

Studies in the Book of Joshua
Lesson 10 - Joshua 13:1-17:18
The Abundant Life
Inheritances

Throughout the conquest of Canaan, Gilgal had been the center of operations for Israel. Later, Joshua moved the camp and the tabernacle to a more central location at Shiloh.

We don't know Joshua's exact age at this time in Israel's history, although he could well have been 100. Caleb was 85, and it's likely that Joshua was the older of the two. Joshua lived to be 110, and the events described in the last half of the book could well have taken over ten years.

Caleb might have been eighty-five years old, but he didn't look for an easy task, suited to an "old man." He asked Joshua for mountains to climb and giants to conquer! His strength was in the Lord, and he knew that God would never fail him. The secret of Caleb's life is found in a phrase that's repeated six times in Scripture: *"he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel."*

In Joshua 15, we see Caleb providing for the next generation. Some of Caleb's daring faith rubbed off on his son-in-law Othniel, who later became a judge in the land. Caleb's faith also touched his daughter, for she had the faith to ask her father for a field and then for springs of water to irrigate the land. Caleb's example of faith was more valuable to his family than the property he claimed for them.

Ephraim and Manasseh were the sons of Joseph, whom Jacob "adopted" and especially blessed. Since the tribe of Levi wasn't given any territory, these two tribes made up the difference so that there were still twelve tribes in Israel. The birth order was "Manasseh and Ephraim," but Jacob reversed it. God rejects our first birth and gives us a second birth. He accepted Abel and rejected Cain; He rejected Ishmael and accepted Isaac, Abraham's second-born son; He rejected Esau and accepted Jacob.

Joshua had a problem with the children of Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh), who complained because the Lord didn't give them enough room! You can detect their pride as they told Joshua what a "great people" they were. After all, didn't Jacob personally adopt and especially bless them? And hadn't they multiplied in a great way? And wasn't Joshua from the tribe of Ephraim? They were a special people who deserved special treatment.

Joshua told his brethren that, if they were such a great people, now was their opportunity to prove it! Let them do what Caleb did and defeat the giants and claim the mountains! It's worth noting that the people of Ephraim and Manasseh seemed to be given to criticism and pride. They not only created problems for Joshua but also for Gideon, Jephthah, and even David.

Read Joshua 13:1-17:18. Pray and answer the following questions:

1. Why do you think the author includes so much detail about which land was allotted to each tribe? (See 1:6, 11:23, 21:43-45)
2. Why do you think the dividing of the land was so important to the Jewish people?
3. Read Psalm 16:5-6. What is your lot, portion and inheritance? How does knowing this affect your priorities and actions?
4. Who was Caleb? What and why was a special inheritance given to him? (See 14:6-12)
5. What did Caleb have to do to take the city?

6. What did he offer to the man who would capture Debir?

7. What request did Caleb's daughter make of him? (See 15:18-19)

8. What mistake did they commit regarding the Canaanites? (See 16:10)

9. What complaint was raised by some descendants of Joseph? (See 17:14-16)

10. How did Joshua respond to them? (See 17:17-18)

11. Are you in any way like the tribes of Joseph? If so how? (See 17:14)

Caleb **“Give Me This Mountain”**

Caleb is a case study in uncompromising faithfulness and seasoned courage. When the entire nation wanted to quit its journey at Kadesh Barnea and return to Egypt, he and Joshua stood against them, convinced that God would deliver on His promise to give them the land. As the older man, Caleb was probably the spokesperson, even though Joshua became the successor to Moses.

As a result of his courageous stand for God, Caleb not only entered Canaan but helped Moses divide the land, and led his people, Judah, in the possession of their territory. God seemed to prolong Caleb's life as a reminder to a younger generation that He fulfills His word.

Convinced of that truth, 85 year old Caleb could be heard to cry, "*Give me this mountain!*" as he looked upon Hebron. Once his request was granted, he boldly drove out the Anakim who lived there. In the end, Caleb's persevering faith won out over both the size of his enemies and the fear of his friends.

Commentary provided by Warren Wiersbe and others