

GREAT MEN OF THE BIBLE--CALEB

Numbers 13, 14

Introduction

1. It is in the lives of God's servants that the work of the Spirit is demonstrated. Bible biographies are rich in truth concerning spiritual living.
2. Caleb is one of the most outstanding witnesses to the grace of God and the faith of a believer. Although he was an overshadowed man, he has qualities which need to be emulated. It was Joshua who put him in the shadows. He needs to be brought out of obscurity and viewed as he truly was-- a man of God.
3. Caleb was no genius. He was an ordinary man. He was a spy for Israel, but otherwise he held no specially responsible position. He was a man of energy. He was a man of faith. This is seen by his response to God's call to enter the land of promise. Mark the following to accent his faith:

1. His comments ABOUT THE LAND

a. It was desirable 14:7, 8

1) It was good Twice the Bible uses this term to express the thought of goodness. It is an emphatic statement of Caleb.

2) It was flowing Milk and honey speak of abundance and richness. Notice it is called "this land."

b. It was possessable 13:20

1) Immediately The Hebrew participle followed by the main verb doubles the message here. It might well be rendered, "let us boldly go up." Completeness of doing the action is emphasized by the construction.

2) Energetically Caleb does not express any sort of reasonable doubt in his proposition. The Hebrew verb is again doubled here to express the full ability of the people to triumph.

NOTE: Caleb focused on two items in these statements:

1. The promise of God to give the land (Gen. 12:1-3).
2. The intent of God to fulfill what He had said (Gen. 26:3; Rom. 4:21).

2. His comments ABOUT THE PEOPLE 14:9

a. Negatively

It is the common verb for "fear" which is used here. No fear is to be allowed (cf. 2 Tim. 1:7). In place of fear, Caleb notes the people of the land are like bread for them to eat (14:31). Until the enemy is seen as bread and not

something fearful, we will not see things God's way. Caleb viewed things from God's viewpoint.

b. Positively

The term "defense" is the word for shade or shadow. It is used of God's protection of David (Psa. 36:8). Caleb says the enemy has no defense, no shade. This is stated even before the entry to the land is commenced! Defenses of the enemy are dismantled in the face of God's mighty power.

NOTE: The carnality of the people is like those who act in unbelief at any time. Their view of things is different and creates fear. Listen: 1. They are stronger than we are. 2. The people are greater than we are. 3. The enemy eats differently than we (they are cannibals!). Beloved, faith sees God's posture; unbelief sees the enemy strategy.

3. His comments ABOUT THE LORD 14:8, 9

a. Expected delight

While Caleb gives a conditional clause, he does so out of respect to the will of God (James 4:13-15). The verb means to "be favorably disposed" (cf. 2 Sam. 22:20). Caleb uses the holy Name of God--"Jehovah." It means the self-existent One. With His favor, two issues will come: 1) Brought into the land; 2) Given the land.

b. Warned rebellion

The verb "rebel" means to be disobedient, be perverse, or fall away. It is used of idolatry (Josh. 22:16). Mark the holy Name of God is again used (cf. v. 8).

c. Assured presence

In a brief partial sentence, it is affirmed that the Lord is with us (no copulative verb expressed). This is also cause for another appeal to cease from fear.

Conclusion What response did such unflinching faith receive? The Bible records the following: stoning (v. 10). This was the treatment meted to blasphemers (Lev. 24:16). Incredible. But God's response is just as exciting. He caused His glory to appear in the tabernacle. All the people were given this demonstration to approve Caleb! Indeed, the glory of God stood between Caleb's faith and the stoning of unbelief (death). Where do you stand today--with Caleb and faith or with those who would stone and fear? Amen.