

Joshua Chapter 14

Joshua 14:1 "And these [are the countries] which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, distributed for inheritance to them."

Of which an exact account is given in the following chapters, particularly in (Joshua 15:1).

"Which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, distributed for an inheritance unto them": Namely, ten princes, one of each tribe, who, with Eleazar and Joshua, were appointed of the Lord by name to do this business, even seven years ago. Before their entrance into the land of Canaan (Num. 34:17).

“The land of Canaan”: The name for the land west of the Jordan.

We see all aspects of the lives of the Israelites represented here. Joshua was their representative, like Moses had been and was over all. The priests represented the church in all of this, and actually were under Joshua in matters like this. Then the one chosen from each tribe to separate the portion each tribe got was next. The order and the unity of the Israelites was shown in this. God had given explicit instructions to Joshua, and he had done exactly as God commanded him.

Joshua 14:2 "By lot [was] their inheritance, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes, and [for] the half tribe."

Every tribe had its part and portion assigned to it, by the casting of lots. Which was done to prevent any future quarrels, animosities and strifes among the tribes. The disposition being of the Lord. And to show the exact agreement between the lot and the divine predictions by Jacob and Moses. And to make it appear that the division of the land was not owing to the private combination of the above men, and their private settlement of it. But to the providence of God, the director of the lot. Their chief business was to see that the lot was executed in a faithful manner, and that every tribe had its allotment according to it. In this Canaan was a type of the heavenly inheritance, which the saints obtain by lot. In and through Christ, the antitypical Joshua (Eph. 1:11).

"As the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses" (Num. 26:55).

"For the nine tribes, and for the half tribe (see Joshua 13:7). The reason why this number of them is particularly mentioned follows.

God had instructed them to cast lots, to decide which tribe got each portion of land. They believed the wishes of God would be shown in this manner. The land on the other side of Jordan had already been given. This casting of lots is for the land west of the Jordan River, to be divided to the nine and a half tribes.

Joshua 14:3 "For Moses had given the inheritance of two tribes and a half tribe on the other side Jordan: but unto the Levites he gave none inheritance among them."

The two tribes of Gad and Reuben, and the half tribe of Manasseh, whose inheritance is described in (Joshua 13:8).

"But unto the Levites he gave none inheritance among them": This is frequently observed, that it might be taken notice of, to show the disinterestedness of Moses in this affair, Levi being his own tribe. And to recommend the care of the Levites to the other tribes, according to the provision God had made for them.

We remember the land on the eastern side of Jordan had already been given to Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh. The Levites inherited some cities to live in, and their living was of the offerings in the tabernacle.

Verses 4-5: Joseph's family received a double inheritance, with his sons "Manasseh" and "Ephraim" each heading a tribe (Gen. chapter 48). Jacob had declared these boys to be like sons to him (Gen. 48:5).

Joshua 14:4 "For the children of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim: therefore they gave no part unto the Levites in the land, save cities to dwell [in], with their suburbs for their cattle and for their substance."

For the birthright being forfeited by Reuben, was given to Joseph, who had the double portion, the privilege of the firstborn. By which means the number of the twelve tribes was kept up in the division of the land. Though that of Levi had no share in it. And which is also a reason why they had none, that Joseph's two sons might be reckoned two tribes.

"Therefore they gave no part unto the Levites in the land": To make way for the sons of Joseph to have the double portion.

"Save cities to dwell in": And that only, for they might not sell them. As other Israelites could theirs.

"With their suburbs, for their cattle, and for their substance": The Targum is, "for all their beasts, and for their cattle." That is, for convenient places to put them into, and for pasturage for them. Which Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret of their larger and lesser cattle, their herds and their flocks, and their oxen and sheep.

Since the tribe of Levi did not inherit land, there was an extra portion. God gave the tribe of Joseph, through his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh, two portions. Without Joseph, there would have been no tribes. He had kept them alive in Egypt during the famine. The Levites received a small portion of land around the cities they inherited, to have a place to graze their cattle.

Joshua 14:5 "As the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did, and they divided the land."

“So the children of Israel did”: They obeyed in some things, but not in all (see note on 13:1-2).

The commandment had been given to Moses, before he died. Moses had passed this information on to Joshua. Joshua did not question this. He did just as he had been commanded of God through Moses.

Joshua 14:6 "Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the LORD said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea."

“Caleb” was chosen by Moses as Judah’s representative to evaluate the land of Canaan (Num. 13:6). Among the 12 spies only he and Joshua returned with a favorable report. Accordingly, only Caleb and Joshua were permitted to survive (verse 38), because they “followed the Lord” (Num. 32:12; Deut. 1:36; Joshua 14:9). Still living for God at the age of 85, he asked for and received the city of Hebron as his special inheritance based on the promise of God and Moses (verses 6-14). He drove out from there the three sons of Anak (the giants of Num. 13:33, who had terrorized the Israelites), and later gave up Hebron to the Levites and lived in the suburbs (15:13-19; 21:12-13; Num. 13:6; 13:30 – 14:24).

Caleb was not a full-blood Israelite. His father, Jephunneh, was a “Kenizzite” (Num. 13:6; 14:30). The Kenizzites were one of the many tribes to be driven out of the land. Somehow Caleb and his family ended up in Egypt with the Israelites and became part of the Israelite community. As Caleb came to understand the history of God’s people, he fell in love with the God they served and devoted his life to Him.

Caleb was a Kenezite. He and Joshua were the only two, of the twelve spies that searched the Promised Land, that were allowed to see the Promised Land.

Joshua 14:7 "Forty years old [was] I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land; and I brought him word again as [it was] in mine heart."

Not he alone, but eleven more with him, one out of every tribe. His age he mentions, and of which, or near it, it is highly probable the rest of the spies were. To show that he and they were in the prime of their days. Both as to bodily strength and intellectual capacity, which were requisite for such service as to spy out the land. Of what quality the land and its inhabitants were. And Moses he calls the servant of the Lord, because it was by the order and appointment of God, signified to Moses, that this was done. And the place from whence they were sent forth is named, which ascertains what that Kadesh was. Where Israel was encamped when the spies were sent (Num. 13:26).

"And I brought him word again, as it was in mine heart": That is, he gave to Moses upon his return a sincere, honest and faithful representation of the land. And its inhabitants, as it appeared to him.

This is explaining that Caleb knew in his heart they could take the Promised Land, but he was outnumbered. After this search of the Promised Land, they wandered another 38 years in the wilderness before coming back to enter the Promised Land. This means at that time, Caleb would have been 78 years old. Joshua's battles, with the enemy, have lasted about 7 years at this time. This means he is 85 years old approximately, when this is written.

Joshua 14:8 "Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God."

Nearly every time Caleb is mentioned in Scripture, he is described as having "wholly followed the Lord". Because Caleb exhibited an obedient spirit and consistent faith even when those around him failed to believe God's promises (Num. 13:26 – 14:10), God promised that he would enter the Promised Land (Num. 14:24).

This is an explanation of Caleb's position in the matter of the searching out the Promised Land. Caleb believed that nothing was too strong for God. He believed with God leading the way, they could take the Promised Land. The other ten (not including Joshua), thought the people of Canaan were too strong for them to take. The ten doubters convinced the Israelites they could not take the Promised Land. Caleb was totally obedient to God, even in the face of all the other's doubt.

Verses 6-9: This passage reviews what is also recounted (in Numbers chapters 13 and 14). This includes a celebration of God's faithfulness (verses 7-11), and Caleb's specific inheritance (verses 12-15). Later, he conquered the area (15:13-14), and conferred blessing on Othniel and his daughter (15:15-19).

Joshua 14:9 "And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God."

Or declared the oath of the Lord. For it was the Lord that sware to what follows (see Deut. 1:34).

"Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever": Not the whole land of Canaan, nor all the parts of it Caleb travelled through, but particularly Hebron. Which though not expressly mentioned in the aforesaid oath, yet was understood and known to be the meaning of it. And which Joshua by the following grant owned, and it is elsewhere expressly affirmed (Judges 1:20). And it is remarked, that it is not said "they", but "he" came to Hebron (Num. 13:22). That is Caleb, so that it was literally true that his feet had trodden there. Now the reason of this oath, and the inheritance assured by it to Caleb, was:

"Because thou hast wholly followed the Lord thy God": In all his ways, and with full purpose of heart. And particularly had acted the upright and faithful part in the report he made of the good land (see note on Num. 14:24).

Numbers 14:22-24 "Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice;" "Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it:" "But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land where into he went; and his seed shall possess it."

Joshua 14:10 "And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while [the children of] Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I [am] this day fourscore and five years old."

"Fourscore and five years old": Given (1) that Caleb was 40 at Kadesh-barnea and (2) that the Israelites had wandered in the wilderness 38 years, then the conquering of the Land took 7 years (ca. 1405 – 1398 B.C.), Caleb was now 85 years old.

We see a confirmation that the time this is being spoken, Caleb is 85 years old. God had not let Caleb die with the doubters in the wilderness, but kept His Word and brought Caleb to the land of promise.

Joshua 14:11 "As yet I [am as] strong this day as [I was] in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength [was] then, even so [is] my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in."

To spy the land, forty-five years ago. Suggesting that he was as sound in his mind, understanding, judgment and memory, and as hale, strong, and robust in his body now, as he had been so long ago. Which was a wonderful instance of the care of divine Providence over him in upholding him in life, and continuing him in vigor and health at such an age, when the carcasses of so many thousands had pined away and fell in the wilderness.

"As my strength was then, even so is my strength now for war": He had the same strength of body and courage of mind to engage in warlike enterprises as he had so many years ago. And this he mentions, to prevent any objection Joshua might make to the giving of Hebron to him. Since being inhabited by giants, it required a large share of strength and courage to attempt the conquest of it. But Caleb had strength;

"Both to go out, and to come in": To do any civil business, to preside over his tribe, or to govern any city, and its appendages, that should be put into his hands.

Caleb has just as much strength to do God's will at 85, as he did at 40. He is saying he can protect the land that God gives him, because God is with him. He should be allowed to choose, because he had been faithful to God.

Verses 12-15: When Caleb came before Joshua to request his portion in the land, he specifically asked for the area known as “Hebron”, where the “Anakim” lived, so he could be the one to drive out these giants. This was also a sacred place in Canaan because the cave of Machpelah was there, the burial place of Sarah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Rebekah (Gen. 23:19; 25:9; 49:29-31; 50:13). It was the only sacred burial site in the land of Canaan at this time.

Based on His promise (verse 9), God granted Caleb’s desire for Hebron because of his faithfulness to believe that God would give the Land to the Israelites as He promised.

Joshua 14:12 "Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims [were] there, and [that] the cities [were] great [and] fenced: if so be the LORD [will be] with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said."

The mountainous part of the country, the hill country of Judea, in which Hebron, Debir, and other cities were. For it was not one particular city only that Caleb requested, but a large tract of ground.

"For thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced": That the giants, called Anakims, dwelt in the mountainous country, and their cities, Hebron, Debir, and Anab, were very large, and well-fortified. This Joshua heard at the time the spies were sent into the land, he being one of them. And this he heard, not from the report of the spies, but from the people of the country. And therefore, must know that to conquer these men, and subdue their cities, was an arduous undertaking. But since he had strength and courage, he hoped his request would be granted.

"If so be the Lord will be with me": Which he spake not as doubting of his presence and power to be with him, and assist him. But as placing his confidence therein, and, distrusting his own power and ability, having no dependence on that. But believing that the Lord, or, as the Targum, the Word of the Lord, would be with him for his help. Then, says Caleb:

"I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said": That is, to drive the Anakims out of their cities, or out of the mountains. The caves and dens there, to which they betook themselves, since the taking of Hebron, Debir, and Anab, by Joshua (Joshua 11:22). And he relied upon the promise of God to enable him to do this. And not upon his natural strength and courage, or the number and prowess of the warlike tribe of Judah, of which he was prince.

The Anakims were larger people than the Israelites. Caleb was not afraid of them however. He placed his trust in God, not in the flesh of men. This is the area around Hebron. It is made up of hills and valleys. He would be coming against one of the strongest enemies they would face, but he was not afraid because he knew the LORD was with him. His confidence lay not in himself, but in the LORD. He had been promised the land, and he wanted this specific land.

Joshua 14:13 "And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance."

By granting him his request, congratulating him upon it. And praying for and wishing him success in his attempt to drive out the giants, and possess their country.

"And gave unto Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, Hebron for an inheritance": Being satisfied of the justness of his suit, of its being the will of God, and the order of Moses. That he should have this for an inheritance, which he had heard himself, had knowledge of, and well-remembered. This is to be understood not of the city of Hebron itself, for that was given to the Levites, and was a city of refuge. But the country round about in the fields and villages annexed to it, as appears from (Joshua 21:12).

Joshua remembered the specifics of all of this, because he and Caleb were the two spies who brought back the good report. He did as Caleb requested, because he knew it was right.

Joshua 14:14 "Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel."

In the incident of sending the spies into Canaan, faithful Caleb had been the only one to support Joshua's conviction that God would give the land to Israel (Num. 14:6-10). Accordingly, when he asks for "Hebron" as the portion of his inheritance, it is readily granted (compare verse 9 with Num. 14:24). Caleb's confidence is still the same; by God's help the Canaanites will be driven out (compare verses 10-12; 15:13-14; Judges 1:20). Caleb's spiritual fiber is seen further in that he later relinquished Hebron to the control of the Levites (21:11-13).

We see that closely following the will of the LORD, brings rewards. He is given the parcel of land he desires, because of his great faithfulness. We Christians can take a lesson from this. God blesses those who remain faithful to do His will.

Joshua 14:15 "And the name of Hebron before [was] Kirjath-arba; [which Arba was] a great man among the Anakims. And the land had rest from war."

"Anakim" (see 15:13; see note on 11:21).

According to Jerom, it had its name of Hebron from a son or grandson of Caleb of that name (1 Chron. 2:42). And if so, then it is here, and in some other places, so called by anticipation. Kirjath-arba may be rendered "the city of the four"; and had its name, as some think, from the four couples buried there, or near it. Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah. Or from four eminent persons, who formerly dwelt there, Aner, Eshcol, Mamre, and Abraham. Or rather from four persons that more lately dwelt there, Anak and his three sons, Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai. Or Arba is the name of some great man, to whom this city belonged. And so was called the city of Arba, which is the sense of our version, as appears by the following supplement.

"Which Arba was a great man among the Anakims": Both in stature and in dignity, and in authority. Which some take to be Anak himself, the father of the Anakims.

"And the land had rest from war": As is observed in (Joshua 11:23). After Joshua had finished his conquest. And here again it is remarked just before the division of the land, as being now a proper time for it.

Hebron had possibly, been the original name of this place. It had been renamed for the wicked giant Arba. Now Caleb will change the name back to Hebron, as it was in the beginning. This city was known as the city of four, because it is believed Adam, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were buried there. Caleb received the most important city by his request. Christianity is a way of life. We obey the commands of our Lord and He blesses us.

Joshua Chapter 14 Questions

1. Who did the dividing of the land?
2. Who was Joshua's father?
3. What is represented in verse 1?
4. How was their land decided?
5. Which land was decided this way?
6. Who had given the land on the east side of Jordan to the two and a half tribes?
7. Who were the two and a half tribes by name?
8. What did the Levites inherit?
9. The living of the Levite came from the _____ in the _____.
10. Who were the two sons that inherited for the tribe of Joseph?
11. Who had the LORD given the commandment about the separation of the land?
12. Caleb was a _____.
13. Who were the only two, of the twelve spies, who were allowed to see the Promised Land?
14. How old was Caleb, when they searched the Promised Land the first time?
15. How much longer did they wander in the wilderness, after the incident at Kadesh-barnea?
16. Approximately, how long did Joshua lead the battles, before they actually separated the land?

17. What had the ten spies, who brought the evil report, do to the people?
18. What happened to the ten doubting spies?
19. What had Moses sworn to Caleb on that day?
20. Read aloud Numbers 14:22-24.
21. How old is Caleb at this writing?
22. What was Caleb's physical condition at this time?
23. Who does Caleb place his faith in?
24. Who were the people in the area of Hebron that Caleb would have to defeat?
25. What city did Joshua give Caleb for an inheritance?
26. Why had Hebron been changed to Kirjath-arba?
27. The city of Hebron was known as the city of _____.
28. Who was believed buried at Hebron?
29. Christianity is a way of _____.
30. We obey the commands of our Lord, and He _____ us.