

August 13

Scriptures: Read Joshua 13 & 14

Key Verse: “Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the Lord spoke in that day... It may be that the Lord will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them the Anakim out as the Lord said.” (Joshua 14:12)

Overview

Though Joshua had fulfilled his task and subdued all the land, making it ready for the allotment of each tribe’s inheritance, there was still much land yet to be conquered and pockets of heathen inhabitants yet to be removed, especially to the north in Lebanon and along the Philistine coast. Each respective tribe was to drive out the heathen from its own territory. There was no more need for a united Israelite army since the main battles had been won, and all the men were now to give themselves to the settlement of their land.

Joshua was getting up in age, probably between ninety and one hundred, so it was his task to divide up the land before his death. The method used to divide the land was by lot (14:2) so that the outcome would be unbiased. It was done with the oversight of the high priest Eleazar, the son of Aaron. This was a common way to determine the will of God. They did it in faith, believing the Lord would be sovereign in the decision. “The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord” (Prov.16:33)

The land east of the Jordan had already been allotted by Moses to the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh (Num.32). Here Joshua describes the geographical boundaries of each tribe’s inheritance, plus the kings from whom the land had been conquered. Along with the death of the kings and princes, we read of the death of Balaam, the soothsayer, who was killed along with these enemies of Israel. He was responsible for helping these heathen kings in their attempt to seduce Israel into idolatry and sexual immorality.

It appears that the representatives of the tribe of Judah were the first to come before Joshua regarding their inheritance in the Promised Land (14:1). One of the leaders of the tribe, Caleb was a remarkable man. Although he is identified with the tribe of Judah, he came from a non-Israelite background (a Kenizzite, likely descendants of Esau), but he “wholly followed the God of Israel” (14:14). God always had the doors open for those of other nationalities to be one of His children if they would love and obey Him.

Caleb’s life was an example of love and obedience to God, and the Lord honored him for his faith and courage by firstly promising him, along with Joshua, that he would be one of only two men from the last generations’ army that would enter the Promised Land, for only they had been found faithful, obedient, and worthy (Num.14:30). Secondly, God had promised him through Moses that he would receive a special inheritance within Canaan and the desire of his heart was granted to him, namely Hebron (about 40 kilometers south of Jerusalem). Thirdly, God honored Caleb with the strength of a young man, though he was 85 years old.

Caleb's request proved that he was bold and full of faith, for the land in Hebron that he desired was still occupied by the Anakim, a race of giants who, many years before, had brought great fear upon his fellow spies (Num.13:23-33). Caleb took on this challenge in obedience to God, believing He would help him to drive out the heathen Anakin (fulfilled in 15:14). Many believers today have bold faith like Caleb and dare to do things for God, saying, "give me this mountain" (14:12).

Prayer

Lord, we praise You for including us as You included Caleb, a non-Israelite. Give us the same determination as Caleb, regardless of our age, to boldly do exploits. We pray for our entire nation. Your dominion from "sea to sea."