

# CHAPTER 14

Here is,

- I. The general method that was taken in dividing the land (v. 1-5).
- II. The demand Caleb made of Hebron, as his by promise, and therefore not to be put into the lot with the rest (v. 6-12). And Joshua's grant of that demand (v. 13-15). This was done at Gilgal, which was as yet their head-quarters.

## <0640>JOSHUA 14:1-5

### THE DISTRIBUTION OF CANAAN

The historian, having in the foregoing chapter given an account of the disposal of the countries on the other side Jordan, now comes to tell us what they did with the countries in the land of Canaan. They were not conquered to be left desert, *a habitation for dragons, and a court for owls*, <23413>Isaiah 34:13. No, the Israelites that had hitherto been closely encamped in a body, and the greatest part of them such as never knew any other way of living, must now disperse themselves to replenish these new conquests. It is said of the earth, *God created it not in vain; he formed it to be inhabited*, <23518>Isaiah 45:18. Canaan would have been subdued in vain if it had not been inhabited. Yet every man might not go and settle where he pleased, but as there seems to have been in the days of Peleg an orderly and regular division of the habitable earth among the sons of Noah (<01025>Genesis 10:25, 32), so there was now such a division of the land of Canaan among the sons of Jacob. God had given Moses directions how this distribution should be made, and those directions are here punctually observed. See <02653>Numbers 26:53, etc.

I. The managers of this great affair were Joshua the chief magistrate, Eleazar the chief priest, and ten princes, one of each of the tribes that were now to have their inheritance, whom God himself had nominated (<06417>Numbers 34:17, etc.) some years before; and, it should seem, they were all now in being, and attended this service, that every tribe, having a

representative of its own, might be satisfied that there was fair dealing, and might the more contentedly sit down by its lot.

**II.** The tribes among whom this dividend was to be made were nine and a half.

**1.** Not the two and a half that were already seated (v. 3), though perhaps now that they saw what a good land Canaan was, and how effectually it was subdued, they might some of them repent their choice, and wish they had now been to have their lot with their brethren, upon which condition they would gladly have given up what they had on the other side Jordan; but it could not be admitted: they had made their election without power of revocation, and so must their doom be; they themselves have decided it, and they must adhere to their choice.

**2.** Not the tribe of Levi; this was to be otherwise provided for. God had distinguished them from, and dignified them above, the other tribes, and they must not now mingle themselves with them, nor cast in their lot among them, for this would entangle them in the affairs of this life, which would not consist with a due attendance on their sacred function. But,

**3.** Joseph made two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim, pursuant to Jacob's adoption of Joseph's two sons, and so the number of the tribes was kept up to twelve, though Levi was taken out, which is intimated here (v. 4): *The children of Joseph were two tribes, therefore they gave no part to Levi, they being twelve without them.*

**III.** The rule by which they went was the lot, v. 2. *The disposal* of that is *of the Lord*, <sup><163></sup>Proverbs 16:33. It was here used in an affair of weight, and which could not otherwise be accommodated to universal satisfaction, and it was used in a solemn religious manner as an appeal to God, by consent of parties. In dividing by lot,

**1.** They referred themselves to God, and to his wisdom and sovereignty, believing him fitter to determine for them than they for themselves.

<sup><171></sup>Psalm 47:4, *He shall choose our inheritance for us.*

**2.** They professed a willingness to abide by the determination of it; for every man must take what is his lot, and make the best of it. In allusion to this we are said to *obtain an inheritance in Christ* (<sup><111></sup>Ephesians 1:11), *eklerothemen* — *we have obtained it by lot*, so the word signified; for it is

obtained by a divine designation. Christ, our Joshua, gives eternal life to *as many as were given him*, <sup><B17D></sup>John 17:2.

## <sup><B4D></sup>JOSHUA 14:6-15

### CALEB'S REQUEST

Before the lot was cast into the lap for the determining of the portions of the respective tribes, the particular portion of Caleb was assigned to him. He was now, except Joshua, not only the oldest man in all Israel, but was twenty years older than any of them, for all that were above twenty years old when he was forty were dead in the wilderness; it was fit therefore that this phoenix of his age should have some particular marks of honour put upon him in the dividing of the land. Now,

**I.** Caleb here presents his petition, or rather makes his demand, to have Hebron given him for a possession (*this mountain* he calls it, v. 12), and not to have that put into the lot with the other parts of the country. To justify his demand, he shows that God had long since, by Moses, promised him *that very mountain*; so that God's mind being already made known in this matter it would be a vain and needless thing to consult it any further by casting lots, by which we are to appeal to God in those cases only which cannot otherwise be decided, not in those which, like this, are already determined. Caleb is here called the *Kenezite*, some think from some remarkable victory obtained by him over the Kenezites, as the Romans gave their great generals titles from the countries they conquered, as Africanus, Germanicus, etc. Observe,

**1.** To enforce his petition,

**(1.)** He brings the children of Judah, that is, the heads and great men of that tribe, along with him, to present it, who were willing thus to pay their respects to that ornament of their tribe, and to testify their consent that he should be provided for by himself, and that they would not take it as any reflection upon the rest of this tribe. Caleb was the person whom God had chosen out of that tribe to be employed in dividing the land (<sup><B4D></sup>Numbers 34:19), and therefore, lest he should seem to improve his authority as a commissioner for his own private advantage and satisfaction, he brings his

brethren along with him, and waiving his own power, seems rather to rely upon their interest.

(2.) He appeals to Joshua himself concerning the truth of the allegations upon which he grounded his petition: *Thou knowest the thing*, v. 6.

(3.) He makes a very honourable mention of Moses, which he knew would not be at all displeasing to Joshua: Moses the *man of God* (v. 6), and the *servant of the Lord*, v. 7. What Moses said he took as from God himself, because Moses was his mouth and his agent, and therefore he had reason both to desire and expect that it should be made good. What can be more earnestly desired than the tokens of God's favour? And what more confidently expected than the grants of his promise?

2. In his petition he sets forth,

(1.) The testimony of his conscience concerning his integrity in the management of that great affair on which it proved the fate of Israel turned, the spying out of the land. Caleb was one of the twelve that were sent out on that errand (v. 7), and he now reflected upon it with comfort, and mentioned it, not in pride, but as that which, being the consideration of the grant, was necessary to be inserted in the plea,

[1.] That he made his report as it was in his heart, that is, he spoke as he thought when he spoke so honourably of the land of Canaan, so confidently of the power of God to put them in possession of it, and so contemptibly of the opposition that the Canaanites, even the Anakim themselves, could make against them, as we find he did, <sup><0130></sup>Numbers 13:30; 14:7-9. He did not do it merely to please Moses, or to keep the people quiet, much less from a spirit of contradiction to his fellows, but from a full conviction of the truth of what he said and a firm belief of the divine promise.

[2.] That herein he *wholly followed the Lord his God*, that is, he kept close to his duty, and sincerely aimed at the glory of God in it. He conformed himself to the divine will with an eye to the divine favour. He had obtained this testimony from God himself (<sup><0144></sup>Numbers 14:24), and therefore it was not vain-glory in him to speak of it, any more than it is for those who have *God's Spirit witnessing with their spirits* that they are the children of God humbly and thankfully to tell others for their encouragement what God has done for their souls. Note, Those that follow God fully when they are

young shall have both the credit and comfort of it when they are old, and the reward of it for ever in the heavenly Canaan.

[3.] That he did this when all his brethren and companions in that service, except Joshua, did otherwise. They *made the heart of the people melt* (v. 8), and how pernicious the consequences of it were was very well known. It adds much to the praise of following God if we adhere to him when others desert and decline from him. Caleb needed not to mention particularly Joshua's conduct in this matter; it was sufficiently known, and he would not seem to flatter him; it was enough to say (v. 6), *Thou knowest what the Lord spoke concerning me and thee*.

(2.) The experience he had had of God's goodness to him ever since to this day. Though he had wandered with the rest in the wilderness, and had been kept thirty-eight years out of Canaan as they were, for that sin which he was so far from having a hand in that he had done his utmost to prevent it, yet, instead of complaining of this, he mentioned, to the glory of God, his mercy to him in two things: —

[1.] That he was kept alive in the wilderness, not only notwithstanding the common perils and fatigues of that tedious march, but though all that generation of Israelites, except himself and Joshua, were one way or other cut off by death. With what a grateful sense of God's goodness to him does he speak it! (v. 10). *Now behold* (behold and wonder) *the Lord hath kept me alive these forty and five years*, thirty-eight years in the wilderness, through the plagues of the desert, and seven years in Canaan through the perils of war! Note, *First*, While we live, it is God that keeps us alive; by his power he protects us from death, and by his bounty supplies us continually with the supports and comforts of life. He *holdeth our soul in life*. *Secondly*, The longer we live the more sensible we should be of God's goodness to us in keeping us alive, his care in prolonging our frail lives, his patience in prolonging our forfeited lives. Has he kept me alive these forty-five years? Is it about that time of life with us? Or is it more? Or is it less? We have reason to say, *It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed*. How much are we indebted to the favour of God, and what shall we render? Let the life thus kept by the providence of God be devoted to his praise. *Thirdly*, The death of many others round about us should make us the more thankful to God for sparing us and keeping us alive. Thousands falling on our right hand and our left and yet ourselves spared.

These distinguishing favours impose on us strong obligations to singular obedience.

[2.] That he was fit for business, now that he was in Canaan. Though eighty-five years old, yet as hearty and lively as when he was forty (v. 11): *As my strength was then, so is it now*. This was the fruit of the promise, and out-did what was said; for God not only gives what he promises, but he gives more: life by promise shall be life, and health, and strength, and all that which will make the promised life a blessing and comfort. Moses had said in his prayer (<sup>-9910</sup>Psalm 90:10) that at *eighty years old* even their *strength is labour and sorrow*, and so it is most commonly. But Caleb was an exception to the rule; his strength at eighty-five was ease and joy: this he got by *following the Lord fully*. Caleb here takes notice of this to the glory of God, and as an excuse for his asking a portion which he must fetch out of the giants' hands. Let not Joshua tell him he *knew not what he asked*; could he get the possession of that which he begged for a title to? “Yes,” says he, “why not? I am as fit for war now as ever I was.”

(3.) The promise Moses had made him in God's name that he should have *this mountain*, v. 9. This promise is his chief plea, and that on which he relies. As we find it (<sup>-04124</sup>Numbers 14:24) it is general, *him will I bring into the land whereunto he went, and his seed shall possess it*; but it seems it was more particular, and Joshua knew it; both sides understood this mountain for which Caleb was now a suitor to be intended. This was the place from which, more than any other, the spies took their report, for here they met with the sons of Anak (<sup>-04122</sup>Numbers 13:22), the sight of whom made such an impression upon them, v. 3. We may suppose that Caleb, observing what stress they laid upon the difficulty of conquering Hebron, a city garrisoned by the giants, and how thence they inferred that the conquest of the whole land was utterly impracticable, in opposition to their suggestions, and to convince the people that he spoke as he thought, bravely desired to have that city which they called *invincible* assigned to himself for his own portion: “I will undertake to deal with that, and, if I cannot get it for my inheritance, I will be without.” “Well,” said Moses, “it shall be thy own then, win it and wear it.” Such a noble heroic spirit Caleb had, and so desirous was he to inspire his brethren with it, that he chose this place only because it was the most difficult to be conquered. And, to show that his soul did not decay any more than his body, now forty-five years after he adheres to his choice and is still of the same mind.

**(4.)** The hopes he had of being master of it, though the sons of Anak were in possession of it (v. 12): *If the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out.* The city of Hebron Joshua had already reduced (<sup><6167></sup>Joshua 10:37), but the mountain which belonged to it, and which was inhabited by the sons of Anak, was yet unconquered; for though the cutting off of the Anakim from Hebron was mentioned (<sup><6121></sup>Joshua 11:21, because the historian would relate all the military actions together, yet it seems it was not conquered till after they had begun to divide the land. Observe, He builds his hopes of driving out the sons of Anak upon the presence of God with him. He does not say, “Because I am now as strong for war as I was at forty, therefore I shall drive them out,” depending upon his personal valour; nor does he depend upon his interest in the warlike tribe of Judah, who attended him now in making this address, and no doubt would assist him; nor does he court Joshua's aid, or put it upon that, “If thou wilt be with me I shall gain my point.” But, *If the Lord will be with me.* Here,

**[1.]** He seems to speak doubtfully of God's being with him, not from any distrust of his goodness or faithfulness. He had spoken without the least hesitation of God's presence with Israel in general (<sup><6149></sup>Numbers 14:9); *the Lord is with us.* But for himself, from a humble sense of his own unworthiness of such a favour, he chooses to express himself thus, *If the Lord will be with me.* The Chaldee paraphrase reads it, *If the Word of the Lord be my helper,* that Word which is God, and in the fulness of time was made flesh, and is the captain of our salvation.

**[2.]** But he expresses without the least doubt his assurance that if God were with him he should be able to dispossess the sons of Anak. “If God be with us, *If God be for us, who can be against us,* so as to prevail?” It is also intimated that if God were not with him, though all the forces of Israel should come in to his assistance, he should not be able to gain his point. Whatever we undertake, God's favourable presence with us is all in all to our success; this therefore we must earnestly pray for, and carefully make sure of, by keeping ourselves in the love of God; and on this we must depend, and from this take our encouragement against the greatest difficulties.

**3.** Upon the whole matter, Caleb's request is (v. 12), *Give me this mountain,*

**(1.)** Because it was formerly in God's promise, and he would let Israel know how much he valued the promise, insisting upon *this mountain,*

whereof the Lord spake in that day, as most desirable, though perhaps as good a portion might have fallen to him by lot in common with the rest. Those that live by faith value that which is given by promise far above that which is given by providence only.

(2.) Because it was now in the Anakim's possession, and he would let Israel know how little he feared the enemy, and would by his example animate them to push on their conquests. Herein Caleb answered his name, which signifies *all heart*.

**II.** Joshua grants his petition (v. 13): *Joshua blessed him*, commended his bravery, applauded his request, and gave him what he asked. He also prayed for him, and for his good success in his intended undertaking against the sons of Anak. Joshua was both a prince and a prophet, and upon both accounts it was proper for him to give Caleb his blessing, for *the less is blessed of the better*. Hebron was settled on Caleb and his heirs (v. 14), *because he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel*. And happy are we if we follow him. Note, Singular piety shall be crowned with singular favours. Now,

**1.** We are here told what Hebron had been, the city of Arba, a great man among the Anakim (v. 15); we find it called *Kirjath-arba* (<sup><023></sup>Genesis 23:2), as the place where Sarah died. Hereabouts Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived most of their time in Canaan, and near to it was the cave of Machpelah, where they were buried, which perhaps had led Caleb hither when he went to spy out the land, and had made him covet this rather than any other part for his inheritance.

**2.** We are afterwards told what Hebron was.

(1.) It was one of the cities belonging to priests (<sup><0213></sup>Joshua 21:13), and a *city of refuge*, (<sup><0210></sup>Joshua 20:7). When Caleb had it, he contented himself with the country about it, and cheerfully gave the city to the priests, the Lord's ministers, thinking it could not be better bestowed, no, not upon his own children, nor that it was the less his own for being thus devoted to God.

(2.) It was a royal city, and, in the beginning of David's reign, the metropolis of the kingdom of Judah; thither the people resorted to him, and there he reigned seven years. Thus highly was Caleb's city honoured; it is a pity there should have been such a blemish upon his family long after as



Nabal was, who was *of the house of Caleb*, ~~(125B)~~ 1 Samuel 25:3. But the best men cannot entail their virtues.