

The Inheritance of Caleb

Introduction

a. objectives

1. subject – Joshua describes the process of allocating Canaan and allots an inheritance to Caleb
2. aim – To cause us to understand our inheritance in Christ as the fulfillment of the promises of God
3. passage – Joshua 14:1-15

b. outline

1. The Inheritance of Canaan (Joshua 14:1-5)
2. The Inheritance of Caleb (Joshua 14:6-15)
3. The Inheritance of Christ

c. opening

1. the **location** of **chap. 14**
 - a. in **chap. 13**, Joshua outlined the allocation of the land E of the Jordan (**i.e.** the Transjordan)
 1. **i.e.** the land settled by Reuben, Gad, and E Manasseh as per the promise made by Moses
 - b. in **chaps. 15-19**, Joshua will summarize the allocation of Canaan-proper, W of the Jordan
 1. **i.e.** the land promised to Abraham, where the *remaining* 9½ tribes are to settle
 2. **i.e.** each tribe *in order* (**see below**) will be given a territory to occupy and settle
 - c. (**first**) **chap. 14** begins this process ...
2. the **substance** of **chap. 14**
 - a. the chapter consists of two (2) pericopes (**related to one another**):
 1. **vv. 1-5** are a summary of *how* Canaan-proper was to be allocated (reminding the reader of the specific *methodology* and *intentions* of this allocation)
 2. **vv. 6-15** are a rendition of a *special (personal) allocation* made *first*, before any of the methods and intentions of **vv. 1-5** are put into action
 - b. the keyword of the chapter is “*inheritance(s)*” (**vv. 1, 2, 3 [x2], 9, 13, 14**)
 1. **principle: when a word or phrase appears multiple times (in close succession) in a passage of Scripture, it is probably the theme of the passage (or its focus)**
 - a. **note:** the word was also used **x13** in **chap. 13** to describe the allocation of the Transjordan
 2. it is a word meaning: “that which is handed down *by promise* to a succeeding generation”
 - a. **i.e.** the giving of that which is *valuable* to your heirs; a *gift* to those you have *chosen* to bless
 3. **ITC:** the giving *by Yahweh* of this land *bequeathed originally* to Abraham, to be passed *by God* down to Abraham’s heirs (**i.e.** the people traced to him through Isaac and Jacob)
 - a. the Transjordan was an “inheritance” given *by Moses*, although God *honored* it as *his own*
 4. **LOW:** something to which the Israelites *now* have legal ownership passed to them through the process of inheritance – what was *originally* Abraham’s *now* belongs to them, and it is divided up in accordance with the wishes of the *original owner*

I. The Inheritance of Canaan (Joshua 14:1-5)

Content

a. the **method** of the allotment of the inheritance of the land

1. **v. 1** = the inheritances of the land will be made by Eleazar, Joshua, and the tribal heads
 - a. the “picture” of this verse is one of a *legal dispensation* of what has been bequeathed (**note order**)
 - b. Eleazar (the high priest, the son of Aaron [deceased]) represents *God* in this inheritance process
 - c. the tribal heads (**i.e.** “*the heads of the father’s houses of the tribes*”) represent *the people*
 - d. Joshua will act as the *mediator* – he stands “between” the two parties, assuring that the allocation *fairly represents* the requirements and promises of both
 1. (**again**) a picture of Joshua as a *foreshadowing* of the Christ, the *ultimate mediator* between God and the elect in the inheritances to be “passed down” from the Father to them
2. **v. 2** = the allocation of Canaan to the 9½ W tribes was to be done “*by lot*”
 - a. the process is described “*as the Lord had commanded*” in **Num. 26:52-56; 33:50-54; 34:13-15**
 1. larger tribes (by number) were to be given large territories; smaller tribes, small territories
 2. the boundaries of Canaan are described *specifically* in **Num. 34:1-12 (map to follow)**, although the areas allocated to each tribe *per se* was not defined at that point (**see below**)

- b. the casting of lots was for two (2) purposes:
 - 1. it would protect Israel's leaders (or Eleazar or Joshua) from any suspicion of favoritism, in giving allotments to their "personal" tribes (**i.e.** the lot was cast to select not only *the order of the allotment*, but also *where that allotment was to be made*)
 - 2. it would guarantee divine oversight, in that the casting of lots was understood to be sovereignly governed by God, through it determining the outcome (**Prov. 16:33**)
"The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD."
 - a. by definition: *if* all things are ordained by God, *then* the outcome of casting a lot will be determined by that sovereign ordination (**i.e.** there is nothing "random" in a universe where God sovereignly governs all things to the purposes of his divine decree; **contra synergism**)
 - 1. **e.g.** even in computer systems, random numbers are never "random"
 - 2. ancient cultures (**see Acts 1:24ff**) understood casting of lots to be under the divine "will"
 - b. thus, casting of lots (here) would mean that God was "participating" in the process by ordering the fall of the lots, thus determining where each tribe would wind up
- c. **question:** if it was, *in fact*, God determining where each tribe would wind up, *why* doesn't he just *reveal* the final location of each tribe and their boundaries *directly to Eleazar and Joshua*?
 - 1. **answer: no one knows!** – it would seem *to us* more reasonable for God to do it by *direct revelation*, but (in fact!) there is no explanation given as to why the use of lots was ordained
 - a. true, lots *seems* to remove "tribal favoritism," but that is *also* accomplished by revelation
 - b. and, there has *already been* a significant amount of "tribal favoritism" (**e.g.** the Levites)
 - 2. **truth: God is inscrutable** = God's ways are so far above that of the creature that his choices are *beyond our ability to know or understand* – his ways are *beyond our ability to rationally figure them out on our own* (**Romans 11:34 cf. Job 38:1-4**)
"For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor? ... Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? ... Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?"
 - a. faith is to *believe* what he has revealed, and leave the rest to his sovereign purposes
 - b. **we are not God and he does not answer to us as to how or why he does anything**
- 3. **v. 3** = the allocation of Canaan *will not* include the tribes of Reuben or Gad (or E Manasseh)
 - a. they have already received their inheritance in the Transjordan, and are not a part of *this* allotment
 - b. and (**again**), the Levites were not allocated land in the Transjordan *although many would be sprinkled amongst the Israelites living over there*
- 4. **v. 4a** = the allocation of Canaan *will* include two (2) portions for Joseph (as blessed by Jacob)
 - a. the people descended from Joseph would be "divided" up in Canaan between those born to Ephraim and those born to Manasseh (with ½ of Manasseh already settled in the Transjordan)
 - b. **IOW:** no *specific* allotment will be made for Joseph, but (rather) for his two sons instead
- 5. **v. 4b** = the allocation of Canaan *will not* include any specific territory for the Levites
 - a. (**again**) the Levites will be allocated sanctuary cities throughout the land and will occupy space around the various city-states of the Israelites (as discussed in **chap. 13**)
- 6. **v. 5** = the allocation of Canaan was carried out by the Israelites, per the instructions of the Lord
 - a. **note:** the territory *occupied* by Israel was *far less* than the territory *promised* by God (initially)
 - b. **i.e.** although the tribes will each get territory for their own, less than ½ of that space was taken up by the Israelites *at first* – the full extent of the *promised* land will be occupied *only* by David

II. The Inheritance of Caleb (Joshua 14:6-15)

Content

a. the history of Caleb

- 1. after Sinai (under the Negev), Moses sends 12 *tribal* spies into the land (**Num. 13:1-24**)
 - a. to determine the nature of the natives (**v. 18**) and the state of the land itself (**v. 19**)
 - b. **the goal:** to show God is *faithful* and the land he is leading them to is *fruitful* (**i.e.** a test of faith)
- 2. Caleb and Joshua are a part of that group of spies, which brings back a report (**Num. 13:25-33**)
 - a. the spies *admit* that land is prosperous, but they *also* fear the natives (**i.e. Anakim**) are too strong
 - b. the report causes the Israelites to "balk" at going in, **even over Caleb's specific dissent** (**v. 30**)
- 3. **the result:** God curses that generation of Israelites to perish in the wilderness, **but ...**
 - a. he specifically **blesses** Caleb for his faithfulness and promises him an inheritance (**Num. 14:24**)
 - b. it is **here** that Caleb now receives his inheritance ... the *first allotment* of the promised land belongs to the "only" faithful spy (other than Joshua; **i.e.** the only survivors of that generation)

b. the inheritance of Caleb

- 1. Caleb comes to Joshua and *lays claim* to his inheritance (**vv. 6-12**)
 - a. he reminds Joshua of *his* faithfulness to the Lord in the incident of the spies (at the age of 40)

The Inheritance of Caleb

- b. he reminds Joshua of the *promise* made to him (an inheritance of land for his family)
- c. he reminds Joshua that he is still alive *45 years later*, and still physically strong (*i.e.* by God's will)
- d. he reminds Joshua of the *specific territory* promised to him: the land of the **Anakim** in the hill country around Hebron, with all of its fortified cities
 1. so ... Caleb's inheritance would be the land of the original natives *that had scared the spies*
 2. **note:** Joshua had dislodged *some* of the Anakim during the conquests of N Canaan (**11:21ff**)
 3. Caleb believes that the Lord would "*be with [him]*" (**v. 12b**) as he drives out the *remaining* Anakim from his inheritance – he would enter the land *by faith* (as he wanted the spies to do) and trust the Lord to finish the work of driving out the remaining enemies
2. Joshua blesses Caleb and gives him the land of Hebron (**vv. 13-15**)
 - a. territory formerly known as Kiriath-arba (*i.e.* the city of Arba = *greatest man among the Anakim*)
 - b. "*the land had rest from war*" (**v. 15b**) = the *main* conquest of this territory would now be given to Caleb to complete, *personally* (*i.e.* it would no longer be a part of the *larger* actions of Israel)

III. The Inheritance of Christ

Content

a. the inheritance we have in Christ

1. like Caleb, those who trust in *Christ* (*i.e.* who are willing to "enter in" to his Promised Land, *by faith*) also stand to receive an inheritance from God (**Eph. 1:11-14**)

"In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory."
2. this inheritance awaits those who have the "courage" to take it – who possess the *fortitude* to face the enemies (*i.e.* temptation, opposition, persecution, laziness, etc.) and *live for* it (**Matt. 11:12**)

"From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence [or: has come violently, breaking in upon the world], and the violent take it by force."

 - a. *i.e.* entry into the inheritance of God is not easy, and requires the force of will and perseverance
3. this inheritance is a promise of everything given by God the Father to the Son – that the elect will receive **the fullness of Christ himself**, and all that he has secured in eternity (**1 Peter 1:3-5**)

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

 - a. *i.e.* the very presence of God himself *in the risen Christ Jesus*, an eternity of him
 - b. (**not**) a "materialistic" set of rewards ... but *true life* in the presence of God, to enjoy *him* forever as our greatest "treasure", to experience *the glory of God* in every aspect of ourselves as creatures made in his image, to truly *know God* and all of what he is *forevermore*
4. **the inheritance we have waiting for us is also inscrutable** – the inheritance that God has for us in Christ is so far above our imagination **we cannot begin to fathom it** (**1 Cor. 2:9-10**)

"... no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him—these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit."

 - a. **God has given us a "glimpse" of it in the revelation of the Spirit, yet what awaits those who love God and follow Christ in faith is simply too wonderful to imagine, and too wonderful to abandon to the trifles of this world!**