

Revelation 11:1–14

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[0:00] verses 6-14, and that's found in the Bible on page 164. Then the people of Judah came to Joshua at Gilgal, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, You know what the Lord said to Moses, the man of God, and Kadesh Barnea, concerning you and me.

I was forty years old when Moses, the servant of the Lord, sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought him word again, as it was in my heart. But my brothers who went up with me made the heart of the people melt, yet I wholly followed the Lord my God.

And Moses swore on that day, saying, Surely the land on which your foot has trodden shall be an inheritance for you and your children forever, because you have wholly followed the Lord my God.

And now behold, the Lord has kept me alive, just as he said these forty-five years since that time that the Lord spoke this word to Moses, while Israel walked in the wilderness.

And now behold, I am this day eighty-five years old. I am still as strong today as I was in the day that Moses sent me. My strength now is as my strength was then, for war and for going and coming.

[1:28] So now give me this hill country to which the Lord spoke on that day. For you heard on that day how the Anakim were there with great fortified cities.

It may be that the Lord will be with me, and I shall drive them out just as the Lord said. Then Joshua blessed him, and he gave Hebron to Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, for an inheritance.

Therefore Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb, the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite, to this day, because he wholly followed the Lord, the God of Israel.

Now the name of Hebron formerly was Kirith Ar-Rabba. Ar-Rabba was the greatest man among Anakim, and the land had rest from war. This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God. You may be seated. Gilgal, which you see there in chapter 14, verse 6, was where Joshua dwelt during the years of the conquest.

[2:42] And so it was to Gilgal that the people of Judah came to receive their allotment of the land, the inheritance. The city of Gilgal appears in those maps at the back of your Bible, and you'll find it only a short distance from Jericho.

Jericho, the first city that Israel took upon entering the land. And Joshua has made Gilgal his place of residence now for more than five years.

Gilgal was the city associated with Israel's earliest days in the Promised Land. When the people first came up out of the Jordan on that miraculous day of crossing, the Bible says that they, quote, encamped at Gilgal on the east border of Jericho.

We saw that back days ago and early in our study, chapter 4, verses 19. Gilgal was the place where the twelve stones were set up as witnesses and as reminders that their presence in the land had been accomplished, quote, by the Lord their God, so that all the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty, that they may fear the Lord their God forever.

Back in chapter 4, verse 23. Gilgal was the hill of four skins. Literally, that is its name. In other words, it's the place where the covenant of circumcision had been renewed.

[4:30] Joshua, chapter 5. It was the place where the Passover had been celebrated. From here, that is Gilgal, this place in chapter 14, verse 6, Israel set out to Shechem where it stood in the valley between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal and renewed their covenant with that antiphonal cry, all the blessings and the curses of the Lord.

And from Shechem then Joshua returned to Gilgal. Gilgal is the place that Joshua went out to battle, the five kings who made war against the Gibeonites, who had made an alliance from the south on that day, that famous day that we saw a few weeks ago, where the sun stood still and the Lord fought for Israel.

And afterwards, it was to Gilgal that they encamped and Joshua returned. The Bible says, with all Israel with him, chapter 10, verses 15 and 23, after the battles had been won, and chapter 11, 23, when they had rest from war and all that had been given.

Gilgal, this monumental place in Israel's history, is the setting for our own narrative.

Take a look across the page at Joshua 13, 1, for we now find that Joshua is old and advanced in years, and yet much land needed to be possessed.

[6:23] So he summons 12 representatives, one warrior from each tribe, to his either tent or residence, his home, where he'd been living now for over five years for the purpose of dividing up the land.

And so to Gilgal, they all come. And the people of Judah, according to chapter 14, 6, come with him. It reads, Then the people of Judah came to Joshua at Gilgal.

Now, years before, Moses had actually written down for Joshua the names of the representatives from each tribe who would come to Gilgal for their inheritance.

And so from Numbers 34, we know that it isn't just Caleb who is present here, but we know that stepping into Joshua's tent is Eliezer the priest, the leaders of Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, and the tribe of Reuben, of course, who have already received their allotment of land on the other side of the Jordan.

We know that from the tribe of Simeon was one named Shemuel, son of Amihud, and Eladad, son of Chislon from Benjamin.

[8:09] From Dan, the tribe of Dan was Buki, son of Jojli. From Zebulun, Eliphon, son of Parnak. Patiel was there, from Issachar, son of Azan. Ahihud, son of Shilomi, from Asher. And Padella, from Naphtali, son of Amihud.

These men, names recorded, were all gathering before Joshua at Gilgal. Warriors. And every one of them in the prime of their life.

By that I mean in the fullness of life. Probably between the ages of 43 and 48.

Enough life experience beyond them, but they were the ones present. They were men among men. And so they're there.

[9:15] And then, another enters. Four decades their senior. A man now, according to our text, who is 85 years old.

Caleb, son of Jephaniah, from the ruling tribe of Judah. What a setting that must have been.

What a sight. They have arrived before Joshua for the dividing of the land. And I can't help but wonder if Joshua, now old and advanced in years, and Caleb himself, now 85, don't exchange a look, a glance, and their memories are filled with the days when they were the age of these men now there.

Having returned from spying out the land, one representative from each tribe. That day, that fateful day when all Israel faltered in their belief except for Caleb and Joshua.

And so now Caleb and Joshua are standing a half century later. Promises now being fulfilled.

[10:51] With a backdrop of Gilgal, the site of memorial to the handiwork of God.

the men of a previous generation are all dead. Their fear for entering in the land was rooted in faithfulness, and their frightened vote not to enter now stood nearly a half century in the rearview mirror.

And the men now in the presence of Caleb and Joshua are a different kind of men. They are faith-filled men. They are battle-tested. They are proven.

And they are the ones that see the years of promise come to fulfillment. So much for the setting of our text at Gilgal.

what follows is the speech of Caleb verses 6-12. This is one of the most complete and eloquent speeches in all the book of Joshua.

[12:10] It's the speech of Caleb with all the representatives seated. You can imagine this valiant octogenarian who still has a strong grip of hand rising to his feet.

This is a man whom we have not seen nor read of nor heard lift his voice for over four decades. We left him with his call to go into the land in his minority report.

And so he rises to his feet. It says that he came to Joshua and said and here is his speech you know what the Lord said to Moses the man of God concerning you and me.

His eyes and Joshua is fixed on one another's. I was 40 years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land and I brought him word again as it was in my heart.

But my brothers in his mind the very faces of the ten who went with them whom we also know by name stand before him and he says they went up with me and they made the heart of the people melt yet I wholly followed the Lord my God and Moses on that day swore to me saying surely the land on which your foot is trodden shall be an inheritance for you and your children forever because you have fully followed the Lord my God imagine what it must have been like for Caleb he now stands seeing that promise of nearly half a century before fulfilled and now he says verse 10 not only that but he says behold the Lord has kept me alive just as he said these 45 years since the time that the Lord spoke to me in the wilderness and now behold I am this day 85 years old

[14:46] I am still as strong today as I was in the day that Moses sent me I can just imagine all the young guys around him realizing yeah that's true there's one guy you still don't mess with even though he's 85 it's Caleb reminds me of an old wrestling coach in the town where I grew up Pete Wilson whose handshake in his 80s could still crumple a man younger in all his strength I've often said that when Pete Wilson is dead and in the grave for more than three years he will still be stronger than I ever will have been in the land of the living and so it was for Caleb he says verse 11 I am still as strong today as I was in the days when my strength now is as my strength was then for war and for going and coming what words this phrase for going and coming back in

Deuteronomy 31 Moses uses in reference to himself to indicate that he is old and no longer can come and go it is really the language of someone who has become a shut in who no longer walks the streets or waits for the buses or conducts their business and affairs but for Caleb he is as strong now as he was then now there's three things I want to say about his speech first notice he reminds Joshua of the words Moses made to him and the ways in which God has seen fit to be faithful to him he's reminding Joshua of the words

Moses swore to him and the ways God has seen fit to be faithful to him you see those words in chapter 14 verse 6 you know what the Lord said to Moses the man of God concerning you and me the words of Moses you can see it again in verse 9 and Moses swore on that day saying surely the land on which your foot is trodden shall be an inheritance for you and your children forever because you have wholly followed the Lord my God words of promise had been given to him and he reminds Joshua of those words he in other words is going to fix his request upon the promises of God secondly he reminds Joshua of the ways that

God has seen fit to be faithful to him that is what he says and begins in verse 10 and now behold the Lord has kept me alive in other words he is testifying all the words he gave me have been accompanied by the ways in which he has preserved me God has been faithful this is an elderly man in full strength standing before a young congregation in a sense and saying!

God has been faithful in all his ways with me according to all the words he gave me in other words in these reminders we are to understand that Caleb was a recipient of a real promise and acknowledged that God was able to secure it even though we haven't heard from him in nearly 50 years the second thing I want you to see about the speech not only is what he reminds Joshua concerning God's words and ways but he recounts to Joshua his faithful obedience take a look at verse 7 I was 40 years old when

[19:19] Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land and I brought him word again as it was in my heart but my brothers who went up with me made the heart of the people melt yet I wholly followed the Lord my God he's reminding him of his own obedience he's recounting it that phrase I hope you see it there yet I wholly followed the Lord you see it in verse 8 it comes from Caleb's own lips and then notice that phrase again in verse 9 where it comes in a sense in the mouth of Moses because you have wholly followed the Lord my God that phrase will appear a third time this time in the voice of the narrator as if he does not want us to miss it verse 14 because he wholly followed the

Lord the God of Israel he recounts to Joshua his obedience I wholly followed the Lord in the voice of Moses Caleb wholly followed the Lord in the voice of the narrator lest the reader miss the point here is one who received that which he had been promised because he wholly followed the Lord the God of Israel what a thing to be able to say I was trying to say this in my family room last night could I say this could you stand before the leader of God's people the representatives and say let it be said of me

I wholly follow the Lord what a statement I mean as we've been traveling through the book of Joshua our view of Joshua has been rising but what what a picture of a person not only physical strength but enduring faith well it doesn't mean that he was perfect can't be perfect but he was undivided he was not of two opinions the phrase is used of Caleb and Joshua in numbers 32 12 and Deuteronomy 1 36 in other words those who are receiving that which God promises are those who are wholly following the

Lord it's used elsewhere in contrast to the rest of Israel in fact that is the way he uses it in verse 7 and 8 isn't it he says my brothers who went up from me made the heart of the people melt yet I in contrast to them wholly followed the Lord so what does it mean to wholly follow the Lord it means to believe that which God said you will have the land and of course the ten came back from that expedition of spying it out and said it is too great for us one who wholly follows the Lord believes God's word those who don't don't believe God's word what does it mean to wholly follow the Lord does it mean to be perfect in your own strength absolutely impossible we all need the gospel it's one of grace but it means to believe

God's word to take him at his word amidst the fears that overrun your life amidst the obstacles that you are facing in life to believe God's word elsewhere in Joshua the phrase holy follow the Lord is used in contrast to people who are fearfully at least feared to be taking up with other gods in Joshua 22 when the when the Reubenites are moving back across the Jordan into their own homeland they will erect a monument of their own and all of Israel is frightened because they think that the erecting of this monument is in a sense an idolatrous act that they have already forgotten that they're to follow God and they're beginning to see their heart being given over to other things that are empty that don't have value that cannot sustain them and of course the Reubenites tell them no we're just building a memorial our heart has been fixed with God and so we ask ourselves is my heart fixed in faith do I wholly follow the

[24:41] Lord that's the need for us I don't care whether you're in grade school or high school or university or you're setting out I don't care if you're married with children or without I don't care if you're 30 or 35 or 49 a whole hearted devotion to the Lord is the record of those who receive his promise so believe God's word he reminds Joshua of God's words and ways he recounts for Joshua his own obedience and he requests from Joshua that the promise now will be fulfilled take a look at verse 12 so now give me this hill country of which the Lord spoke on that day for you heard on the day how the

Anakim were there with great fortified cities it may be that the Lord will be with me and I shall drive them out just as the Lord said he makes a request he asks that the promise now nearly 50 years in the making would be fulfilled the setting at Gilgal the speech of Caleb the significance of Joshua's words both then and now verse 13 through 15 then Joshua blessed him and he gave him gave Hebron to Caleb for an inheritance the significance of Joshua's words he bestows upon Caleb a blessing that's interesting because you think of Joshua in terms of the leader of God's people you think of

Joshua in terms of his Greek namesake Jesus you think of Jesus who brings all blessings the one who dispenses the promises of God upon those who take God at his word he blesses him he gives it to him the significance for Caleb then is that the land was given the promise was fulfilled he is emblematic and he embodies what it is to be a recipient of God's promises and it's interesting that you're about to get into a section well we've entered it here where the land is allotted and you get this thing from Caleb in 14 but all the way back in chapter 19 verse 49 after all the other tribes have received their inheritance who's the last to receive his inheritance Joshua himself so

Caleb and Joshua bracket all the allotment of the land as two individuals that represent what God is doing for the whole nation they embody what it is to be a recipient of the promise long years of enduring belief now finally rewarded that's the significance for Caleb a lifetime and you think you've been around a long time and we grow so impatient with whether or not God will fulfill his plan 45 years of waiting for one thing to come true the significance for you for me persevering faith the kind of persevering faith that your eternal inheritance requires will be rewarded

Hebrews 11 or 9 15 says that the inheritance into which you are entering through Christ is an eternal one the persevering faith that your inheritance requires will one day be rewarded and you have a stamp of it already you have a guarantee you have been given those of you who are in Christ the imprimatur of God's blessing the Holy Spirit who guarantees your inheritance even when you don't already see it or possess it I was thinking just now of 1 Peter where it says blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ according to his great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of

[29:55] 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 salvation ready to be revealed in the last time so in this future you rejoice even though now you walk in faith not having received I'd like you if you have a Bible to take a look at this wonderful text and I'll close with this Colossians 3 24 start at verse 23 whatever you do work heartily as for the Lord and not for men knowing that from the

Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward you are serving the Lord Christ that's the takeaway from Caleb not only does he stand as a recipient of the promise but he stands as an exemplary model for you to follow in Christ so whatever you do work heartily as for the Lord knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward how should you grow old well you guys don't consider it too often because you are so young but how should you grow old never relinquish a belief in God's promises that are fulfilled in God's son trust his word endure in faith and you will move graciously and gracefully from the flower of youth which is really what this congregation is the flower of youth to the maturity of middle age to one who is ready to recount and to remind people that

God is faithful in all his words and ways by the time you grow to old age imagine your names on the record as mighty valiant warriors who can stand one day in the presence of God's people and recount the glories of God's promises let's pray our heavenly father