

GREAT MEN OF THE BIBLE - CALEB (2)

Numbers 14:24

Introduction

1. Caleb is an outstanding example of a man who believed God. His faith drew him out of the shadow under which he lived--the shadow of Joshua the great commander of Israel forces.
2. The energy with which Caleb manifested faith is clearly noticeable in his comments about the promised land, as a spy (Num. 14:7, 8), about the people in the land (Num. 14:9), and about the power of the Lord to take them into the land (Num. 14:8, 9).
3. While Caleb was threatened with stoning because of his position (Num. 14:10), the Lord graciously spared him by demonstrating His glory (Num. 14:10). This only accents the fact that Caleb was a stalwart in character before the Lord. Just what sort of man he was is recorded in the Word. Note these facts about him:

1. CALEB'S BACKGROUND

a. His family

It is clear that Caleb was not fully related to Israel in his heritage (Num. 14:6). Being the son of Jephunneh, he is noted as being a Kenizite (Num. 32:12). This puts him outside the pure Israelite. Apparently his father and grandfather belonged to some tribe, probably of Idumea. In some way they became related to Judah and came under the aegis of that tribe (1 Chron. 4:13, 15). It was due to this relationship that he had his part with Judah (Josh. 15:13).

b. His age

While some may prefer not to divulge their age, Caleb had no problem at this point. He tells when he was given the commitment to be a spy (Josh. 14:7). He also indicates that 45 years later he was still available to God for the sake of Israel (Josh. 14:10). We are therefore dealing with an alert 85 year old saint.

2. HIS INTEREST

a. Promised--by God

Whatever Caleb desired was not his own imagination, but the very promise of the living God. When coming to Joshua to negotiate his concerns, he makes this clear. Note

such phrases as "Moses said" and "the Lord spake this word unto Moses" (Josh. 14:9, 10). Of course, the promises were true (Num. 13:22; 14:24; Deut. 1:36). It is the Word of God which moved Caleb into action.

b. Related--to strength

This is a neat observation reported in the Word. Caleb indicates his strength has not failed in 45 years (Josh. 14:10, 11)! This is remarkable. In fact, he claims he has ability to move out in war. Caleb employs two Hebrew words to enforce his physical abilities to gain his inheritance. He had no doubt but what he could go out to war and would return therefrom. What a man of faith and assurance in the Lord.

c. Committed--to God

It is true that Caleb had tremendous personal confidence, but the bottom line reports that it was not he, but the Lord. This can't be missed in such phrases as "the Lord spake," "if so be the Lord be with me," and "as the Lord said" (Josh. 14:12). Caleb was not carnal in his thoughts. He knew from whence the victory would come.

3. HIS SPIRITUALITY

a. He was God's servant (Num. 14:24)

This is the simple Hebrew word for servant. But for Caleb it meant something. He was God's man who believed that he had a Master--the Lord! Gloriously, God testifies to this fact. He calls Caleb "my servant."

b. He was God's different servant (Num. 14:24)

Here is a factor which separated him from others. He had another spirit. This obviously means he was not led by his own whims but by the Spirit. Scripture actually notes that the other Spirit was "with him." This is the dynamic of those whose commitment is to the Holy Spirit of God (Rom. 12:1, 2).

c. He was God's devoted servant (Num. 14:24)

The phrase which is used here occurs several times (Num. 32:11, 12; Deut. 1:36; Josh. 14:8, 9, 14). It means that he was yielded to God completely. He gave the Lord full obedience. It is a phrase with enormous implications. No wonder he did what he did!

Conclusion If God can take a man like Caleb out of the shadows, it is because he had some reality to him. How great is the need for people who take God's promises and believe them--at whatever age they may be! Amen.