

The Inheritance of Love

by A.B. Simpson

Hebron represents a special inheritance, a higher inheritance than the ordinary lot of the tribes, and the very highest inheritance that God has for each of us.

Scripture: Joshua 14:14, Matthew 7:7, John 15:10, Romans 8:28, Galatians 6:9, Philippians 3:14, 2 Timothy 4:7, Hebrews 11:6, James 1:12, 1 John 4:18

Topics: "Inheritance of Faith", "Pursuit of God's Best"

Description

A.B. Simpson emphasizes the significance of Caleb's inheritance of Hebron, illustrating it as a symbol of the highest spiritual blessings that come from wholly following God. He highlights that Hebron represents not only a special inheritance but also the hard-won victories of faith, love, and obedience, encouraging believers to aspire for God's best. Simpson draws parallels between Caleb's unwavering faith and the challenges faced by Christians today, urging them to claim their spiritual inheritance with courage and perseverance. He concludes by calling for a deeper commitment to love and fellowship with God, as well as a readiness to face the trials that accompany the pursuit of divine promises.

Transcript

"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." (Josh. 14: 14.)

The City of Hebron is still one of the most interesting and delightful places in Palestine. It is a highly elevated spot, overlooking a wide extent of country, and even amid the desolations of Palestine it is still a scene of surpassing beauty, fertility and luxuriance.

The country is covered with vineyards and plantations. The grapes of Eshcol still grow in the valleys, and the rains and water springs are returning in something like their former fulness.

One cannot wonder that Caleb should set his heart upon this choice inheritance and claim it as his own.

The incident of this chapter is one of the most stirring in the Book of Joshua. Caleb was one of the faithful spies who returned from the land at Kadesh, and, unlike the rest of his brethren, he encouraged the people to go up and claim their inheritance. But they refused, and for forty years he waited until that unbelieving generation had passed away. And now, for more than four years, he had stood shoulder to shoulder with his comrades in the conquest of the land and the securing of their various inheritances, until

at last the kings were all subdued and the land divided by lot. Then he comes forward and claims his own inheritance and justly receives it.

The whole scene is full of spiritual meaning, and vividly sets forth the higher inheritance which faith may claim from the great Commander in the better Land of Promise.

A SPECIAL INHERITANCE

Hebron represents a special inheritance; something more than the ordinary lot of the tribes. Caleb's act expressed a holy ambition which is worthy of our imitation.

God is pleased to have us claim all there is for us in His great redemption. The Master was not angry with James and John when they wanted more than their brethren. The prophet of old was angry with Israel's king when he was willing to take so little, and reproved him that he had not struck five or six times with the arrows of faith upon the ground.

There is more for each of us than an ordinary Christian experience. There is much more than just being saved and sanctified. God has choice possessions for choice spirits, and He lets each one of us decide for ourselves how much we shall have. He is always watching with loving jealousy to see how earnest our spirit is, and how much of our high calling in Christ Jesus we will claim.

GOD'S BEST

Hebron represents not only a higher inheritance, but the very highest. It was the choicest spot in all the land. Caleb wanted it just because it was the best, and Anak held it for the very same reason. God has for each of us a good, a better, or a best. The great majority are languidly content to have the good, a minority choose the better, and one out of myriads occasionally claims the best. But it has been truly said: "The better is the greatest enemy to the best." If we rise a little higher than the average we are apt to rest there in self-complacency, and so miss the highest calling.

Caleb would take nothing less than God's best, and he got it. God wants us to be content with nothing but His highest thought, and to "press forward into all the good pleasure of His goodness" and "the good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

HARD

Hebron represents a very hard-won victory. It was not only the highest, but the hardest choice. It is ever true that God's highest gifts are the most costly. In natural things, value is expressed by rarity and cost. Pearls do not grow on the trees. Sovereigns do not fall like snowflakes. The laurel of fame does not hang on every branch along the way. Success is not a capricious accident. All these things are the recompense of labor, sacrifice, self-denial, and often great suffering. And so the highest spiritual things are costly things, and involve intense labor and self-denial.

Satan does not dispute our way over the plains of average blessing, but when we ascend to higher altitudes we find his principalities and powers disputing our advance, and they are thickest at the end. The devil is too shrewd to waste his ammunition on ordinary, average things. The reason that Arba, the greatest of the Anakim, chose Hebron was because it was the choicest place in Palestine. The reason why the best things in your life cost you such great temptations and pressures is because such mighty and unspeakable blessings lie behind the breastworks of your foe for you if you will only dare claim your

inheritance.

If you are to reach the heights of holiness, you will have, like Habakkuk, to have "hind's feet," and learn to "walk on your high places." If you are to come into the more delicate shades of Christian experience, you shall have to know the heaviest touches of the adversary's hand. If you are to sit with Christ upon His throne you must go with Him through His Gethsemane. Christ is not holding you back from the highest places at His side, but He is asking you, as He did His disciples of old, "Can you drink of My cup? Can you be baptized with My baptism?"

Caleb understood all this when he asked for Hebron, and the reason he wanted it was because "the Anakim were there, and the cities were great and strong." Christ is still looking for men and women of the heroic type, those who will bear the hardest things, and fear not the cost of the highest things in His kingdom.

Once in my life, when almost tempted to discouragement by the temptations and pressures around me, my eye fell on this line in an old book: "The best evidence that you are in God's will is the devil's growl." And so I thanked the devil for his growl, and found that the reason he was there in force was because there was a Hebron just beyond.

THE VICTORY OF FAITH

Hebron represents the victory of waiting faith. The promise claimed at Hebron had been given forty years before. It was the realization of a lifelong vision. It was the fulfilment of a long deferred hope.

God's richest blessings often require not only sacrifice, suffering and hard conflict, but long delay and patient waiting. But the blessing grows with the delay. The interest gathers with the extended time, and God's ratio is always compound interest.

It is very blessed to receive, in the early morning of life, some precious promise, and then stand, as the years go by, and wait for God to fulfil it, undiscouraged by the lapse of time, but knowing that "a thousand years with God are as one day, and one day as a thousand years."

So God gave all His ancient people the early promise and the waiting years. And oh, how His heart looks down with delight as His children hold fast, amid all the testings, knowing that "if it tarry it will surely come, and will not tarry too long."

Thus, and thus alone, are the strongest things matured. The basswood tree can grow in a decade, but the mighty oak that lasts for a century, takes many years to mature. So God is teaching us to reach our highest blessings. Let us hold fast to all His promises. Let us learn to wait for the best wine at the last.

I am sorry for the man who has got all his blessings, and has no unanswered prayers, and no reserve of faith and hope beyond the present hour. Like the painter who wept when he had reached his ideal, because he could never rise beyond the present, so the heart loses its spring when it reaches its full desire.

The Holy Ghost is always pressing us forward in holy aspiration and infinite outreaching after greater things, that He may lure us on by the hopes He sets before us. Let us store the heavens with these waiting prayers, and let life's perspective be crowned, height above height, with our unrealized blessings; and we shall praise Him as much for what He has not yet given us as for the blessings we have received, and

often sing with one of the sweetest spirits of our century:

"A sweet new song is in my mouth,

To long-loved music set;

Glory to God for all the grace

I have not tasted yet."

LOVE

Hebron represents especially the inheritance of love and holy friendship. It was the city of Abraham, the friend of God, and its name to the present day is "The Friend." It is the type of love, the highest heritage of Christian faith and experience.

I do not speak of love in its ordinary, natural meaning, as a human instinct, but of the love which is the grace and gift of Christ; and I think that Hebron represents not the commoner phases of Christian love, but the choice and finer shades which the Holy Spirit has to give to those who will "come up higher."

We know the Lord Jesus had some disciples who came nearer to His heart than others; and love has still its inner chambers and finer shades. Hebron seems to express these heights of love and heavenly fellowship.

There is "the love that casts out fear"; the perfect confidence in the Father which has no cloud; a fellowship which is eternal and unbroken, and covered with His mighty oath. "I have sworn that I will never be angry with you, nor rebuke you." Do we not want this mountaintop of love?

Then there is the love of Christ shed abroad in our hearts, that is the very heart of Christ in us. I cannot sing the song,

"Give me a heart like Thine,

Help me to love like Thee."

because I am not able to resemble Christ. I must have Christ Himself to live in me. This is my highest Hebron, that "as He is, so also are we, in this world." "That the love wherewith You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

Again, there is what we have sometimes called the love-life of the Lord; the blessed tender relationship in which we call Him Ishi and He calls us beloved; where we are betrothed unto our Lord and He becomes the Bridegroom of the heart, quickening all our being with a touch so real, and so infinitely holy, that it is preeminently true of this as of everything else.

"The love of Jesus, what it is,

None but His loved ones know."

Do we not want to dwell on this high place of love?

Then there is the love that adjusts all our natural and spiritual relationships, and enables us to love each one in Christ, not with an earthly, sentimental love, a selfish love that often hurts what it would bless, but just as Christ loves each one with a perfect, righteous, unselfish love and simplicity.

How our hearts often ache because they are unadjusted! How bone fails to fit bone, in the body of Christ, and joint to fit into its socket, until the whole frame is distorted and diseased! But Christ has a love for each of us which is stronger than our natural affection, and infinitely sweeter, quieter, more unselfish and blessed than any earthly love.

Some of you would die for your friend today, through your passionate devotion; but tomorrow, if he should slight your corpse, you would instantly rise from the dead to pour upon him your angry recrimination. That is not the Christ-love. It is peaceful and ever-lasting.

Some of you will fasten on the fault of another until you become blinded to his better qualities and forget his real goodness. The Christ-love can see the error, but it can see also the other side, and can cover the error with the faith and hope that will claim from Christ its healing, and see him only in the light of Christ's own perfect love and grace.

The Christ-love has no respect for persons. It loves most dearly those whom God has fitly framed into the nearest place, but it loves each in his or her place, simply, wholly, unselfishly, with Christ's own thought and blessing.

The sun looks into the little daisy and gives it all the light the daisy can hold. The same sun looks into the great bosom of the summer lake and gives it a larger, richer glory, because the lake can hold more and reflect back the sun and the glory. And so the love of God meets each person that comes in contact with your life, and touches each according to the adjustment of God's providence and the principles of His Word.

This Christ-love can love even the unworthy for its own sake and not for theirs. It loves not for the worth of the object, but, like the sunshine, it covers the meanest thing with its own glory, "and loves the loveliness itself has given."

Are not these some Hebron heights we long to climb, where it would be sweet to dwell above the clouds of our murky skies and malarial plains?

FELLOWSHIP

And so we might speak of Hebron as the type of fellowship, as the name expresses. There are heights of fellowship with God into which we need to rise. Do you not want to know the prayer of the Holy Ghost in all its mighty possibilities? Do you not want to know the prayer of faith in God in all its limitless forces? Do you not want to know the prayer without ceasing, and the abiding communion where the curtains are never closed and the Presence is never withdrawn? Do you not want to know the communion of wordless fellowship which waits upon the Lord, which brings in His very life and fulness, which breathes His breath and lies upon His bosom in perfect rest, without a murmuring wave upon the peaceful shore?

Do you not want the sympathetic intuition that catches the very thought of God, that meets the Spirit's finest touch, that understands the Master's will, that responds to the still, small voice, and reaches out into the very mind of God?

Are these the things that weary you and oppress you and have no charm for you? Or does your spirit cry, "Oh, You whom my soul loves, tell me where You feed, where You make Your flock to rest at noon?"

I'm leaning close to Jesus' breast;

So close that I can hear

The softest whisper of His love

In fellowship most dear;

And feel that His almighty hand

Is with me in this hostile land.

And then this makes the fellowship of others just as close and holy. In this secret place of the Most High, God brings to us the most sacred companionships of love, leads us into their inner lives, lays upon us their needs, and makes it a luxury to pray for them, uses us to carry their work and share in their sorrows, and begins even here the holy fellowships of the world above.

There are none so near to us as those that are far away, across wide seas and distant continents.

There are cables underlying

Every ocean wide;

Cords of love and prayer are stronger

Than the Atlantic's tide.

These are some of Hebron's heights. Beloved, shall we claim them and dwell there with Caleb, "in the summer-land of love"?

COVENANT BLESSINGS

Hebron was the city of Abraham and of David. As the city of Abraham, it represents the covenant of all the children of faith. It is our right to have their highest blessings. There is nothing within the limits of the promises of God, or the possibilities of faith and love which we are not entitled to claim through the everlasting covenant, if we will but dare to appropriate it and enter in.

And so David was crowned at Hebron before he reigned at Jerusalem. So Hebron is a royal city, and so the place of love is always the place of kingliness. If we would rule in human hearts, and influence human destinies, we must have the heart of love. As I watch people in the work of God, I always see the loving heart go out in advance, and just as certainly the souls that have not won the highest victories of love, notwithstanding the most brilliant gifts, will become disqualified for the highest service.

If God is to make you a king, and crown you for the highest place in His work, you must get settled at Hebron, and begin your kingdom there, in the place of perfect love. Sensitiveness, selfishness, irritability, censoriousness, and lack of sympathy, gentleness and infinite compassion, will bar you from the highest work and the grandest compensations.

FAITH

Hebron represents the victory of faith. How did Caleb win this mighty citadel? Listen. "If the Lord be with me, I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said."

It was all of faith. And so every victory must be one of faith. When Jesus told the disciples of the vast requirements of love for the erring, requiring forgiveness even unto seventy times seven, they might well have cried, "Lord, increase our love!" but their Spirit-prompted prayer was wiser than this. It was, "Lord, increase our faith!" They were right, and Jesus well said in reply, "If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, Be you removed and cast into the sea, and it should be done."

The mightiest mountain of unbelief and alienation will yield to one germ of divine love. We cannot grow into faith; it is not a plant indigenous to the soil of earth, but it must be claimed in the name of Jesus, on the ground of the covenant, through the Holy Spirit, as the direct obtainment of His grace.

And if today you have seen any lack of love in your heart and life, you have but to appropriate it according to your covenant right, to put down your name there, and then to put down your foot upon it and believing that you do receive it, step out into the testing of that love, insisting upon it as your right, and it will come into your life through His faithful and all-sufficient grace.

OBEDIENCE

Once more, Hebron represents the recompense of obedience. Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb "because he wholly followed the Lord his God."

Human love gives its rewards capriciously. That mother will hug her child almost to death this moment, and an hour hence may beat it almost to death. But God loves on principle, and His caresses are always given for something. It is when we obey Him, when we please Him, when we stand fast in some place of testing, when we sacrifice some selfish thing at His bidding, -- it is then that we hear the sweet words, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of Your Lord."

Like a loving mother, He takes up His child in His tender embrace, and lavishes upon him the fulness of His affection. It was when Abraham had proved his fidelity by the sacrifice of his son that God met him with that sweet testimony, "Now I know that you love Me, because you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

This is what Jesus means in these wonderful words: "He that has My commandments and keeps them, he it is that loves Me, and he that loves Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself unto him."

This is something more than He says to the ordinary Christian. This is His special love for the always obedient heart. And so struck were the disciples with it that they asked Him again concerning it, and He repeated the same promise in still stronger language: "If a man loves Me he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him."

This is the pathway to Hebron. Shall we walk obediently in it, and so enter into all the joy of our Lord?

And now, in conclusion, God has been calling us in these lessons to the highest things. Do we realize that in these waiting years Caleb had accomplished much more than an ordinary life already? He had reached

nearly a century of years. He had seen two generations pass away. He had been a slave amid the brick-fields of Egypt. He had crossed the Red Sea, had stood under Sinai's awful cloud, had crossed the borders of Canaan, and stood on Hebron's heights nearly half a century before, and had afterwards traversed the whole round of the wilderness, without once turning from his God, following like a faithful dog, as his name signifies, and obeying all the will of his Master.

And now he had gone through the whole campaign of the conquest of Canaan, had marched around Jericho and entered through the breaches of its walls, had triumphed at Bethhoron, and walked through the length and breadth of the land; and as his gray hair streamed in the wind that day, a man of nearly a century old, almost anyone would have said he, at least, might well deserve to claim a release from work and toil and enter the richest inheritance his Commander could give him. But we find him instead just stepping out on the threshold of his greatest life work, and, like a young man of twenty-one, begging for the privilege of fighting the hardest battles that remained and conquering the mightiest giants of the Anakim.

Glorious Caleb! Inspiring leader! Bright example! Speak to the men and women that have been sanctified and called to meet the mighty opportunities of these momentous days.

O, as we stand on the threshold of the coming kingdom and await the first beams of the millennial dawn, Lord, send us out to higher, diviner, more victorious achievements of faith and love than we have yet experienced, for the glory of our Master's name. Amen.

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