

Caleb, the Sons of Anak, and the Secret of the Lord

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Caleb — Faithfulness and Its Inheritance

Caleb's name in Hebrew means faithful. Born in sin as all of Adam's race, brought to new birth by the grace of God — and thereafter his life was to be marked by faithfulness. That is the meaning the name carries, and the meaning his life fulfilled. When the twelve spies came back from Canaan, ten brought a report that discouraged the people and turned them back from the land. Caleb and Joshua brought a good report: the land is exceedingly good, and the Lord will bring us in and give it to us. For that faithfulness — for wholly following the Lord his God — Caleb received a promise: the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance.

Joshua 14 shows Caleb at eighty-five years old coming to Joshua to claim that promise. He was forty when the spies went into the land and brought back the good report. Forty-five years had passed. And he stood before Joshua and said: as yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day Moses sent me — as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out and to come in. Give me this mountain.

The mountain he asked for was Hebron — and Hebron was the place where the sons of Anak lived, the very giants that had frightened the ten unfaithful spies. At eighty-five, Caleb went where the greatest challenge was and drove them out. He wholly followed the Lord his God. That is the character his name carries — faithful.

Hebron — Community and Communion

Hebron means community in Hebrew. It was the place where Abraham pitched his tent after separating from Lot, and there he built an altar to Jehovah. Genesis 13:18. It was a place of communion. Abraham was satisfied to have a tent as long as he had an altar — the tent was temporary, the altar was what mattered. And Numbers 13:22 inserts a remarkable note into the spies' survey: Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.

Zoan was the seat of Egyptian wisdom — the city where the intelligence and learning of Egypt was concentrated. What the Spirit is telling us is that communion with God was established a perfect period (seven being the number of completeness) before the wisdom of man ever gathered itself together. Abraham's altar came before Pharaoh's learning centre. Hebron before Zoan. Fellowship with God before all the ingenuity of the world.

For us, Hebron is what Colossians 3 describes: having our minds set on things above, where Christ is. It is communion with the Father — speaking with Him as a familiar friend, daily, not only in emergencies. The Lord Jesus said, I ascend to my Father and your Father. The Father has His delight in His Son, and He raises us up with that Son and invites us into that nearness. That is Hebron for us. And the three sons of Anak sit there, in the very place of communion, seeking to displace it.

The Three Sons of Anak — Three Occupations That Choke

Anak means long-necked, or ornamented — something that draws the eye, that calls attention to itself, that speaks of pride. His three sons represent the three things the Lord identified in the parable of the sower as what chokes the word: the cares of this life, the pleasures of this life, and riches. These are the poor man's danger, the young man's danger, and the successful man's danger.

Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai — the same three names appear in both Numbers 13 and Joshua 15. In the parable of the sower the Lord is specific: the cares of this world occupy the man who is struggling to make ends meet, so that the word is choked. It is easy to look back on seasons of raising a family and see how the constant pressure of providing can crowd out the word of God and the fellowship of the saints, not from wickedness but from absorption. The pleasures of this life occupy the young — there is nothing inherently wrong with pleasure, but occupation with it is the danger of youth. And the deceitfulness of riches occupies the successful man — Paul's word to Timothy about those who are rich in this world is not to be rich in this world itself, but to be rich toward God.

All three of these are legitimate things — making a living, enjoying life, acquiring wealth — turned into occupations that crowd out Hebron. That is Anak's sons sitting in the place of communion. And the answer is Caleb's answer: wholly follow the Lord, and at eighty-five years old go up and drive them out.

Kirjath-Sepher to Debir — The City of the Book Becoming the Word

Joshua 15 records Caleb offering his daughter Achsah to whoever would take Kirjath-Sepher and capture it. The name means city of the book. Othniel, the son of Kenaz, took it — and Kirjath-Sepher became Debir, which means the word. The Bible for many people is a city of the book. They have it, they may even read it, but it remains a city — a place to visit, not a word that lives and acts. The move from Kirjath-Sepher to Debir is the move from possession to reality. The word has to be taken, searched, meditated upon, until the city of the book becomes the living word.

Othniel means strength of God, and the name of the city — hunting, searching — describes the exercise that brings the city of the book into the living word. The Bereans searched the scriptures daily to see if what Paul said was true. They

heard preaching, and then they went to search. The slothful man goes out to hunt and brings in the game but does not roast it — it never becomes nourishment. The one who meditates in the word day and night brings it home and makes it food for the soul.

And Achsah his wife — anklet, adornment — speaks of the walk of the believer that adorns the doctrine of God. Titus 2 says of servants that they should adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. The word becomes the walk. The city of the book, captured and made the living word through diligent searching, produces a life that adorns what it has received.

Eli and Caleb — The Fear of the Lord and Its Absence

First Samuel 4 shows us the contrast with Caleb in the person of Eli. The news came to Eli that his two sons were dead — he heard it without reaction. Then came the words: the ark of God is taken. And Eli fell off his seat, broke his neck, and died. His heart trembled for the ark of God. There was something genuine in Eli's love for the things of the Lord.

And yet Eli is not in Hebrews 11. His sons were wicked beyond measure, committing abomination in the tabernacle itself. The man of God came to warn him in 1 Samuel 2. The Lord came to him through the young Samuel in 1 Samuel 3. Both times the message was the same: your sons are wicked and you have not restrained them; you have honoured your sons above Me. And Eli's response each time was minimal. For them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed. Eli's heart trembled for the ark. But he was not characterised by honouring God. He honoured his sons — not by worshipping them, but by failing to restrain them when God required him to.

The difference between Caleb and Eli is the fear of the Lord. Psalm 25:14 says: the secret of Jehovah is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant. Job 28:28 says: the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from

evil is understanding. Caleb had that fear — he wholly followed the Lord his God, at twenty-five, at forty, at eighty-five, to the end. Eli had warmth of heart for the ark and weakness of heart toward his sons, and died without being named among the faithful.

*The secret of Jehovah is with them that fear him, and he will show them
his covenant. — Psalm 25:14*

God's inheritance is real and it is ours. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given you. But possession requires exercise, diligence, the willingness at eighty-five years old to go where the sons of Anak are and drive them out. It requires the fear of the Lord — the reverence that honours Him, not in emergencies only, but in the quietness of daily communion at Hebron's altar. The secret of the Lord is not learned by those who merely know the right answers, but by those who fear Him and walk with Him. And that secret, when it comes, comes to the tent as well as the soul — it was upon Job's tabernacle, Psalm 91 says, upon the whole dwelling. Hebron is not only where we go privately. It is what is spread over everything we are and everything we do.