to, and feel that they should know better, or that they should share our exercises. Remember, if the believer



tries to please everyone, and as the saying goes, make the best of both worlds, whether with the ungodly or in Christian circles, he will find that his testimony has lost its effectiveness and power. He will start to question in his own mind, the truth and convictions that he himself once held. No, we want to please the Lord and stand firm for truth at all times and at all cost. Are you afraid to stand alone for what you believe? Are you afraid of losing some popularity among the world or your brethren, or losing some advantage, either real or imaginary? We read two outstanding things regarding Enoch:

- He “walked with God” (Genesis 5:22).
- “He had this testimony, that he pleased God” (Hebrews 11:5).

The world has a saying, “If you don’t stand for something you will fall for anything!” When it comes to the truth of Scripture, we must stand firm or we leave ourselves open to fall for “every wind of doctrine” (Ephesians 4:14).

I am told of a man who used to preach for two different fellowships of believers who did not agree on certain fundamental principles of Scripture. A sister asked him how this could be? He assured her that he was careful not to say certain things depending on which group he was addressing, and that there were certain Scriptures he never spoke on in either place. Her response was to quote him James 1:8, “A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.”

The real question is, whose acceptance are we really seeking in our pathway through this world? If we are truly seeking the Lord’s approval and acceptance, then we can quietly leave with Him all the misunderstandings even of our brethren, knowing that there is a day when it will all be manifested, commended, and rewarded according to His perfect understanding. This helps us to “judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God” (1 Corinthians 4:5).

We also have the perfect example of the Perfect Servant, the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom we read: “Who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously” (1 Peter 2:23). What an example! Knowing that all He said and did was done to the satisfaction and glory of God His Father, the Lord could leave all in His hand, and wait for that day of vindication, which incidentally, is still future. If the Lord has waited for over two thousand years for the moment of His exoneration in this world, should we not be content to wait a little time as well? Not everything is going to be straightened out this side of glory and the judgement seat of Christ, but it will most certainly be at that time. What a thrill it will be to hear His, “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:23). Are you and I content to wait for that time? Caleb had the Lord’s approval and acceptance, and isn’t that what we really covet and desire too?

## Moses' Intercession

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“And the Lord said: I have pardoned according to thy word” (Numbers 14:20).

In the preceding verses (Numbers 14:13-19), Moses has interceded on behalf of the people. “And Moses said unto the Lord, Then the Egyptians shall hear it, (for Thou broughtest up this people in Thy might from among them;) and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that Thou Lord art among this people, that Thou Lord art seen face to face, and that Thy cloud standeth over them, and that Thou goest before them, by day time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. Now if Thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of Thee will speak, saying, Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which He sware unto them, therefore He hath slain them in the wilderness. And now, I beseech Thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as Thou hast spoken, saying, The Lord is long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of Thy mercy, and as Thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.”

Moses, is often a type of the Lord Jesus, as our mediator and intercessor. As a result of Moses's interceding, God in His longsuffering and mercy pardons, and graciously declares that He will forgive, and carry His people through, although, as we will see in a subsequent section, there would be governmental consequences.

Though sin abounds, though failure's ripe,

Though we complain, murmur, and gripe;

Our God is merciful and kind,

Gracious and loving; still we find

He pardons for His own name's sake,

He'll not abandon, nor forsake:

To Him we fly, His goodness, plead,

Restoring grace in time of need.

Faithful, though we unfaithful prove,

Nothing His glory can remove;

He never can Himself deny,

On this great truth our souls rely:

In spite of us, He is the same,

Enduring is His blessed name,  
Nothing, His purposes will thwart,  
On this we count, to this resort.

## God's Grace

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All through the history of the children of Israel, we find that God comes in, time and time again, in sovereign grace. Grace, is undeserved favor and blessing, and we need to always have a realization of this principle in our souls. In and by ourselves we merit zero, but God is indeed gracious! We deserve nothing, but grace gives us everything. Remember, God is greater than our failure!

- It is His grace that saves us: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8).
- It is His grace that preserves us: “And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work” (2 Corinthians 9:8).
- It is His grace that restores us when we fail: “For the Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away His face from you, if ye return unto Him” (2 Chronicles 30:9).
- Is it always available? “The Lord will give grace” (Psalm 84:11).
- It is available to all? “And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace” (John 1:16).
- Do we need more? “He giveth more grace” (James 4:6).
- Is it all we need? “My grace is sufficient for thee” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Let's learn to be, “strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 2:1). This is what is needed so much, especially in days of failure and weakness.

## God's Glory

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"But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" (Numbers 14:21).

Nothing touches or changes the sovereign will of God. We have already noted in a previous section, that God often allows things in His permissive will that are not according to His directive will. But remember, nothing alters His sovereign will. Nothing ever frustrates His purposes: no failure in man or work of the enemy.

God always brings His purposes to fruition for His glory and according to His plan. And so the earth would be "filled with the glory of the Lord," because it did not depend on His people or their faithfulness, but upon Himself. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain" (Psalm 76:10). "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth" (2 Corinthians 13:8). "If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself" (2 Timothy 2:13). These Scriptures are a real comfort, especially in times of failure. Not that they excuse failure and sin, but because, as has already been affirmed, we realize that our God is greater than our failure, and "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Ephesians 1:11). And all this in spite of us!

We can be thankful that ultimately blessing doesn't depend on us, or anything man can do. No, it depends on Him, solely on Him, His unchanging word, and His faithfulness!

## God's Government

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“Because all those men which have seen My glory, and My miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted Me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to My voice; surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked Me see it” (Numbers 14:22-23).

No matter how faithful and sincere Caleb's pleadings were, the people's hearts were such that they refused to harken. As a result, God told them that they would have to wander in the wilderness for forty years until all of that generation of men had died. It perhaps seemed harsh, but remember, the government of God in our lives as believers is very real. We get away with nothing, and unbelief, sin, and self-will, have their consequences. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Galatians 6:7).

The Israelites had tempted the Lord ten times. Ten speaks, in Scripture, of man's responsibility to God, and they had completely and utterly failed in their responsibility. As a result they were to wander in the wilderness for forty years, and forty denotes God's complete time of testing. Notice that they spent one year in the wilderness for every day that the spies spent on their mission. “And they returned from searching of the land after forty days ... After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know My breach of promise” (Numbers 13:25; 14:34).

The wilderness story, in general, brings out two great facts:

- “The flesh profiteth nothing” (John 6:63).
- “God is faithful” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

It also brings out two other aspects of God's ways with His people, namely:

- God's grace.
- God's government.

Moses not being allowed to go into the promised land is another example of the governmental ways of God. When he lost his patience with the people, called them rebels, and perhaps most serious of all disobeyed the Lord in smiting the rock, not just once but twice, here is what God said: “And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed Me not, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them” (Numbers 20:12).

## Another Spirit

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“But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it” (Numbers 14:24).

As we have said, Joshua and Caleb are the only two of their generation that we know of from Scripture who ever entered the land and took possession of their inheritance. Of the others we read: “As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in Mine ears, so will I do to you: Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against Me, Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness” (Numbers 14:28-32).

What is striking about it is, that Caleb is given the promise, because of his “spirit.” Not only was he faithful in his presentation of the truth, and in standing firm for what he believed, but he did it in the proper spirit.

It has often been remarked that the spirit of something is as important as the thing itself. How often, under the guise of faithfulness and steadfastness, we can act in a wrong spirit or attitude. There has been much damage done, a great deal of discouragement caused, and even schisms and divisions resulting amongst the Lord's people, by that which is right in principle but wrong in spirit. Psalm 32:2 declares, “Blessed is the man...in whose spirit there is no guile.” We also read in Proverbs 16:32, “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit that he that taketh a city.” Our spirit and attitude are so very important. In fact so important are they that the last words that the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, and the last words he wrote by divine inspiration were, “the Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit” (2 Timothy 4:22). Timothy was a man who was seeking to live for the Lord and go on in the truth, even in what are referred to as “the last days” (2 Timothy 3:1). Paul exhorts him to “continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them” (2 Timothy 3:14). Moreover, Paul's concern was that he would not only “continue” but that he would do it in the proper spirit. Not just that he would teach the truth, but with a right attitude. It is not only what we say, but how we say it. “Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” (Colossians 4:6). Of the Lord Jesus, we read, “and all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth” (Luke 4:22). The very tone of His voice was perfect. Prophetically we read of Him, “Grace is poured into Thy lips” (Psalm 45:2). Someone has said, We need to always make sure that our words are sweet, as we never know when we will have to eat them.

An appreciation of grace, and a sense of our own weakness and failure will help us to act in the proper attitude and with the right spirit toward the world, our brethren, and our families. “The Lord is nigh unto...such as be of a contrite spirit” (Psalm 34:18). “For thus saith the high and lofty One

that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isaiah 57:15).

In contrast, a prideful, haughty spirit will make us arrogant and give us an air of self-righteousness, which will be a severe detriment in our relationships with others. "Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom" (Proverbs 13:10). "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger" (Proverbs 15:1). We can be clear as ice but just as cold; solid as a rock but just as hard; as pointed as a spear but just as piercing; straight as a razor but just as sharp; exact as a surgeons scalpel but just as cutting. Not that we want to ever be wishy-washy when it comes to truth. As was quoted earlier, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8). Jude, exhorts us to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). When it comes to principles we never help someone by trying to sit on the fence, walk the middle of the road, or worse yet, get in the ditch with them. It is true that when the Scriptures are presented, the conscience must always be reached, but, let it be stressed, the spirit in which it is taken up can make or break the matter; it can encourage or discourage; it can edify or tear down; it can restore or drive the wedge deeper; and it can either rectify or destroy, and in the end, help or hinder.

Of Moses we read, "They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes: Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips" (Psalm 106:32-33). As we have noted already, this was such a serious offence that it hindered him from entering the promised land. If our spirits are provoked by something our brethren say or do, we need to judge it immediately so that it does not affect our words and actions. (God does not look lightly on speaking ill of His people. They are His people, and He loves them, and desires their blessing in spite of their failure.)

Of faithful Daniel we read, "An excellent spirit was in him" (Daniel 6:3). May we covet such a commendation regarding our interactions with one another. Remember, "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself" (Romans 14:7). The spirit in which we do and say things affects others more than we realize. "Speaking (holding) the truth in love," (Ephesians 4:15) should always be what characterizes us. May we display, at all times, the "spirit of meekness" (Galatians 6:1). Like the Lord Jesus, who was "meek and lowly in heart" (Matthew 11:29).

Maybe we haven't always displayed a proper spirit in our interactions with one another. Let's pray, like David, "Renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10).

"But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (Romans 14:10). If you notice the context of this aspect of the judgment seat of Christ, you will find that it is in connection with our spirit or attitude. So much does the Lord value the spirit and attitude in which we do things, that He will reward for it in that day of commendation. Little did Caleb realize that it would be recorded in God's eternal record for our encouragement and instruction, that he had "another spirit."



## The Kenezite

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“Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite” (Numbers 32:12).

Three times Caleb is referred to as “the Kenezite.” In Joshua 14:6, as well as verse 14 of that same chapter, and of course, in the verse we have just cited in Numbers 32.

If we were to go back to Genesis 15:18-19, we would find that the “Kenezites” are listed among some of the original inhabitants of the land of Canaan. This was at the time when the land was promised, by God, to Abraham and his descendants, because of his faith and obedience in earlier answering the call to come out of Ur of the Chaldees and dwell in the land as a stranger and pilgrim. “In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: The Kenites, and the Kenezites...”

Now, we don’t want to go too far with our applications, or read into Scripture more than God has told us. It is true that Caleb was an Israelite, he was of the tribe of Judah, and further he was one of the heads of his tribe. However, I just make this gentle suggestion, without being definite or dogmatic, that perhaps we learn from this that Caleb is a picture of one who was brought into the place of blessing, by grace. Isn’t this how all of us are brought into the family of God, and all the privileges connected with it? We were enemies of God, sinners, and “far off” (Ephesians 2:13). We had no claim on God or on any blessing. We were nothing but hell-deserving reprobates, doomed to a lost eternity, “having no hope, and without God in the world” (Ephesians 2:12). “But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Romans 5:20). As Paul could say, regarding his own case, “And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 1:14).

Later on we have another beautiful example of grace in Rahab. “And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father’s household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho” (Joshua 6:25).

Another outstanding incident of one brought in by grace in the Old Testament, is the case of Ruth the Moabite. We read in Deuteronomy 23:3, “An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord forever.” No wonder, when Boaz told her to glean in his field without fear, “she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?” (Ruth 2:10). She had no claim, except on the ground of pure grace! We find later on in her history that grace even included her in the royal lineage of Christ, as also in the case of Rahab (Rachab), according to Matthew 1:5.

None of us have any right to any blessing, apart from the grace of God. The Bible is full of story after story of His amazing grace in reaching out to individuals, and heaven, through all eternity, will resound with the recounting of such histories! Everyone will have a unique account of how the

Lord picked them up, saved them, and carried them safely home to the Father's house, and all because of grace! Is it any wonder that there will be continual praise in heaven? Furthermore, we will cast our crowns at His feet, saying, "Thou art worthy..." (Revelation 4:11). We will realize the full import of Philippians 2:13, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Then and only then, will we have a full sense and understanding of grace. No wonder John Newton penned these words still sung around the world today:

Before leaving this section we will quote from H.L. Rossier's commentary on 1 Chronicles.

Rossier continued: "Must we conclude from all this that the text of Chronicles is a human and capricious compilation and that thus the historical value of this book is nil? This is what the rationalists assert, but thank God, their reason is always at fault when it attacks His Word. No enlightened Christian will deny that the genealogies of Chronicles are composed of fragments gathered up in the midst of general confusion, yet documents upon which God sets His seal of approval. So it is true that a number of passages in these genealogies are of very ancient origin, not mentioned in the other books of the Old Testament.

"Caleb's fragmentary genealogy, which we have cited above, is very instructive in this regard. We know from a number of Scripture passages (Numbers 13:6; Numbers 14:30, 38; Numbers 32:12; Numbers 34:19; Deuteronomy 1:36; Joshua 14:13) what favor Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, won from God by his perseverance, moral courage, faithfulness, and zeal to conquer a portion in the land of Canaan. The Lord's approval was upon him, whereas Caleb, the son of Hezron and of Judah, despite his numerous descendants, is not mentioned as the object of God's special favor. But if the fragmentary genealogies of Caleb the son of Jephunneh are proof of the existing disorder, God puts these fragments together for a special purpose, and we find a deeper thought in them. Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, is the one whom God has particularly in view, as the Word teaches us; he is the one whom He introduces in so extraordinary a way into the genealogy of the son of Hezron (1 Chronicles 2:49). It is in view of him that this genealogy is inscribed next to that of David, as forming part of the tribe of Judah, from whence the royal race comes. But what connection does Caleb the son of Jephunneh, whose daughter was Achsah, have with Caleb the son of Hezron? Here we find a most interesting fact which has perhaps not been given sufficient attention. Caleb the son of Jephunneh was not originally of the people of Judah. In Numbers 32:12 and Joshua 14:6,14 he is called Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite. Likewise, Caleb's younger brother Othniel, to whom Caleb gave his daughter Achsah as wife, is called "the son of Kenaz" (Joshua 15:17; Judges 1:13; Judges 3:9, 11). Now in Genesis 36:11 we learn that Kenaz is an Edomite name. Hence the conclusion that at some point of time the family of Kenaz, and therefore the family of Caleb the son of Jephunneh, was incorporated into the tribes of Israel just as so many other foreigners, such as Jethro, Rahab, and Ruth, who in virtue of their faith became members of the people of God. This explains a characteristic phrase in Joshua 15:13 JND, "And unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a portion among the children of Judah according to the commandment of Jehovah to Joshua...that is, Hebron." And in Joshua 14:14 JND, "Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite to this day, because he wholly followed Jehovah the God of Israel."

"Thus Caleb, who by his origin really had no right of citizenship in Israel, received this right amidst Judah by virtue of his faith and was incorporated into the family of Caleb the son of Hezron, as it

appears in 1 Chronicles 2:49 and in the passages already cited in Joshua. The fragments preserved of the genealogy of Caleb the son of Hezron confirm the place that God assigned to Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and this substitution is one of the important points the Spirit of God calls our attention to here.

“To summarize, the name of Caleb is highlighted in this chapter. With this name is associated the thought of ‘virtue,’ that is, of moral energy which in view of a goal to be attained enables the believer to surmount obstacles, separating him from every weight and the sin which so easily entangles him. 2 Peter 1:5 JND says, “In your faith have also virtue.” Caleb is an example in this. With this name are associated characters of the same caliber as the son of Jephunneh: Othniel, Achsah (1 Chronicles 4:13; 1 Chronicles 2:49); Hur (1 Chronicles 2:19, 50; 1 Chronicles 4:1, 4); Jair (although this latter later lost everything that his energy had at first acquired, 1 Chronicles 2:22-23); the house of Rechab (1 Chronicles 2:55).”

## Wholly Followed

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1. "My servant Caleb...hath followed Me fully" (Numbers 14:24).
2. "Caleb...wholly followed the Lord" (Numbers 32:12).
3. "Caleb...hath wholly followed the Lord" (Deuteronomy 1:36).
4. "I wholly followed the Lord my God" (Joshua 14:8).
5. "Thou hast wholly followed the Lord my God" (Joshua 14:9).
6. "Caleb...wholly followed the Lord God of Israel" (Joshua 14:14).

Caleb is one of the few Old Testament individuals of whom we don't have any recorded failure, (Joseph and Daniel being two others). For our learning the divine pen has chosen to only record his faithfulness and courage. Six times we find it confirmed that Caleb "fully" or "wholly" followed the Lord. This is what the Lord wants from each of His own. He doesn't want half-hearted followers, He wants whole-hearted followers. Notice six further verses on this subject:

"Blessed are they that observe His testimonies, that seek Him with the whole heart."

"With my whole heart have I sought Thee."

"I will keep Thy law; and I will observe it with my whole heart."

"I have sought Thy favor with my whole heart."

"I will observe Thy precepts with my whole heart."

"I have called with my whole heart."

(Psalm 119:2, 10, 34 JND, 58 JND, 69 JND, 145).

Are we following the Lord, but leaving certain corners of our hearts for ourselves and for the world? Let's seek the Bible's commendation of Caleb, and not be like Peter, who followed the Lord, but on one occasion, "followed afar off" (Luke 22:54). Sad to say, it lead to Peter associating with those who had no love for his Lord, and eventually denying Him three times, and that with oaths and curses. Notice the progression:

- "Peter followed afar off" (Luke 22:54).
- "And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself" (John 18:25).
- "He sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire" (Mark 14:54).
- "And he denied Him" (Luke 22:57).

Peter walked, stood, and sat, where he should not have been. We get a warning regarding this in Psalm 1:1. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the

way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.” Let’s learn to wholly follow, and keep close to the Lord; it will preserve us from many unholy associations and detrimental practices.

We really don’t know someone until we follow with them and walk in their company. It is possible to know much about the Lord, but not actually know Him the way we should. “Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord” (Hosea 6:3). The exercise of the Apostle Paul’s life was, “That I may know Him” (Philippians 3:10).

When I was growing up in Canada we studied a great deal regarding the history of the British monarchy, and the current British royal family. To this day I know a good deal about Queen Elizabeth II and her household. But to claim that I know the queen of England personally would be an overstatement to say the least. Only if I were invited to Buckingham Palace to spend some time in her company could I then say that I really know her. I know about her, but I do not know her. And so it is with the Lord! Do you know Him, or just about Him? To really know Him, you must wholly follow Him.

The following is part of a quote from Sadhu Sundar Singh, the East Indian Christian who was born on September 3, 1889, and who followed the Lord against all odds, and much persecution:

It might be added that Caleb was a truly devoted person! Devotedness is not merely reading our Bibles and being a faithful servant. It is not simply being engaged in the Lord’s work, and looking to Him for direction and blessing. It is much more! It is much deeper! It is having the Lord Jesus Christ Himself as the sole delight of the heart, and our thoughts centered around Him. Devotedness is not so much being occupied for Christ, but occupied with Christ, and following Him, not just because it brings joy to our heart, but because it brings delight to His heart.

It really is much easier to follow someone than just have them give us directions. I remember being in a city I was not familiar with, and eventually having to stop and ask the way to where I was staying. The person I asked rattled off a lot of twists and turns, stops and starts, and then finally realized from the puzzled look on my face that I wasn’t taking it all in. They then indicated that they were going that way, and to just follow them. God has given us directions and infallible guidelines in Scripture. “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105). Not only so, but we also read, “He goeth before” (John 10:4).

Let it be further noted, that Caleb followed the Lord throughout his entire life. It is more than just a good start that God looks for; it is continuance that He desires. It says of Daniel, “And Daniel continued” (Daniel 1:21). Many in the history of God’s people have made a good start but a poor finish, but this does not have to be the case in your life and mine. Timothy was told, “Continue thou” (2 Timothy 3:14). Of the early Christians we read, “And they continued steadfastly.” (Acts 2:42). In spite of strife and bickering amongst the disciples in the upper room, the Lord commended them by saying, “Ye are they which have continued with Me.” (Luke 22:28).

## A Dog

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“A living dog” (Ecclesiastes 9:4).

It is noteworthy that the name Caleb means dog. Usually a dog in Scripture doesn't have a very good connotation. They were an unclean animal under the law; and the false shepherds in Israel were spoken of in this way in Isaiah 56:10-11 JND, “His watchmen are all of them blind, they are without knowledge; they are all dumb dogs that cannot bark, dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber: and the dogs are greedy, they know not to be satisfied, and these are shepherds that know not how to discern: they all turn to their own way, every one for his gain, even to the last of them.”

The Gentiles are also referred to as dogs, even by the Lord himself, in connection with the Canaanitish woman in Matthew 15:21-28 JND. The Lord told her, “It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it unto dogs” (vs. 26). She had no claim on the blessing because she was not of the nation of Israel, but in taking a low place, and recognizing her true position as an unclean dog, she besought the Lord on the grounds of grace and mercy. As a result of her faith, and her saying, “Yea, Lord; for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from the table of their masters,” she receives healing for her daughter. This is the true way of blessing for anyone.

Prophetically, regarding the sufferings of Christ and the circumstances surrounding His trial and crucifixion we read, “For dogs have compassed Me” (Psalm 22:16). This, no doubt, refers to the Gentile Roman soldiers, for it was they who actually nailed the Lord Jesus to the cross. Later on in that same psalm we read, “Deliver...My darling from the power of the dog” (vs. 20). This would answer to Pontius Pilate, the Gentile, Roman governor. In the plural we see the Gentile mob, and in the singular we have the Gentile judge.

The last mention of this creature in Scripture is in Revelation 22:15. “For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.” In the Middle East and many other countries today, dogs are still despised animals, and are not kindly considered, or taken in as pampered pets, with hundreds of dollars spent on their care and comfort, the way they are in western culture. This then is the way Scripture generally views them.

However, there are two characteristics of a dog, which are perhaps more relevant and applicable to the subject at hand. A dog is a good follower, and he is faithful to one master. Very quickly we see the application. These characteristics were true of Caleb, and should be true of each believer. What the Lord wants is faithful followers! To what degree do our lives answer to this pattern? The last recorded words of the Lord Jesus, in John's gospel, are addressed to Peter, when He said, “Follow thou Me” (John 21:22).

When Gideon's army was chosen we read, “So he brought down the people unto the water: and the Lord said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself...and the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their

mouth, were three hundred men...And the Lord said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place" (Judges 7:5-7). Those who were watchful and ready to do the bidding of their leader Gideon, were those who were chosen to accompany him to the battle. God wants men and women who are ready, willing, and obedient, just like a faithful dog. Have you ever seen a dog sitting at the gate or the end of the driveway watching and waiting for the master to return from school or work at the end of the day? Those who are faithful to the Lord in this way are those that He can use to deliver His people in days of failure and weakness, and to overcome despite the work and oppression of the enemy.

A brother in Christ mentioned to me that he wished he was as faithful to his Lord and Master as his trusted dog was to him. He felt it would make quite a difference in his Christian life and testimony. As I observed his dog during my visit and stay in his home, I could well understand the brother's sentiments. I was struck by how near the creature stayed by his master's side, and how closely he followed him wherever he went, listening for his voice and obeying his every instruction. What an instructive lesson from nature this is.

Another Christian friend was telling me that in the morning before he gets out of bed his two dogs come and lie on his chest watching his face and waiting for a command from their master. It made me think of the Apostle John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on His breast at supper" (John 21:20). Wouldn't we like a commendation like that? To what degree are these things true in your life and mine? Are we resting on the bosom of the Lord Jesus, waiting for His instruction, and ready to follow wherever He gently leads?

When I was a young person we used to sing this chorus (attributed to Sadhu Sundar Singh), although with very little real thought as to its import:

I have decided to follow Jesus;

I have decided to follow Jesus;

I have decided to follow Jesus;

No turning back, no turning back.

The world behind me, and Christ before me;

The world behind me, and Christ before me;

The world behind me, and Christ before me;

No turning back, no turning back.

Though none go with me, by grace I'll follow;

Though none go with me, by grace I'll follow;

Though none go with me, by grace I'll follow;

No turning back, no turning back.

This is true discipleship!

The Apostle Paul could say, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1).

There are some other characteristics of dogs that are instructive.

- Loyalty—"If a man love Me, he will keep My words" (John 14:23).
- Obedience—"As obedient children" (1 Peter 1:14).
- Forgiving—"Forgiving one another" (Ephesians 4:32).
- Friendly—"A friend loveth at all times" (Proverbs 17:17).
- Ready to sympathize—"Having compassion one of another" (1 Peter 3:8).
- Happy, as long as they are with their master...in spite of circumstances—"Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee" (1 Kings 10:8).
- Willing to sit quietly and wait for their Master, no matter how long he takes—"Their strength is to sit still" (Isaiah 30:7).
- Content with a dish of food and a bowl of water (The necessities of life)—"Godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Timothy 6:6).

What lessons we can learn from these animals! "Doth not even nature itself teach you?" (1 Corinthians 11:14).



## The Wilderness

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“In the wilderness forty years” (Acts 7:36).

As the children of Israel turned back into the wilderness to wander for many years, we find nothing more is said about Caleb, until after they had crossed the Jordan River and began to take possession of the promised land, by driving out their enemies.

I have often pondered why we have no mention of Caleb for all those years. Why is Scripture so silent concerning the life of this man of God, during the wilderness journey? The following remarks are some meditations in this connection.

It is most instructive to see that Caleb was willing to go on quietly following the Lord, amidst much failure and discontentment on every hand. Firstly, there were the physical difficulties connected with the desert terrain and climate. I've traveled on the Sinai Peninsula on more than one occasion, and it is certainly a barren piece of land. Hot and arid in the day, cold at night, scorched sand and rock as far as the eye can see, with nothing green, and not a drop of water for miles. Yet, we never hear of Caleb grumbling or complaining. We never read of him blaming God or his brethren. He counted on the Lord! He knew that what He was doing, with His people, and in his own life was right and just, and that all would work out for His glory in the end. He trusted, and with unwavering faith waited for the day when he would be able to cross the Jordan River, set foot on his inheritance, and enjoy the promised land. He never tried to get ahead of the Lord, which is a great test of faith, especially in the twenty-first century, where we are used to everything being instantaneous. We like our high-speed internet, speed-dial calling, microwave lunches, and everything at our fingertips. We are a generation that does not like to wait for anything, but remember, to run ahead of the Lord puts us on very shaky and dangerous ground. He does not always operate as quickly as we would like and as fast as we think it should be. His timing is always right and always the best for us! Not only does he order our circumstances, but the timing of them as well.

We have the New Testament principle in Romans 8:28. “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.” It is not necessarily that all things are good, but that in the final scheme of things, in God's plan for the overall blessing of our lives, circumstances work together for good. When my wife makes a cake she uses both bitter and sweet ingredients. Some of those ingredients are tasty by themselves and just as they are, others are not palatable or even good for you on their own and without baking. However, when it is all mixed together in the proper proportions, stirred and beaten according to the recipe, and baked in the heat of the oven for the proper length of time, all those ingredients work together for good to make a very delicious product. So it is in our lives, God mixes the bitter with the sweet, and through the furnace of affliction, works it all out for our good in the end. We may not always see the finished product this side of heaven, but when we do, we will realize that it was indeed all for our good, and we will praise Him for all His ways with us, and the perfection of His timing.

In this connection I enjoyed reading of another man of God who lived centuries later. Bernard Gilpin, who was sentenced in the reign of Queen Mary to die for his faith, audibly repeated the text during his imprisonment each morning and night, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." On his way to execution he fell and broke his leg, and was ordered back to prison where he moaned in pain. The jailor taunted him with his text. "Ah!" he said, "but it is true just the same." Sure enough, it was, for while he lay in that damp cell, Queen Mary died, Elizabeth ascended the throne of England, and Bernard Gilpin was set at liberty.

Caleb must have had a sense that nothing happens by chance, and that the Lord had a perfect plan and timetable for his servant. Psalm 37:5, gives us good counsel on this subject. "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass." It may not always be to pass in the way or time that we thought it should be, but if we are willing to commit it into His hand, it will be to pass in the way that He sees is the very best, and the timing will be perfect too. To commit and submit is the very best way, and it will help us not to complain and grumble, and I repeat, it will keep us from trying to get ahead of the Lord and running on what we think is the best timetable, which may not be what His schedule for our lives is.

It must have really pained the heart of Caleb to have to turn back into the wilderness, when he knew that in the strength of the Lord they were well able to overcome the enemies living in Canaan, and take possession of their inheritance. It must have further distressed his soul to hear the continual murmuring and complaining of his own brethren all around him day after day and year after year, throughout the duration of the desolate desert trek. Unquestionably it troubled him to see those of his own generation fall in the wilderness, and the governmental hand of God on His people time and time again. Yet he goes on quietly year in and year out. God honors tireless, unseen obedience and service! He values an unwearied continuance in well-doing! Quiet, patient ongoing, faithful obedience, notwithstanding human praise or blame, is to Him of a great price. To trust when there is nothing else to be done, is of such delight to the heart of the Lord that he has promised a special reward for it.

The story is told of a young man who was visiting an elderly Christian in the hospital, and the lady complained that there was nothing that she could do for the Lord, or to earn reward, lying there in her debilitated, chronic condition. The young man turned to Hebrews 10:35, and read the promise: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward." She might not be able to do anything else but trust, yet that was enough to invoke the favor of the Lord, and to be assured of His reward.

Caleb's attitude might have been, to continue to follow the Lord, but not to go on with his brethren who acted in such unbelief and rebellion. But no, he associates with the people of God in spite of everything, and continues on in the path of individual faithfulness despite the general failure and deplorable spirit and attitude that so often invaded the camp of Israel and raised its ugly head around him during those years.

Now let us be very clear, that we are never to be indifferent to sin, nor are we to tolerate evil. Scripture teaches that sin is a thing not fit for the Lord's presence nor the presence of His people. Yet, sad to say, when difficulties arise amongst our brethren, sometimes the initial reaction is that we are not going to associate with them anymore. It is not that we are going to leave off from following the Lord, but just not with those who do not seem to appreciate us, or our service, or the

truth that we feel we are seeking to uphold and be faithful to. But let's learn from Caleb, the blessedness of going on simply and quietly with the people of God, knowing that there is one in full control, and one who gives His sense of approval and commendation. Like Paul, who said, "Wherefore we labor, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him" (2 Corinthians 5:9). No matter how misunderstood he was by those he loved and served, he was willing to go on in fellowship with them, knowing that there is one who "judgeth righteously" (1 Peter 2:23).

As we noted earlier, in a day of ruin Timothy was told to "follow righteousness, faith, charity [love], peace, with them that call on the Lord out of pure heart" (2 Timothy 2:22). To go on with the people of God in a day of weakness and failure is often a real test of faith, as it was, no doubt, in the case of Caleb.

## The Promise

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“Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenazite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the Lord said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadeshbarnea” (Joshua 14:6).

The years have passed, and now we have Caleb reminding Joshua of the promise made by the Lord through Moses, back in the days when they had first gone in to spy out the land at the beginning of the wilderness journey. The promise was that he and Joshua would be of those who would take possession of the inheritance. There are perhaps two things to consider in regard to Caleb's reminder.

Firstly, though some four decades had transpired, the promise was just as sure in his soul as when it had been made. Nothing could dissuade Caleb from believing that God would be faithful to such a promise. This gave him courage to press on step by step, mile after mile, over the hot Sinai terrain. How often do we become discouraged because we lose sight of the promises of God? Remember, “all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us” (2 Corinthians 1:20). How often have we made promises, and not been able to carry through with them? Perhaps we were sincere in making them, but promised too much. Or possibly we promised more than we had the power and resources to fulfill. Maybe when we made the promise we did have the resources, but between the promise and the time to make good on it we somehow lost the means to complete the pledge. In contrast, our God never makes a promise that He can't or won't fulfill.

Another New Testament writer tells us, “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises” (2 Peter 1:4). Do we claim these promises by faith, and do we walk in the practical good of them? Can God fail? Can His promises fail? Of course not! Even if we are not faithful, He is always true to His word. “If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself” (2 Timothy 2:13).

When we become weary, disheartened, or discouraged, we need to open the Word of God and read and rest on its wonderfully secure and sure promises. At the end of his life Joshua reminds Israel, “And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof” (Joshua 23:14). Years later, Solomon makes a similar declaration at the dedication of the temple. “There hath not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised by the hand of Moses His servant” (1 Kings 8:56).

Caleb knew that there was a day coming when he would take full possession of his inheritance, and that the Lord would make good on His promise. We too need to keep the future in view. “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18). One of the wonderful promises we have from the lips of the Lord Jesus Himself is, “I will come again, and receive you unto Myself;

that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3). Let's keep the end of the journey in view, and the glory that is ahead. "Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John 3:3). In one of her hymns, Hannah K. Burlingham expressed it this way:

The glory shines before me!

I cannot linger here!

Though clouds may darken o'er me,

My Father's house is near.

If through this barren desert

A little while I roam,

The glory shines before me;

I am not far from home!

I am sure Caleb, over and over again, had to keep reminding himself, that there was an end in sight, and that the day was coming when he would exchange the wilderness for the full enjoyment of his inheritance. For us, the day is coming when we will no longer enjoy our portion in part, but fully, and with all the hindrances removed. "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away...For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Corinthians 13:9-10, 12).

This man of faith must have had tremendous patience! To wait all those years in the wilderness, and then even after they entered the land, to continue to wait God's time, must have been a great test of endurance. The lesson for us is, "Let us run with patience [endurance] the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus." (Hebrews 12:1-2). The Christian race is not the sprint or the dash, it is the marathon, and it takes real patience and endurance to press on lap after lap, mile after mile.

## Mine Heart

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“Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadeshbarnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart...And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's forever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord my God” (Joshua 14:7,9).

Secondly, in regards to Caleb's reminder, we notice that the inheritance had affected His heart. He had seen the good land. He was there when the grapes of Eshcol were cut down and carried on the shoulders of two men. (Perhaps, as sometimes illustrated, by Caleb and Joshua.) He had been one of those who had gathered and brought back the figs and the pomegranates. “And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs” (Numbers 13:23). He knew it was a land flowing with milk and honey, and it had indelibly impressed itself on his heart. He had stood by the gurgling brooks of water, and, no doubt, drunk from the bubbling fountains. He had seen the lushness of it all, and its richness, affluence, and abundance had embedded itself in his soul. What a preserving, empowering, effect it had on this dear man of faith during all those weary years in the wilderness. The promise was as fresh and real to his heart as when it had been made. The luster of the inheritance still shone brightly before him, giving him a burning desire and anticipation to go in and take what he knew was his and waiting for him, by the pledge of his faithful God.

How much has our portion in Christ, our spiritual blessings, our inheritance, affected our hearts? It is easy to enumerate certain blessings and quote passages of Scripture that tell of these wonderful things, but what about the heart? We may know these things in our heads, we may be able to give mental assent to the truth, but that is not enough, we must hold these things dear in our hearts. If the heart is not engaged then the feet are going to become weary and turned aside.

In marketing there is an expression, catch the heart and the mind will follow. In the spiritual realm it has often been remarked that where the heart is, there the feet will follow. To sell us products and services the business and corporate world tries to grab our heart and mind. To have us following close to the Lord in the path of faith He attracts our heart, to preserve our feet in the right course. (Of course in spiritual things the mind must be properly instructed too. This is through the reading of God's Word.)

So in this way, Caleb could go faithfully on, with the inheritance firmly implanted in his heart, and the assurance in his soul that he would take full possession of it in God's time.

There are three vital elements to taking in, enjoying, and walking in the truth:

- The entrance of the truth is the mind.
- The channel for the truth is the conscience.
- The dwelling place of the truth is the heart.

There must be knowledge of divine things. "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). But that is not the dwelling place of the truth. The conscience must always be reached as well, but this too is not the dwelling place of the truth either. No, the dwelling place of the truth is the heart. "My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways" (Proverbs 23:26). "O how love I Thy law! It is my meditation all the day...Great peace have they which love Thy law" (Psalm 119:97,165).

The Lord said to His own, in the upper room, just before going to the cross, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words" (John 14:23). When the heart is affected the truth is fresh, precious, and relevant to the soul, and there is substance and reality in our lives!

Caleb was a man, like Daniel, who, "purposed in his heart" (Daniel 1:8). This is a great preserver in the Christian life. We read of Barnabas encouraging the early brethren, "that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord" (Acts 11:22-23). It has been said, that purpose of heart, is the affections motivated by an object.

They purposed in their hearts,  
Those saints of eras past,  
And nothing could dissuade  
Their souls from holding fast;  
Not that the path was easy,  
But with the heart engaged,  
They followed on with gladness,  
And every conflict waged.

## As Strong

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“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. 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” (Joshua 14:10-11).

Caleb is now an elderly man of eighty-five years of age, but he is as strong as the day he had come out of Egypt. Now this does not mean that if we follow the Lord and are faithful to Him that we will not experience physical weakness, frailty, or aging. I think we all immediately see the foolishness of such a thought. But isn't it a real treat to meet an aged Christian who is still “strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might” (Ephesians 6:10). I have known many, and they have been a real encouragement and inspiration to me. They may be weak in body, lying on a bed of sickness, or sitting in a wheelchair, but they continue to “fight the good fight of faith” (1 Timothy 6:12). They are those who continue to “bring forth fruit in old age” (Psalm 92:14).

While working on this book, I had the privilege of being with a brother in Christ, and his wife, on the West Indian island of Bequia. I have known this couple for many years, and as we had lunch together we talked of God's goodness, the Lord's work, and some of the joys and sorrows, and ups and downs, we had each experienced in the path of faith and service. During the conversation it came out that the brother I was visiting still preached twice on Lord's Day, conducted Bible studies during the week, visited the sick and the needy, and a host of other tasks. It then further came to light that he had just past his eighty-fifth birthday. I thought, how appropriate, here is a Caleb! Pressing on, as I well knew, sometimes amid extremely difficult circumstances. Someone else has said, “It is better to rust out than to wear out.” There is no retirement plan when it comes to the Lord's work and doing His service; and there is no discharge from the Lord's army this side of heaven. This goes for all of us! We are all servants of the Lord, and soldiers in his infantry. We receive our honorable discharge only when we reach that land, where there will be no more battles to be fought and no more victories to be won. Here is how the poet and hymn-writer Thomas Kelly expressed it:

Sometimes I have people say to me, “Take it easy; slow down; have a break, get a rest; no need to kill yourself doing the Lord's work.” Now it is true we don't want to be foolish. Ecclesiastes 7:17, raises the question, “Why shouldest thou die before thy time?” Ephesians 5:29, states, “No man yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church.” Still, I recall saying to one individual who had challenged me in this regard, “Would that be so bad? Suppose I drop dead in the jungle or the desert, or running for the next plane, or packing a shipment of Bibles and gospel literature? The Lord won't take us out of the path of faith and service, and home to Himself, one moment before our work is finished, and there is plenty to do in the great harvest of souls, and victories still to be won, and obstacles that need to be overcome.” Someone might have said to Caleb, “Let someone else do the fighting, you are an old man now; you've had your day; it's



been a long wilderness journey, and you deserve a break.” What a portion he would have missed if he had heeded such counsel!

Getting older may bring with it some physical limitations, and we may find ourselves tiring quicker, jumping up slower, and maybe not accomplishing as much in a day as we once did. Perhaps we can't always be where we want to be, or involved in things we once were, but it does not mean we have to become weaker spiritually or retire and fade into obscurity or uselessness. In fact, it should be just the opposite, and will be if we continue to live for God, and “wholly [follow] the Lord.” Many people lament getting older, and fret as each inevitable birthday comes and goes. Let's seek to be like Caleb, faithful in youth, consistent in manhood, and strong in his old age, and with a proper attitude that made him useful and fruitful through every period of his life.

Though years may come and years may go,

We still can serve the Lord,

And usefulness at any age,

Will have its sure reward.

It starts with little things in youth,

And later, greater deeds,

And as we age, we carry on,

For God meets all our needs.

Statistics indicate that Americans spend more than twenty-billion dollars annually on various anti-aging products that claim to cure baldness, remove wrinkles, build muscle, revitalize the human body, and renew the power of youth. Can those products deliver all the marvelous things they promise in the advertisements? Dr. Thomas Perls of the Boston University School of Medicine says that there is “absolutely no proof that any commercially available product will stop or reverse aging.” Not very encouraging is it?

Are we taking advantage of God's anti-aging power? It is promised to all who put their confidence in Him for strength of heart, vigor of spirit, and energy of soul. Through the exercise of spiritual energy and purpose of heart we can, with youthful vitality, “run with patience [endurance] the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1). To be renewed with spiritual energy there needs to be spiritual exercise. Notice what the Apostle Paul tells a young man named Timothy: “Exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things” (1 Timothy 4:7-8).

We spend a great deal of energy and discipline trying to keep in good shape physically, and there is certainly nothing wrong with that, but do we spend as much time exercising in the things of God? This is why we often become spiritually weak and sickly Christians as we get older. Just as we become weak naturally and hasten the aging process by lack of physical exercise and diligence, so it is with the spiritual.

In High School history we learned about the Fountain of Youth. The Fountain of Youth is a legendary spring that reputedly restores the youth of any person who drinks from it. The Spanish explorer, Ponce de León, first governor of Puerto Rico, was searching for this spring, when he first discovered what is now the state of Florida, which he assumed at that time to be an island, in 1513. Of course, to his great disappointment, he never found such a fountain, although he is reputed to be the first European to set foot on the American mainland. Needless to say, no one, although many have searched, has ever been able to find such a spring; it is purely legendary.

However, there is a promise of spiritual vitality that defies the ravages of age and time. It is found in these words of the Holy Bible: "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: [Natural strength, even of youth isn't enough when it comes to following the Lord and Christian warfare.] But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:30, 31). Isaiah very aptly used the eagle as a symbol of freedom and endurance, held aloft by a source of power completely outside of itself. As we put our hope and trust in the Lord, we are carried along by His strength and not our own. May the Lord give us the desire and motivation that is needed to "renew our strength" day by day.

David stated: "Thy youth is renewed like the eagle's" (Psalm 103:5). He also prayed, "O God, Thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared Thy wondrous works. Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have showed Thy strength unto this generation, and Thy power to every one that is come" (Psalm 71:17-18).

Another individual that was as strong at the end of the wilderness journey as at the beginning, was Moses. "And Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated" (Deuteronomy 34:7).

Can we honestly say that we are as strong in faith and in the Lord as when we first began to follow Him? We can only make such a statement if, like Caleb, we avail ourselves of the resources of The Almighty and "wholly [follow] the Lord." If we are thus exercised, the promise is, "Thy shoes shall be iron," that's power; "and brass," that's endurance; "and as thy days, so shall thy strength be," that's the result. (Deuteronomy 33:25).

Strong in the Lord,

Strong in His grace,

Strong in The Word,

Still running the race!

Strong in the Saviour,

Preserver and Friend;

Strong in His love,

Which provides to the end.

Strong while abiding

Close to His side,  
Strengthened in faith,  
While He is our guide.  
Strong—nothing wavers,  
While Jesus is near,  
Strong amidst trials,  
With nothing to fear!  
Strengthened with might,  
Though the enemy rage,  
Strong, just as strong,  
No matter our age.

## This Mountain

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“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” (Joshua 14:12).

Caleb asked for “this mountain.” A mountain in the Bible would speak of a couple of things. It would denote something unmovable or lasting, something that isn’t affected by circumstances or change. And our inheritance is just like that. We have “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away” (1 Peter 1:4). A monetary inheritance can be spent, and even squandered by misuse or mismanagement. Besides, no matter how careful a person may be, every time they draw on an earthly inheritance the inheritance becomes less. However, not so with “the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Ephesians 3:8). We can draw on the bank of heaven time and time again, day by day, moment by moment, and there is still an unending, unceasing, unfailing, perpetual account at our disposal. The amount never lessens!

A mountain also figures that which is heavenly in character. The rest of 1 Peter 1:4 reads, “...reserved in heaven for you.” Our inheritance is not connected with this world in any way; it is, strictly speaking, heavenly. We have never seen our blessings with the natural eye, but that does not mean that they are any less real to the eye of faith. Our blessings are spiritual and eternal. “While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:18). These things are ours for eternity!

As we have said a number of times, the inheritance of Israel was earthly and physical, but the blessings of the believer in this dispensation are heavenly and spiritual. Israel didn’t rightly value the blessing, and not until the Lord establishes them in the full good of what He intended for them, will they finally be fully and securely in the enjoyment of their inheritance. To this day they have never possessed all that was marked out for them. This is yet future. Today they are struggling for peace in their own strength and by their own devices, but the day is coming when, in the power of the Lord, and on the ground of pure sovereign grace, they will have peace and enjoy the good land. For us, we can never lose what we have in Christ, but the enjoyment of it depends on our obedience and willingness to walk in the practical good of it. How much is it true of us now? We cannot lose it, but we can lose the enjoyment of it, and very quickly too if we are not careful to maintain spiritual vitality on a daily basis.

Caleb also asked for the very part of the good land where the giants and high walls were. Not because it was a particularly lush part of the land, although truly it was. It was where they had cut down the grapes of Eshcol, and gathered the pomegranates and figs, but this was not Caleb’s reason for desiring that area. No, as the Scripture affirms he wanted to prove, that in the strength of the Lord, he was able to defeat the enemy and overcome the obstructions. He wanted to show that the Lord was sufficient and that He had not changed. For us, we have, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). So often we choose what we think is going to

be the path of least resistance. But this is not the way of faith. Faith meets the enemy head on in the power of the Lord, conquers, and enjoys the fruit and blessing as a result. This request did not spring from pride or self-confidence, no, not for a moment. It was the result of humility and confidence in One who had never failed him, who was greater than he, more powerful than the giants, and loftier than the high walls.

Was the Lord able for Caleb's conquest? Indeed! He never disappoints real faith. As Philippians 4:13 reminds us, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Then again in Romans 8:37: "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

## Hebron

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“And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance. 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” (Joshua 14:13-14).

Beginning at the end of Joshua chapter 18, and continuing with chapters 19 through 21, we find that Israel received the portion of their inheritance by tribe and family. But not so with Caleb. He is the only one we read of who received a personal inheritance. What a reward for his personal faithfulness all those preceding years! The Lord is no man's debtor. “Them that honor Me I will honor” (1 Samuel 2:30).

It is instructive to notice that Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb. Hebron, is a place that has at least a quadruple connotation.

Firstly, it was the place of death. “Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre: the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan” (Genesis 23:19). Earlier in that chapter we find that Abraham had purchased the field for this very purpose, that is, to bury his dead.

This would remind us that all blessing depends on the death of another. The Lord Jesus has paid a great debt to secure our blessing. We deserved death, in that “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). Yet we are assured that life, blessing and the inheritance have been secured through the death of our Saviour. “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9). Not only so, but it is not just a question of Christ's death for me, but my death with Christ. It is the end of the first man. “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

Secondly, we find, that Hebron was the place of communion. In fact this is the way it is first introduced to us in the Word of God. The father of faith had an altar there, which denotes worship and communion. “Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord” (Genesis 13:18). Here this man of faith enjoyed many happy hours of fellowship and sweet communion with his God.

For us, we have been brought into a wonderful place of fellowship with God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and with one another as believers. “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ....But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another” (1 John 1:3, 7).

Thirdly, the name Hebron means, a sure alliance. This denotes the union we have with Christ. As His bride we will be united to Him in that day when the “marriage supper of the Lamb” takes place.

Revelation 19:9. The wedding day is set, and it will be a wonderful moment for the heavenly bridegroom and His bride, the church. Many a wedding day is fixed in this life, and never comes to pass for one reason or another. Not so with the heavenly wedding: the date is determined, and nothing will delay it, or deter it from happening according to His schedule. The apostle John records; "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband...And there came unto me one of the seven angels...and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife" (Revelation 21:2, 9). Union with Christ forever! What a stupendous thought!

Oh, glorious wedding morning,  
When on that golden strand,  
Christ and His own united,  
At last, together stand;  
Arrayed in pure resplendence —  
Fine linen, oh, so white;  
No spot or wrinkle marring,  
That garment fair and bright.  
Oh, happy wedding morning,  
When in that home of light —  
The Father's house — the mansion,  
Where sorrow cannot blight;  
Adorned as for her husband,  
The bride, His wife, His own,  
With Jesus Christ, reflecting,  
His glories — His alone!  
Oh, blessed wedding morning,  
When there with Christ above,  
His bride surveyed in splendor,  
The object of His love;  
He will rejoice with singing,  
The Bridegroom o'er the bride;  
His heart, and hers, forever,  
Completely satisfied.

Oh, joyful wedding morning,  
For all who know the Lord;  
The marriage of the Lamb come,  
He by His bride adored:  
Blessed are they, the called ones,  
Those for whom Jesus died;  
They shall rejoice, beholding,  
Christ and His blood-bought bride.

Fourthly, Hebron also became one of the cities of refuge. "Thus they gave to the children of Aaron the priest Hebron with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer" (Joshua 21:13). This figures to us the security that we have in Christ, the sureness of the promises in Him, and the eternal link with Himself that can never be broken, and will be enjoyed forever. "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand" (John 10:28-29).

So, in conclusion, Hebron, with its remarkable history, brings before us four very distinct truths:

- Death, the ground of all our blessings.
- Communion, the place and privilege of all believers.
- Union, the place of relationship we have, and will share with Christ forever.
- Security, the eternal refuge we have in our Saviour.

What a wonderful inheritance! Do we value and prize it as Caleb did?



## Expulsion

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“And unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a part among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the Lord to Joshua, even the city of Arba the father of Anak, which city is Hebron. And Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak. And he went up thence to the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before was Kirjathsepher” (Joshua 15:13-15). “And they gave Hebron unto Caleb, as Moses said: and he expelled thence the three sons of Anak” (Judges 1:20).

It would appear that Caleb is the only one who completely drove out all his enemies. Is this not a lesson for us? Are we allowing the enemy some foothold in our lives, however small it may be? If we are it is robbing us in some way of our proper enjoyment of the precious things of Christ.

Do not dare give an inch to Satan,  
For soon he will take a foot,  
Then after awhile, he'll take up a mile,  
For he's wily and never stays put.  
He's a robber, a thief, and a cheat;  
Remember, he is not your friend!  
Plans many a heist, so you won't enjoy Christ,  
And leaves you bereft in the end.

## Kirjathsepher

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“And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjathsepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife” (Joshua 15:16).

Kirjathsepher was the “City of Books,” that is what the name means. This might seem strange, but we learn from it that we need to smite this city, figuratively speaking, in each of our lives. Solomon, perhaps the wisest man who ever lived, apart from the Lord Jesus, penned these words thousands of years ago: “Of making of many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh” (Ecclesiastes 12:12). Books are being churned off the printing presses, in the twenty-first century, at an alarming rate. One of the characteristics of the end times, and thus the day we live in, is “knowledge shall be increased” (Daniel 12:4). If there was ever a confirmation that we are right at the end, it is the fact that the bookstores are larger than ever, and everyone seems to have become the author or editor of something. This is most certainly the information age!

Even under the banner of Christianity there is much published that we need to practically slay in our reading-habit-lives. There is much that is not wholly in accord with the Word of God, and which does us more harm than good in the end. There may be some good, or even much good, but in the end it muddles and muddies our minds, our perception of divine things, and our comprehension of the truth. Be careful! One example of this is all the so-called prophetic ministry that is on the bookstore shelves. Much of it is simply man’s opinion and speculation without real Scriptural backing. It is true that there are many helpful commentaries on prophecy, but again, be wary. Ask yourself, does it line up with Scripture?

A good test of any book is to ask ourselves if it exalts Christ or man, namely the author? Usually this can be determined by reading the flyleaf or the first page or two. Another great test is, does it edify? Often things are greatly sensationalised with very little real meat or substance. Many commentaries occupy us more with self rather than the Lord.

Then there are fairytales and fables. There is much fiction that causes us to live in a fantasy world, and lose touch with reality, such as love stories, romance novels, etc. Not that all fiction is bad, but again, be careful! Even, so called Christian fiction can be injurious.

There are, despite what has just been said, lots of good and helpful books. We can be thankful for that which has been written for our learning and profit. The Apostle Paul valued his books, and said to Timothy, “The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments” (2 Timothy 4:13).

In summary, remember there is no substitute for orderly, consistent reading of the Word of God. As the children’s Sunday school song reminds us,

The best book to read is the Bible!

The best book to read is the Bible!

If you read it everyday,

It will help you on your way!

The best book to read is the Bible!

## Othniel

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“And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it” (Joshua 15:17).

Othniel, who was probably Caleb’s nephew, was able to take up the challenge forwarded by his uncle, and overcome The City of Books. I doubt not that his faith and courage was strengthened by that which he had seen in his faithful relative. We affect others in every aspect of family relationships. What a powerful influence Caleb’s legacy of faith, and strong convictions, had on this young man.

Here is an example and encouragement for every young person. This young man rose up and saw the danger of not overcoming this city. For us, in type, he realized the necessity of overcoming the City of Books. Now, it is true that there is much required reading in connection with school and business today. It seems that there are reams and reams of reading material to just keep up with a curriculum, career, vocation, or profession. But the question remains as to what we read in our spare time. What do we pick up as non-required reading? What do we read for our own enjoyment?

Othniel received a real blessing because of his valor and accomplishment. And there will be blessing in our lives too, in the measure in which we smite the City of Books. Are we reading those things that would edify us and encourage us in the Lord?

We find later on that Othniel is raised up of God to be a wonderful deliverer, and the first judge in Israel, at a time when things were on the skids morally and spiritually. “And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgot the Lord their God, and served Baalim and the groves. Therefore the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Chushanrishathaim eight years” (Judges 3:7-8). What a deplorable condition, but God had his man. It is a comfort to know that God always raises up men for the time. Like David of whom we read, “after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep.”

“And when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother” (Judges 3:9). God accomplishes His purposes, in spite of sin, failure, and indifference to His claims, and often through the most unlikely individuals, such as, Deborah, Gideon, Samson, etc.

“And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war: and the Lord delivered Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushanrishathaim. And the land had rest forty years” (Judges 3:10-11). He is the only judge mentioned in connection with the tribe of Judah, and one of four judges of whom it says, “the Spirit of the Lord came upon him,” the others being Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson. He surely needed the power of the Spirit of God if he was going to stand and be used of God for the deliverance of His people. He could not go on past victories, or family history, or anything else that the world might count as qualifiers. No, it must be in the power of the Lord, energized by His Spirit, and this

certainly holds true for us today.

Othniel was a real man of faith, courage, and conviction. He was a man used mightily of God in a day of utter weakness and departure from the truth, to the extent that there was rest in the land of Israel for forty years. Remember though, it all started with taking the city of Kerjathsepher. Are we overcoming the City of Books, or being overcome with books?

## Achsah

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“And he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife” (Joshua 15:17).

Here we have the next generation. Earlier we noted Caleb’s father, Jephunneh, and we have spent much time meditating on the faith of Caleb, but now we have his daughter, Achsah. She has now been married to Othniel, and immediately we find her influencing him for good, as we will see in a subsequent section. This is another word, particularly to young people. Proverbs 19:14, tells us, “a prudent wife is from the Lord.”

Perhaps one reason Othniel continues on, and as we mentioned, becomes a godly judge, for the rest of the land from war, and the blessing of God’s people for forty years, is because he had a godly wife behind him. A wife with real faith and godly exercise is a tremendous blessing to her husband. It has been well said that one reason we do not have the men of great moral and spiritual stature today, like in times past, is because there are not the great women of piety behind them, as there were in former days. It has been further stated, that behind every great man is a great woman.

Achsah had seen the faith of her father in the wilderness. She had observed his quiet testimony amidst all kinds of difficulties and discouragements. She could attest to the joy of wholly following the Lord, exhibited in Caleb’s everyday wilderness life, and it had evidently strengthened her faith. She had also just seen her father overcome the enemy in the strength of the Lord. All this had encouraged her, taught her, and built up her confidence in the Lord to such a point, that when the time came for her to make decisions and choices in her own life, she makes wise and prudent ones.

## Interlude

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“Forsake not the law of thy mother” (Proverbs 1:8).

We are going to pause here for a short detour in our story.

It is interesting to note that we do not read of Caleb’s wife, or Achsah’s mother. No name, no details, nothing! In the Bible, so often the faith of mothers had a great deal to do with the faith of the child, and as we have just noted in the case of Othniel, often the great men of Scripture similarly had wives of faith and conviction supporting them behind the scenes.

The Holy Scriptures abound with the names and histories of wives and mothers who influenced their husbands and their children for good. Sarah, Jochebed, Hannah, Abigail, Priscilla, and Eunice, just to name a few. The writer had such a mother, and a few days before her passing, as I sat by her bedside, the following lines were penned in remembrance and tribute:

She was a loving mother,  
Her hands were soft, but strong;  
Her voice was firm yet gentle,  
She taught them right from wrong:  
She tried to always be there,  
To fill their every need,  
To guide, protect, and warn them,  
Correct, instruct, and lead.  
She worked so hard to train them,  
To mold their youthful mind,  
To teach them to be gentle,  
Good, holy, pure, and kind:  
She told them about Jesus,  
And how He died to win,  
Their youthful heart’s affections,  
And save them from their sin.  
She woke them up each morning,  
With tenderness and love,

And prayed the Heavenly Father,  
Would watch them from above,  
That they would play in safety,  
And learn to honor Him,  
In all their childish pleasures,  
In every passing whim.  
She prayed with them each evening,  
She read the Bible too,  
Told them to trust in Jesus,  
And He would see them through:  
She worked to feed and clothe them,  
In health, in sickness, cared;  
In happy times and sadness,  
With tears and smiles shared.  
And now her work is over,  
Her rest at last begun;  
She will no longer toil,  
From sun to setting sun:  
She's gone to be with Jesus,  
The one she told us of;  
She's left this world for heaven,  
Our mother's gone above.  
So let us not forget her,  
And all the truth she taught;  
Remembering her wisdom,  
And deeds of kindness wrought;  
She left with one desire,  
For those she raised from youth;  
One prayer — that all her children,



Would learn to walk in truth.

With the chronicle of the kings of Judah their mother's name is often mentioned, and then whether they did right or evil in the sight of the Lord. In other words, it was the direct influence of the mother that helped form their character in later life, either for good or for bad. But nothing is said as to the case in point. We can make perhaps three suggestions and applications, and bear in mind that they are only advanced as suggestions and applications.

1. Perhaps Caleb's wife, and thus Achsah's mother, was not a woman of faith. If this were the case, it shows that even in a difficult situation like that, it is possible to live for the Lord's glory. Similarly, or perhaps I should say, conversely, Timothy's mother Eunice, is a prime example. The only thing we read of Timothy's father is, "His father was a Greek" (Acts 16:1). We never read that he had faith, or that he even had much to do with Timothy and his upbringing. But, in spite of that, Timothy's mother, and grandmother Lois, had faith, raised this boy in a god-fearing atmosphere, and were rewarded, in that Timothy took hold of the truth and became a wonderful servant of God in the early church.

2. Possibly she had died in the wilderness, and never saw Achsah reach maturity or Caleb take possession of his inheritance.

3. Another possibility, and the one I prefer, is that this woman was a person of faith, and willing as a wife and mother to go on quietly as such, behind the scenes, reaping the fruit of such a blessed, god-given place. As Caleb was content to go on quietly for all those years in the wilderness, so it may be that Caleb's wife was likewise satisfied, as is summed up in 1 Peter 3:5 concerning those godly women of old. "For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands." In 1 Peter 3:4, we have reference to "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

Whatever the case, we don't want to go beyond the record of Scripture. God has told us all we need to know, but still, there are things we often ponder, and silences that we can perhaps learn something from without being dogmatic.

I appreciated the account of Mrs. John Deck (from, *More Hymns and Their Writers*, by Jack Strahan), who's eldest son, James George, wrote many hymns that are still sung around the world today. The story goes, that after she and her husband John were saved, they sought to bring up their family in the fear of the Lord. Mrs. Deck was a woman of fervent, consistent prayer, and a mother whose one burden and concern in life was the salvation and spiritual welfare of her children. She adopted the practice of regularly setting aside time each day to be alone with God to pray for the household. God graciously heard her supplication and she had the unspeakable joy of seeing all her family of eight children led to Christ and consecrating their lives to His service. Her daughter, Mary Jane, was a godly, pious woman, and wrote a number of poems and hymns, including, "The wanderer no more will roam," and "I have Christ! — What want I more?" Her son James not only wrote many hymns and much poetry on Biblical subjects, but was a faithful servant of God throughout his life.

Would that there were more wives and mothers like that today! Let it be repeated, "A prudent wife is from the Lord" (Proverbs 19:14). Certainly we can say the same as to godly mothers. God has given wives and mothers a wonderful, vital place and work to perform for His glory, and the

blessing of the family circle. Read these words of Proverbs 31:10-31.

“Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She is like the merchants’ ships; she bringeth her food from afar. She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet. She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land. She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant. Strength and honor are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.”

## A Field

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“And it came to pass, as she came unto him, that she moved him to ask of her father a field” (Joshua 15:18).

Here we have the influence of a godly wife over her husband.

We have noted that Hebron was the place of communion. A field, would further speak of personal fellowship and perhaps more specifically, meditation. In Genesis 24:63, we find that “Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide.” For Isaac it was the time and place of personal, quiet fellowship with his God. One of the characteristics of a clean animal under the Levitical law was that they chewed the cud. Again, it speaks of meditation, or going over that which we have taken in from the Word of God. Remember, it is not what we eat that does us good, but what we digest.

Ruth gleaned in the field of Boaz, and was instructed, “Go not to glean in another field” (Ruth 2:8). She was only to glean from the field of one who is a beautiful picture of the Lord Jesus. When she arrived home that evening, her mother-in-law, Naomi, asked, “Where hast thou gleaned today?” (Ruth 2:19). This is a good question for all of us. I saw this verse on a wall plaque in a brother’s study, and I thought it was a good text to have in one’s reading room.

David said, “He maketh me to lie down in green pastures” (Psalm 23:2). “We are the people of His pasture” (Psalm 95:7). After we are saved we are to “go in and out, and find pasture” (John 10:9). Have we fed and meditated in the field of personal communion with Christ today? Have we looked for quiet moments to contentedly contemplate and enjoy something of His person and work?

I well remember sitting with a brother in Christ, in a café in Kingstown, on the West Indian island of Saint Vincent, and enjoying fellowship and coffee together. All at once he leaned across the table and said, “Brother, we have lost the art of meditation.” Sad to say, I believe, for the most part, he was right. Furthermore, I firmly believe that it is the busyness of society that is mostly to blame for such a loss.

While editing these pages I had the privilege of visiting for a few days in a chateau near the city of Bergerac, in southern France. One morning I came down to the kitchen early, put the coffee on, stirred the coals in the fireplace, got a roaring fire started, and sat for about forty-five minutes in the early morning gloom alone with the Lord and my thoughts, just quietly meditating. After awhile it struck me as to just how little time I take for such a necessity. I felt renewed in spirit and refreshed in my soul, by those few moments of musing and reflection.

Here are some further verses that would encourage us as to the need for meditation:

“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success” (Joshua 1:8).

“His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night” (Psalm 1:2).

"I remember Thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches" (Psalm 63:6).

"I will meditate also of all Thy work, and talk of thy doings" (Psalm 77:12).

"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD" (Psalm 19:14).

"My meditation of Him shall be sweet" (Psalm 104:34).

"I will meditate in Thy precepts, and have respect unto Thy ways" (Psalm 119:15).

"O how love I Thy law! it is my meditation all the day" (Psalm 119:97).

"I have more understanding than all my teachers: for Thy testimonies are my meditation" (Psalm 119:99).

In fields of sweet communion,

In fellowship I rest:

Sweet hours of meditation;

My hungry soul is blest.

In fields of peaceful quiet,

I feel my Father near,

My God, the God of comfort,

Speaks words of hope and cheer.

I walk through fields of blessing,

Or in green pastures lie;

In both I have refreshment,

With Jesus Christ so nigh.

In fields of sweet communion,

I wearily recline,

My soul is fed and strengthened,

With fellowship divine.

I linger in the fields,

Until the evening dew;

And then return at daybreak,

My spirit to renew.

There all is met in Jesus

I want no more than Him;  
The fields of sweet communion,  
Have filled me to the brim.

## A Question and Its Answer

---

“And she lighted off her ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wouldest thou?” (Joshua 15:18).

Questions and decisions. As we go on in life, it seems that things become more and more complex. Sometimes there seem to be more questions than answers, and we have to learn to stand on our own two feet. But this woman's faith was real, and when her father asks a question of her, she was ready to face things with discernment, discretion, and prudence. Her father in recognizing these qualities, now asks her what she desires, and her answer must have thrilled his heart.

“Who answered, Give me a blessing” (Joshua 15:19).

What an answer! She didn't just desire something for self-gratification, or with a selfish motive, but a blessing! If our fathers asked us what we wanted most, what would our answer be?

Here is an interesting statement: “Today's poor choices are a down payment on tomorrow's problems.” Everything we choose and do has a consequence. Perhaps not right away, but at some point there will be an effect, either for good, or for bad. What we sow today we will reap tomorrow...or at some point in the future. That's why it is good to learn, while we are young, to make our choices in the “fear of the Lord,” and in obedience to His Word, and not just for present advantage.

Do we desire a blessing,

That will eternally last?

Or are we seeking some folly,

That which will quickly be past?

This world's joys will be over,

But in a moment at best;

Heaven's riches forever endure,

In these, we then need to invest.

## A South Land

---

“...for thou hast given me a south land” (Joshua 15:19).

In acknowledging what he had already given her, it is just as if Achsah is thanking her father for her upbringing and recognizing the place of blessing that had been, and was still, hers.

Every godly father desires to see spiritual growth and conviction with their children, and the time when they express appreciation for their upbringing and the truth they have been taught. This time had come in the life of Caleb's daughter, as we see clearly stated in Achsah's answer to her father.

A south land would denote a place of pleasantness, warmth, and comfort. Many who live in cold snowy climates head south in the winter, if they have the time and resources to do so. For the purposes of our story it would, in application, speak of that which Caleb's daughters had received as a place of shelter and blessing. In other words, many of us look back to the nurture and solace of a godly, Christian home. Many godly fathers have provided a refuge, sanctuary, and shelter from the world and all its stormy turmoil and strife.

The Christian home is really the only true bulwark against the world. Are we truly thankful for such a south land? Have we ever expressed it to those who were so exercised and made much sacrifice to accomplish it? It is not easy to raise children and young people in this dark, sin-sick world, where there is so much that is opposed to Christ and the truth. And so much to vie for our time and affections. We don't often appreciate such a home and shelter when we are young, but as we get older, it is good to take hold of what our fathers have taught us, weighing it in the light of Scripture, and learning to appreciate it more and more. There is no greater joy for a parent, than to hear from their offspring that they value their upbringing, and desire further blessing.

What a wonderful solace and reward for Caleb, as he sees those years of quiet faith in God and following the Lord pay off in the life of his daughter, and her new husband. This is what every godly father desires. Solomon wrote: “My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine...The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him” (Proverbs 23:15,24).

## Springs

---

“Give me also springs of water” (Joshua 15:19).

At this juncture we will digress briefly from our story, to speak of the operation of the Spirit of God.

Running water, be it a fountain, brook, river, spring, etc., is mostly used, in the Bible, as a type or figure of the Spirit of God. This is confirmed by the words of the Lord Jesus, in John 7:38-39, “He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)”

(Contained water in a vessel, for example, the laver, Exodus 30:18; or a pitcher, Mark 14:13; is more often a type of the Word of God.)

The Lord told the Samaritan woman at Sychar’s well, “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water” (John 4:10). The gift referred to in this chapter is the gift of the Holy Spirit. He further told her, “Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14). The blessing, refreshment, and enjoyment of eternal life is the result of the work of the Spirit of God (the springing well) being in us.

Another example of this is at Elim, at the beginning of the wilderness journey. “And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters” (Exodus 15:27). The wells and the palm trees denote power and provision. There were seventy trees, because it says, “the days of our years are threescore years and ten” (Psalm 90:10). In other words, there is provision for the whole pathway. The wells, are a picture of the Spirit of God, and that is the power for our journey. Notice, there was a well for every tribe. “For God giveth not the Spirit by measure” (John 3:34). Everyone who knows Christ as Saviour is indwelt by the Spirit of God, and has the same power for their Christian life as every other believer. Notice also, it is the wells first and then the palm trees. As believers we are indwelt by the Spirit, and this is the power that makes, and gives, provision for the Christian journey.

It is also through the action of the Spirit that we have refreshment for our souls and an appreciation of divine things. “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me” (John 15:26). When Moses first smote the Rock in Exodus 17:6, we find that the water flowed out for the refreshment of the people. The Lord instructed him, “Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink.” We know from 1 Corinthians 10:4, what, or who, the Rock was: “They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.” Since the Rock was Christ, the stream of water that flowed from it would speak of the refreshment resulting from the operation of the Spirit of God. Moses striking the Rock figures the Lord Jesus coming under the rod of God’s



judgment for sin. We read of the Lord, "I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of His wrath" (Lamentations 3:1). Mrs. Ann Ross Cousins expressed it so well in the following lines:

This had to be, before the Spirit could be given. We have already quoted from John 7:39, which tells us, "the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." The Lord had to bear the judgment on the cross, rise from the dead, and ascend back to heaven, before the Spirit could be send down. This decent, of course, happened on the Day of Pentecost.

Later on in Numbers 20:8, Moses was told to go and to speak to the Rock. "Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink" (Numbers 20:8). Sin had come in amongst the people of God, and as a result the water had stopped flowing. Moses was to simply speak to the Rock so that the water would flow out again. Let's quote the whole passage: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. And Moses took the rod from before the Lord, as He commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also" (Numbers 20:7-11).

Sin hinders the work of the Spirit of God in two distinct ways. By grieving or quenching.

- "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God" (Ephesians 4:30). This is hindering the work of God in us.
- "Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thessalonians 5:19). This is hindering the work of God through us.

When this happens, we are to speak to the Rock, that is to the Lord Jesus. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

(Moses in disobedience smote the Rock and spoiled the beautiful type...but that is another subject.)

Now let us be clear that we don't have to ask for the Spirit. We have it! The Lord stated clearly, "The Spirit of Truth...dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:17). Some of the contemporary Christian songs implore the Father or the Son to send us the Spirit, or even address the Spirit directly and invite Him to come and indwell us, or be in our midst. This is not an accurate or intelligent prayer for a believer in this dispensation. We further read, "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever" (John 14:16). The abiding presence of the Spirit, both in us and with us, is one of the things that makes the Christian dispensation unique from all dispensations past and future.

As a side note, and in regard to what has just been stated, we never have a precedent in Scripture that would teach us to pray or sing to the Holy Spirit. We pray and sing in and by the Spirit, addressing God the Father, or the Lord Jesus Christ.

So we learn that in asking for springs of water, Achsah acknowledges the need for power and refreshment, for the day-to-day life of herself and her family. While, as we have said, we do not ask for the Spirit or pray for power, yet we need to be exercised to avail ourselves of that which is available through His working, and not allow anything in our lives that would hinder His proper function.

By the Spirit's mighty power,  
We can walk the desert sand,  
By the springs of sweet refreshment,  
We enjoy the promised land.  
All is ours, we taste the blessings,  
Of our God through Jesus Christ,  
What a source of overflowing,  
Joy, and rest, and grace, unpriced.  
Minister of precious portions,  
Bringing Christ before the soul,  
Giving vision to the weary,  
Pointing to the prize and goal.  
He is with us, He is in us,  
Blessed Spirit of our God,  
We have all the power that's needed,  
As to glory, on we tread.  
He abides with us forever,  
Until that momentous day,  
When the Lord will come to call us,  
Home to glory, safe away.  
Thus the Spirit and the bride say,  
"Come, Lord Jesus, even so;"  
Raptured up together with Him,  
Then Himself to fully know.

## Upper Springs

---

“And he gave her the upper springs” (Joshua 15:19).

The upper springs bring before us our link, by the Spirit of God, to the Lord Jesus, the heavenly man, and where He is now seated at the right hand of God. On the Day of Pentecost, the Spirit descended on those hundred and twenty or so, who were in the upper room, and among other things, formed the church of God, and joined those believers, as members of the body of Christ, to their ascended Head in heaven.

As a result of this we can have an enjoyment of heaven, even before we get there. “But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit” (1 Corinthians 2:9-10). We can enter into Canaan now, and enjoy our heavenly inheritance, although in part (due to the distractions within and around), as we will soon enjoy it in its fullness, when we are finally wholly and physically there with the Lord, with every hindrance removed, and the enemy gone for good. “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away...For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (1 Corinthians 13:9-10, 12).

## Nether Springs

---

“...and the nether springs” (Joshua 15:19).

If the “upper springs” speak of our connection with our risen Head and our enjoyment of heavenly things, then the “nether springs” are the power to walk for God’s glory while still here below. It is true that, positionally, He, “hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6). But practically, we are still here in this world, dealing with the enemy, and all the hindrances and distractions that plague and harass us from day to day. Thence, we need the power and refreshment of the Spirit of God, for our Christian path, moment by moment. The divine life has no power of itself; the power for the new life, is the Spirit. We are exhorted, “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” (Galatians 5:25).

Another type used as a figure of the Spirit is oil. We read in Deuteronomy 33:24-25, “Let Asher be blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil. Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be.” Children would speak of fruit. Acceptability would speak of service in fellowship with our brethren. Dipping our foot in oil would teach us of a walk in the power of the Spirit. Shoes would speak of a walk of separation from the world, as we walk through the world. As we noted earlier in our meditation, iron tells of power, and brass of endurance.

How much we need the “upper springs and the nether springs,” if there is to be an enjoyment of heavenly, spiritual things, as well as power and endurance, fruit and testimony.

Springs in the desert,

The valleys and hills,

Springs of refreshment,

The Spirit distills.

Flowing from Jesus,

Who died on the tree,

Who now is risen,

And living for me.

Springs, blessed springs,

Sent down from above,

Quenching my thirst,

With His goodness and love.

Spring for my blessing,  
From which I can drink,  
Rivers to swim in,  
Yet never to sink.  
With Achsah, faith asked for much, and faith received much!

## Fields and Villages

---

“And the children of Israel gave by lot unto the Levites these cities with their suburbs, as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses. And they gave out of the tribe of the children of Judah, and out of the tribe of the children of Simeon, these cities which are here mentioned by name, which the children of Aaron, being of the families of the Kohathites, who were of the children of Levi, had: for theirs was the first lot. And they gave them the city of Arba the father of Anak, which city is Hebron, in the hill country of Judah, with the suburbs thereof round about it. But the fields of the city, and the villages thereof, gave they to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for his possession” (Joshua 21:8-12).

In the previous chapter we learn that Hebron, which was the inheritance of Caleb, became one of the “cities of refuge” (Joshua 20:2). Now in this chapter it is further set aside as part of the portion for the Levites. But as this happens Caleb retains two things, “the fields...and the villages.”

We have already taken up the significance of a field in Scripture: personal communion and meditation. If then the fields speak of personal fellowship, the villages would signify fellowship with one another. If people have common interests, want company, or to dwell in close proximity to their fellow-man, they build and form communities: that is, cities, towns, villages, communes, etc.

Not only have we been brought into a place of fellowship with God the Father and with the Lord Jesus Christ, but as a result, with one another as well. “If [since] we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another” (1 John 1:7). As we have said several times throughout these pages, Caleb valued Hebron as the place of communion, and in the end was able to secure as his own, “the fields of the city, and the villages thereof.”

Notice the order: It is not the villages and fields, but the fields first, and then the villages. As to practical fellowship this order is important. True fellowship with fellow-believers is our enjoyment of the person and work of Christ together. This enjoyment can only be in the measure in which we enjoy Christ in our own souls. I cannot share Christ with others, if I have not enjoyed Christ myself.

We have a similar thought with the bride in Song of Solomon 7:11. There she has been awakened in her affections and restored to her bridegroom, and now she says to Him, “Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages.” Notice the order is the same, because we cannot “lodge in the villages,” if we have not gone “forth into the field.”

Why is it that so often we get together with other believers, we come away feeling that there wasn't much true fellowship, or enjoyment of Christ with one another? There may have been some nice activities, of which there is certainly nothing wrong. In fact it is good to be together with other Christians for activity and recreation. But the reason we often do not experience real fellowship is because we have not first had the personal communion that is necessary for ourselves. Remember, “fields” come before “villages.” Personal communion precedes collective communion.

There is nothing so vital as personal, intimate communion with the Father and the Son. Satan is busy working to introduce every kind of thought and activity to keep us from enjoying personal communion, knowing that the result will be that we cannot encourage one another by sharing the precious things of Christ with our brothers and sisters. Not only do we lose the benefits of such experience, but our fellow-believers lose out as well since we have nothing of Christ to offer.

Life is full of trade-offs, but never exchange fellowship with God the Father and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ for anything. It is always a poor trade-off!

## Postscript

---

Interestingly enough, just as we never read of Caleb's wife, we never read of the death of Caleb either. The Word of God gives precise details surrounding the deaths and burials of many of the Old Testament greats, and if not details, at least confirmation by a brief mention of the fact itself.

Now there is no doubt that Caleb died! There are only two in the Old Testament that we read of who left this world without dying:

- "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him" (Hebrews 11:5).
- "Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven" (2 Kings 2:11).

Possibly the reason we are not told of the death of Caleb, is because we are not to look for death. We have a hope far better than that! We look forward to the Lord's coming, often referred to as the rapture. That is what we are to be looking for. "Looking for that blessed hope" (Titus 2:13). "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching" (Luke 12:37).

We should be so much in the enjoyment of heavenly things (the land of Canaan), that when the Lord comes it will simply be to be taken from His presence into His presence. From a partial enjoyment to a full enjoyment!

We do not look for death,

The grave is not our goal,

The coming of our Lord,

Is that which cheers the soul;

We know it may be anytime,

We long to be in heaven's bright clime,

And Jesus' praises fully chime.

We do not wait the tomb,

We wait the shout to hear;

We listen for the call,

When Jesus will appear:

Then to the cloud we'll quickly rise,

To meet the Saviour in the skies,

And seize the everlasting prize.



"To dust," is not our hope,  
The change we're looking for;  
When bodies like our Lord,  
We'll have forevermore;  
Then death can never touch us there,  
And all is perfect glory where  
We'll live with Christ, in heaven so fair.

We may, like Caleb, and a vast multitude of saints, pass through death. "To depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better" (Philippians 1:23). But this is not what we are to be expecting. We are to be looking up every day and saying, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

## Caleb's Life

---

He was a slave in Egypt,  
In bondage labored hard,  
Made brick for cruel masters,  
No doubt, with scourges scarred;  
And then one night, oh wonder,  
Ate of the roasted lamb,  
With sprinkled blood protecting,  
The firstborn, for I AM.  
He left that night of feasting,  
With every Israelite;  
The Passover completed,  
They took their midnight flight;  
He stood and saw them coming,  
Egyptians strong in force,  
Then saw the Mighty save them,  
On dry land's watery course.  
He trekked across the Red Sea,  
Saw Pharaoh and his host,  
Dead on the shore behind them,  
On Sinai's western coast;  
Sang of redemptions story,  
The way Jehovah made,  
And drank from wells at Elim,  
Enjoyed the palm trees' shade,  
He went to spy the good land,  
With Joshua, and ten

Other brave scouts, each leaders,  
Heads of their tribe, these men:  
He brought a faithful message,  
Encouraging each one,  
To go and take possession  
Of that which God had won.  
He heard them call for stoning,  
He knew their unbelief,  
With Joshua his partner,  
He rent his clothes in grief;  
He turned back with the people,  
With heaviness of heart,  
He knew His God was able,  
To fight and take their part.  
He walked the desert pathway,  
In faithfulness to God;  
Stood while the rock was smitten  
By Moses with his rod;  
He gathered manna daily,  
With Amalek did fight;  
Followed the cloudy pillar,  
Which turned to fire at night.  
He saw the golden idol,  
The calf that Aaron made,  
Heard Moses interceding,  
Witnessed the awful plague,  
He knew the ten commandments,  
On stony tablets graded,  
And how they first were broken,

And all the camp was saved.  
He viewed the tabernacle  
Erected in the way;  
And all the sacrifices,  
Offered from day to day:  
He must have been so weary,  
Beneath the desert sun,  
Felt often times discouraged,  
Before the day was done.  
He heard the people murmur,  
Saw many bitten sore,  
By fiery, deadly serpents,  
Upon the desert floor;  
Observed the brazen pole,  
With healing power sublime,  
And those who looked upon it  
By faith, cured every time.  
He felt the heat of daytime,  
The cold of desert night,  
The weary, dreary miles,  
The forty years of plight;  
Yet, through it all he followed,  
Yes, fully followed Him,  
The Lord, whose faithful promise,  
Seemed never to grow dim.  
He crossed the Jordan River,  
And entered Canaan's land;  
He fought with Anak's giants,  
And every high wall spanned;

His strength had not abated,  
God's blessed recompense;  
And Hebron, he was given,  
For his inheritance.  
His daughter's name was Achsah,  
His nephew Othniel,  
Who conquered Kirjathsepher,  
And for so doing well,  
Received his bride, this lady,  
Of faith and wisdom too,  
Who moved her husband rightly,  
A blessing to pursue.  
She had received a south land,  
But yet she wanted more,  
She asked for springs of water,  
Refreshment from their store:  
This for herself and family,  
Their thirst to satisfy,  
Her father's faith had taught her,  
To trust God's full supply.  
For Caleb's life had strengthened  
So many other lives,  
His influence impacted,  
His friends and family ties;  
He stood amongst his people,  
A faithful, godly man;  
Integrity and purpose,  
Throughout his history's span.  
So let us heed the lessons,

From Caleb's faith and life,  
And follow, trust, and conquer,  
'Midst trials, tests, and strife;  
We too can prove the power  
Of our almighty Lord;  
Triumphant, fruitful, living,  
Will be our glad reward.

Riandaule, France

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