

Inheritance

Our New Testament reading in Titus chapter 3 speaks of the believer's position as recipients of Grace: "... that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Tit. 3:7). There is then, a "hope of eternal life," which is bound up with receiving an inheritance. The Apostle again alludes to this in his epistle to the Galatians:

"... there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and **heirs according to the promise**" (Gal. 3:28-29).

Our hope, then, is in being made heirs according to the promises that were made to Abraham of old. Being unified as one body in Christ, the believers will inherit the promises made regarding Abraham's greater Seed – hence those promises are made to us also: "... Whereby are **given unto us** exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pet. 1:4).

Our Old Testament reading in Joshua chapter 14 describes how the Gentile Caleb was also promised in inheritance: great and precious promises had been made to him by Moses:

"Moses swore on that day, saying, Surely **the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance**, and thy children's for ever, because thou has wholly followed Yahweh my God" (Josh. 14:9)

And again, we find that his desire was granted:

"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 Yahweh, God of Israel" (Josh. 14:13-14).

This reference to the promise of Moses to Caleb, is back to Numbers chapter 13. Here, we read that Joshua and Caleb were amongst 12 spies that were sent to out to view the land, prior to Israel taking it. After searching out the land for a 40 day period, they returned to Moses, "and brought back Word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land ..." (Num. 13:26). The fruit that they brought forth comprised an extraordinarily large cluster of grapes, which was so great that it had to be carried by two, and also some pomegranates and figs (see verse 23).

Some of these principles seem to be alluded to in the New Testament, which describes: "the word of the Truth of the Gospel; which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and **bringeth forth fruit**, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in Truth" (Col. 1:6). Here, this Gentile ecclesia was said to bring forth fruit. Again, they heard and heeded the words of the Gospel, which Israel did not do.

As an aside, we read in the marginal rendering of Hebrews 4:2 which is speaking of these things, that “unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them, but the word preached did not profit them, because they were not united by faith to them that heard it” (Heb. 4:2). The positive words and report of Joshua and Caleb, was “the gospel preached” unto them – yet it went unheeded, they were not united by faith to those who believed it.

Returning back to Colossians: just as Israel – and particularly Caleb and Joshua - were promised an inheritance, we read that God: “hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col. 1:12), and just as Caleb was strengthened in his old age (Josh. 14:11), we read of the saints being “strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power” (vs 11). And finally, Colossians speaks of the saints being: “filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding ... increasing the knowledge of God” (vs 9-10).

Herein, we see the difference between knowledge and wisdom. All 12 spies had the same knowledge – they all saw the same things, and they all saw the adversary that had to be overcome. But the majority lacked faith, and therefore wisdom. Only 2 individuals had the faith to overcome: despite the promised fruitfulness and prosperity, 10 of the spies were disheartened by the scale of the enemy that would have to be defeated:

“... 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 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” (Num. 14:32-33).

Caleb was of a different spirit: “forty years old was I when Moses the servant of Yahweh sent me from Kadesh-barnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart ...” (Josh. 14:7). His word was a confident assurance in the power of his God to save: “... if so Yahweh will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as Yahweh said” (Josh. 14:12).

As a consequence of Caleb’s faith, “Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance” (Josh. 14:13-14). But why Hebron? Hebron was where Machpelah was, where the patriarchs were buried (Acts 7:15-16). They died in faith, not having seen the promises being realised, but beholding them afar off (cp. Heb. 11:13). This, we suggest, was the reason why Caleb went to Hebron when he was sent to spy out the land, and why it was subsequently given to him: he wanted to be associated with those who slept in faith, waiting for the coming resurrection.

Notice the words of Moses in connection with this point: “... Moses swore on that day, saying, Surely **the land whereon thy feet have trodden** shall be thine inheritance, and thy children’s for ever ...” (Josh. 14:9). This brings our attention back to Abraham, and the promises made to him: “Arise, **walk through the land** in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee ...” (Gen. 13:17). So it was that Abraham spent the rest of his life walking throughout the land, as a stranger and sojourner, waiting for the fulfilment that promise. This

was the faith of Caleb, who walked where Abraham ceased from his walk in life – and this is the hope of the believers in Christ. To them, Abraham is their Father also, for he is: “The father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham” (Rom. 4:12). We, as heirs according to the promise, must be like Caleb, and walk in the steps of Abraham’s faith.

Hebrews chapter 3 describes how that although the majority were excluded from entering in the land, “not all” perished in the wilderness:

“some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit **not all** that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief” (Heb. 3:16-19).

It is interesting to note that Caleb is categorised as amongst those “that came out of Egypt”, yet who did not provoke. The record in Exodus describes how that when Israel left Egypt, there went with them those who were not Hebrews: “and **a mixed multitude** went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle” (Exo. 12:38). It would appear then, that Caleb was one of this “mixed multitude” who came out of Egypt in the faith and anticipation of receiving the land of promise.

But ironically, it was this mixed multitude that brought Israel down:

“and the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers and the melons, and the leeks and the onions and the garlick: But now is our soul dried away: there is nothing at all, besides this manna before our eyes” (Num. 11:4-6).

Here is the irony, the mixed multitude lusted back to the flavours of Egypt – yet when presented with the abundance of fruitfulness of the land promised to them, they lacked the faith and courage needed to take and enjoy that fruitfulness. Only one of their number had that faith, and one would assume that it was he, and Joshua who were the two spies that brought the fruit up from Eschol.

DRIVING OUT THE ANAKIM

The hearts of Israel fainted, when they learned of the scale of the enemy. This is what was regarded as the evil report: “... there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants ...” (Num. 13:33). Caleb, however, was a man with a different spirit: “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” (Num. 13:30). Subsequently, it would appear that he overcame the Anakim single-handedly, for the record describes how that “Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmi, the children of Anak” (Josh. 15:14).

The principle that Caleb recognised, was the same as David before the giant Goliath. Their God was far greater than the idols of the heathen:

“then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of Yahweh of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied” (1 Sam. 17:45).

Here is the principle by which we should engage in our spiritual warfare. Speaking of how the faithful would overcome the spirit of antichrist, John wrote:

“Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because **greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world**. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error” (1 Jno. 4:4-6),

This is the spirit of Elisha of old: “Fear not: for **they that be with us are more than they that be with them**” (2 Kings 6:16). Despite being surrounded by the enemy on every side, Elisha was strong in faith, trusting that the Angelic host which was with him, would be greater than the horses and chariots of the adversary.

The reason for Caleb receiving his inheritance, is because of his trust in the power of his God to save: “Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenazite unto this day, **because that he wholly followed Yahweh, God of Israel**” (Josh. 14:14, see also verses 8-10). Here is the true spirit of holiness, to follow Yahweh entirely with every fibre of our being: “... to love [God] with **all** the heart, and with **all** the understanding, and with **all** the soul, and with **all** the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices” (Mrk. 12:32-33).

As we come to consider our own standing before the Lord, we have a powerful example in Caleb to follow. To us it is also said: “Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children” (Eph. 5:1). And we have another powerful example in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the slain lamb:

“for even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did not sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously ...” (1 Pet. 2:21-25).

We then, must follow the steps of Faith. We walk in the steps of Abraham, the steps of Caleb – and we follow the steps of Messiah. Let us therefore lift up our heads in faith and hope, knowing that we shall shortly receive our inheritance – but only if we wholly follow Yahweh, the God of Israel.

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