

Joshua 14:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

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 the LORD God of Israel.

Caleb's reward culminates a 45-year saga of faithfulness (14:7-10). Caleb, along with Joshua, had stood against the ten fearful spies (Numbers 13-14), urging Israel to trust God and enter Canaan. While that generation died in the wilderness, Caleb preserved the promise that he would inherit the land his feet had trodden (Deuteronomy 1:36). Now, at age 85, Caleb claims his inheritance, demonstrating that God's promises, though delayed, never fail. The phrase "Joshua blessed him" indicates more than well-wishing—the Hebrew *barak* (ברך) conveys pronouncing covenant blessing and confirming divine favor.

Caleb's defining characteristic appears twice: "wholly followed the LORD" (מִלְאָא אֶחָדָי יְהוָה, literally "filled [to follow] after the LORD"). This idiom describes complete, unreserved devotion without divided loyalties. Caleb's faith never wavered across 45 years—through wilderness wandering, initial conquest, and now as an old man requesting the most challenging territory (inhabited by formidable Anakim, 14:12). This exemplifies persevering faith that trusts God from beginning to end, never presuming on past faithfulness but continually following forward.

The designation "Kenezite" indicates Caleb descended from Kenaz, likely an Edomite clan (Genesis 36:11, 15) incorporated into Judah. This makes Caleb a non-Israelite by blood who became exemplary Israelite by faith—a beautiful picture of how covenant inclusion transcends ethnicity. Reformed theology emphasizes that God's people are defined by faith, not genetics (Romans 2:28-29; 9:6-8; Galatians 3:7-9). Caleb's ethnicity as Kenezite and his exemplary faithfulness foreshadow the gospel's inclusion of Gentiles into Abraham's family through faith in Christ.

Historical Context

Hebron held immense patriarchal significance. Originally called Kiriath-arba ("city of Arba," 14:15), it was where Abraham settled (Genesis 13:18), where Sarah died and Abraham purchased the Machpelah cave as family burial site (Genesis 23), and where Isaac and Jacob also lived. The patriarchs and matriarchs—Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, Leah—were buried there (Genesis 49:29-32). By requesting Hebron, Caleb chose land saturated with covenant history, connecting his inheritance to the patriarchal promises.

Hebron's conquest required defeating the Anakim, the giants who had so terrified the ten spies 45 years earlier (Numbers 13:33). Caleb's willingness to take on this challenge at age 85 demonstrates remarkable faith and vigor. His self-assessment—"as yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me" (14:11)—shows unusual vitality, perhaps divinely sustained for this purpose. Caleb's victory over the Anakim proved that the fears that had paralyzed Israel 45 years earlier were faithless; with God, the giants were conquerable.

Later history confirms Hebron's importance. David was anointed king in Hebron and reigned there seven years before establishing Jerusalem as capital (2 Samuel 2:1-4; 5:1-5). The city became a Levitical city (Joshua 21:11-12) and city of refuge (Joshua 20:7), though Caleb retained the surrounding fields and villages (21:12). Hebron's continuing significance throughout biblical history validates Caleb's wise choice—he selected inheritance with maximum spiritual and strategic value.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 – Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What does Caleb's 45-year wait for God's promise teach about patience and perseverance in faith when fulfillment seems delayed?
2. How does Caleb's willingness at age 85 to take on difficult challenges (the Anakim) challenge our tendency to coast spiritually as we age?
3. In what ways does Caleb's inclusion as a Kenezite prefigure the gospel's welcome to all who, regardless of ethnicity, follow the LORD wholeheartedly?

Interlinear Text

בָּן	לְכָל	בְּ	סִבְרָה	וְ	אֶת	תֵּת	וְ	יְהוֹשֻׁעַ	וְ	יְבָרֶךְ	הָ
blessed	And Joshua	him and gave		H853	Hebron	unto Caleb	the son				
H1288	H3091	H5414			H2275	H3612	H1121				

Additional Cross-References

Judges 1:20 (Parallel theme): And they gave Hebron unto Caleb, as Moses said: and he expelled thence the three sons of Anak.

Joshua 22:6 (Blessing): So Joshua blessed them, and sent them away: and they went unto their tents.

Joshua 15:13 (Parallel theme): And unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a part among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, even the city of Arba the father of Anak, which city is Hebron.

