

CALEB

THE OVERCOMER

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Caleb the Overcomer

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THE SECRET OF CALEB'S OVERCOMING

God's Testimony

"But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit in him, and has followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went, and his seed shall possess it." NUM. 14:24.

Moses' Testimony

"Save Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have wholly followed the Lord." NUM. 32:12.

"Save Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, he shall see it and to him will I give the land that he has trodden upon, and to his children, because he has wholly followed the Lord." DEUT. 1:36.

Caleb's Testimony

"Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I wholly followed the Lord my God." JOSH. 14:8

"And Moses swore on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon your feet have trodden shall be your inheritance and yo ur children's for ever, because you have wholly followed the Lord my God." JOSH. 4:9.

"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." JOSH. 14:14.

INTRODUCTION

The best illustration of overcoming is the life of an overcomer. The incontrovertible proof of its possibility is that it has been done. The most powerful incentive to live such a life is to see it lived. Herein lies the value of a study of Caleb's life. He was an overcomer.

Most of us Christians are just common folks living comparatively obscure lives. We are apt to think that the abundant life of a Spirit-filled Christian is reserved for the few called to high and holy positions. To preach as he did, Peter must be Spirit-filled. To write as he did necessitated such a life in John. To be the foremost missionary of all time demanded of Paul that he be a Spirit-filled man. We look at such men in public life and say, *"Surely God does not expect me to live as they live."*

But Caleb played no such role in God's service. He was not an Abraham, nor a Moses, nor a David, nor a Paul. He was just Caleb, a man out of the common run of folks, living a life brilliant in no other respect than in its faith, obedience and courage. He was an ordinary man living an extraordinary life not because of anything in himself or in his circumstances but solely because of his relationship to his God. Caleb became nothing that God might become everything. Caleb had but one concern, his relationship to his God. That being

right everything else must be right. Caleb went in a straight line allowing no deflection or deviation. In youth and in old age, amid all difficulties and discouragements, in face of all opposition, he wholly followed the Lord.

Is there any one of us who cannot do the same? Do we not have much more to aid us to live the life of an overcomer than Caleb had? Are we not living on the other side of the Cross and of Pentecost? As we run the race set before us are we not compassed about with a much greater cloud of witnesses to God's faithfulness and power? If in the early dawn of the spiritual history of God's people such an overcomer as Caleb could shine forth with such brilliancy, what excuse can there possibly be to those of us living near the midnight hour of the time of Christ's church on earth?

Canaan stands for the Christian's deliverance from all the power of Satan, for his full inheritance of all his possessions in Christ, for his enjoyment of the peace and power of a Spirit-filled life. God teaches us through Caleb how such a life may be obtained and maintained. Caleb calls and challenges us to enter into it. *"Let us go up at once and possess it: for we are well able to overcome it."*

Dear reader, will you respond to the call and accept the challenge of *Caleb the Overcomer*?

RUTH PAXSON

Lausanne, Switzerland

CALEB AS A YOUNG MAN AT KADESH-BARNEA

"...I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father...I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." 1 JOHN 2:13-14.

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." 1 JOHN 5:4.

CALEB AS A YOUNG MAN—AT KADESH-BARNEA

THE first glimpse that we have of Caleb is at Kadesh-barnea. He is forty years old, the height of his young manhood. We know nothing about him until he is suddenly brought into action as one of the twelve spies appointed by Moses to search out the land of Canaan.

Here we learn that he was a ruler in the tribe of Judah, the largest and most important tribe of the children of Israel. From this we may infer that Caleb, as a young man, was capable and responsible. His work upon this commission

reveals the innermost life of this young man and reflects a consecration to the Lord so outstanding that we may rightly conclude that it must have commenced when he was but a youth. We can only comprehend the great importance of this task to which Caleb was appointed and the part he played in it by understanding the purpose in sending this commission into Canaan to spy out the land.

Through the call of Abraham, God had chosen a people for Himself and He had promised unto them and to their seed the land of Canaan as their everlasting possession through an everlasting covenant. The early fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, had dwelt in Canaan, but only as strangers. It had not yet become their possession.

While Jacob dwelt in Canaan, his son Joseph had been sold into Egypt through the jealousy and treachery of his brothers. There he became the virtual ruler over Egypt by Pharaoh's appointment. Driven to the point of starvation by the famine that spread over Canaan as well as Egypt, Jacob and all his house finally went into Egypt. There through Joseph's magnanimous forgiveness and generosity they were fed throughout the time of famine.

Four hundred and thirty years the children of Israel remained in Egypt. As a people they were *"fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty, and the land was filled with them."* Then there arose a new king over Egypt who had not known Joseph and he became fearful of both the number and the power of this shepherd people. Taskmasters were set over them who afflicted them with unbearable burdens. Then the children of Israel cried unto God for deliverance. The heart of God was moved and He appointed Moses to be their deliverer.

This deliverance was to be two-fold. It was to be a deliverance in Egypt from God's judgment of death upon all the first-born in every house on the night of the Passover. This was effected for Israel solely by the blood of the slain lamb which God had commanded to be put upon the lintel and the door posts.

It was also a deliverance out of Egypt, and from Pharaoh and the Egyptians who pursued the departing Israelites as at God's command they left the country. This deliverance was effected for the children of Israel solely by God's supernatural power, manifested by the dividing of the Red Sea, which enabled them to pass over on dry land, and by the returning of the waters which engulfed Pharaoh's pursuing hosts.

"We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt: and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand." And "he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers."

The road to Canaan passed through the way of the wilderness. But God was with them to guide by the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. He provided them with food, drink and clothes. He protected them from all enemies.

Finally they came to Kadesh-barnea on the very border of the land of Canaan. The promised land lay just before them, a land of which God had said it is *"a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any*

thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass. When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee." DEUT. 8:7-10

"And that ye may prolong your days in the land, which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give unto them and to their seed, a land that floweth with milk and honey. For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs: But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: A land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." DEUT. 11:9-12

A land of sufficiency, satisfaction and safety! Contrast it with the land of burdens and bondage from which they had been delivered and the barrenness of the wilderness through which they had passed.

They are now at the very gates of such a land and God is saying to them:

"Behold, the Lord thy God has set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said unto you: fear not, neither be discouraged."
DEUT. 1:21.

Such a land set before them as an outright gift to be had for the taking! It was theirs already as far as God's part was concerned, but was to be made theirs in actual possession by simple faith and obedience. Would you not think they would

have hastened without one moment's hesitation or one hour's delay to go in and possess "the land which the Lord swore unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them?"

A CRISIS DEMANDING A CHOICE

But what did they do? They asked Moses to appoint an appraisal commission to spy out the land! Is there anything new under the sun? Some modern methods which today seem so up to date have the musty smell of ages upon them. What was this commission to do?

"They shall search out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come." DEUT. 1:22

How human it all is! Now that the children of Israel were out of Egypt and through the wilderness, they could dispense with God's leadership and substitute man's wisdom and guidance for it. They would now take the management of affairs into their own hands and decide for themselves by what route they would enter the land and what the plan of campaign would be. To be guided by God's explicit direction did not seem as necessary as during the miraculous deliverance from Egypt or on the perilous journey through the wilderness. Then they knew they were helpless, but now, no doubt, they could well make their own decisions and trust to their own judgment. Oh! the innate, latent pride of the human heart!

But there was an even more terrible thrust at God in the appointment of such a commission. Blatant unbelief lurks in the suggestion that these men should "search out the land."