

I. INTRODUCTION

Numbers 13:26-33; Joshua 14:6-15 Many people go through life trying to please men instead of God. Today let us look at the life of a great man of God, Caleb, and see how he was able to please God instead of men.

II. BACKGROUND:

God, through Moses, set the people of Israel free from their bondage in Egypt and led them through the desert to possess the land of Canaan – the land that had been promised to Abraham and his descendants centuries before. By a series of deliverance's from starvation, thirst and human enemies, God had demonstrated to the people Israel His mighty power and His love for them. The Israelites are now at the edge of the desert, just before Canaan. In

Numbers 13:1-25, Moses chose one leader from each tribe to explore the land of Canaan. Caleb was one of the twelve. They found the land to be very fertile such that a single cluster of grapes had to be carried by two men with a pole (v.23).

III. Bible Readings

Numbers 13:26 Now they departed and came back to Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; they brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. 27 Then they told him, and said: " We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. 28 Nevertheless the people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there. 29 The Amalekites dwell in the land of the South; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan." 30 Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, " Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it." 31 But the men who had gone up with him said, " We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we." 32 And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, " The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. 33 " There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight." (NKJ)

Joshua 14:6 Then the children of Judah came to Joshua in Gilgal. And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him: " You know the word which the LORD said to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh Barnea. 7 I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as it was in my heart. 8 " Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I wholly followed the LORD my God. 9 So Moses swore on that day, saying, " Surely the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children`s forever, because you have wholly followed the LORD my God." 10 And now, behold, the LORD has kept me alive, as He said, these forty-five years, ever since the LORD spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old. 11 As yet I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in. 12 Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the LORD spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fortified. It may be that the LORD will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the LORD said. 13 And Joshua blessed him, and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as an inheritance. 14 Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel. 15 And the name of Hebron formerly was Kirjath Arba (Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim). Then the land had rest from war. (NKJ)

IV. DISCUSSION

A. Caleb's Courageous Stand (Numbers 13:26-33)

1. What part of the report did all the spies agree on, and on what issue did Caleb disagree with the others? What do you think his inner feelings were at this point? What temptations are likely to face you if a whole committee should violently disagree with you? 2. Why did the other spies report negatively and exaggerate the dangers? (They looked only at the potential problems and lacked faith in God—did not believe God's promise that He will give them the land.) 3. Cite examples today wherein the views/values/ behaviours of many people around us differ from our beliefs. 1) Cheating on exams/taxes 2) Following fads (such as wearing microminis, etc.) 3) Pressure to marry non-Christians. How do you respond to this situations? 4. Summarize Numbers 14:1-38 for your group. Since the Israelites did not want to rely on the Lord and go in and possess the land, they had to wander in the desert for 40 years until all that generation died. Only Caleb and Joshua in that generation were allowed to enter the promised land (Numbers 14:30)

B. Caleb: Courageous and Strong As Ever (Joshua 14:5-15)

NOTE: This is now five to seven years after the Israelites crossed the Jordan River into Canaan.

1. How old was Caleb when Moses sent him to explore the land of Canaan? What did Caleb say was the basis of his report? (According to his convictions) In the face of the negative reports of Caleb's companions which made the hearts of the people melt with fear, how was Caleb's obedience described? (He followed the Lord wholly. He did what was right in God's sight, even if the circumstances and environments were against him.) 2. What difference is there between "following" and "wholly following" the Lord? Give examples in our life to illustrate this.

V. REFLECTION:

Into which category would I honestly have to put myself? What do I intend to do about it now? 3. How old is Caleb now and what is his condition? What is Caleb about to undertake? Why?

(NOTE: these fortified cities of the Anakim in the hill country are the very ones which had made the people tremble more than 40 years earlier. But now Caleb is setting out to conquer them almost single-handedly, confident in God's faithfulness.) How would you describe Caleb? (Courageous. Trusts God. Claims God's promises...)

VI. REFLECTION:

In what ways am I like Caleb? 4. Caleb conquered the strongholds in his time. Today, what are the strongholds God wants us to conquer? Our own body, mind and spirit - we should rid it of all sinful habits. No part of our life should be withheld from God's control, whether it be ambition, career, life partner... Our own family - we should relate to each other lovingly, and claim God's promise to let the entire household belong to god. Our relationships with other people. Our neighborhood/city/country.

VII. REFLECTION:

What will I do to conquer these strongholds? 6. Reviewing Caleb's life as a whole, what can we learn from him? (Go one round and let your members share one lesson each.)

VIII. CONCLUSION

Caleb's earnest desire was to follow God whole-heartedly. He believed in God's almighty power and allowed God to use him throughout his life. He did things that only brave men could do because he remembered that the battle is the Lord's, not his. This is the kind of person God is looking for today.