
JOSHUA 14:1 These are the inheritances which the children of Israel took in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers' houses of the tribes of the children of Israel, distributed to them,

Eleazar, Joshua, and the heads of the fathers, distribute the land by lot to the people, Jos 14:1-3. The Levites receive no land, but cities to dwell in, and suburbs for their cattle, Jos 14:4, Jos 14:5. Caleb requests to have Mount Hebron for an inheritance, because of his former services, Jos 14:6-12. Joshua grants his request, Jos 14:13-15.

Verse 1

Eleazar the priest, etc. - Eleazar, as being the minister of God in sacred things is mentioned first. Joshua, as having the supreme command in all things civil, is mentioned next. And the Heads or Princes of the twelve tribes, who in all things acted under Joshua, are mentioned last. These heads or princes were twelve, Joshua and Eleazar included; and the reader may find their names in Num 34:19-28. It is worthy of remark that no prince was taken from the tribes of Reuben and Gad, because these had already received their inheritance on the other side of Jordan, and therefore could not be interested in this division.

JOSHUA 14:2 by the lot of their inheritance, as the LORD commanded by Moses, for the nine tribes, and for the half-tribe.

Verse 2

By lot was their inheritance - Concerning the meaning and use of the lot, see the note on Num 26:55; and concerning the manner of casting lots in the case of the scapegoat, see the note on Lev 16:8, Lev 16:9. On this subject Dr. Dodd has selected some good observations from Calmet and Masius, which I here borrow: "Though God had sufficiently pointed out by the predictions of Jacob when dying, and those of Moses, what portions he designed for each tribe, we readily discern an admirable proof of his wisdom in the orders he gave to decide them by lot. By this means the false interpretations which might have been given to the words of Jacob and Moses were prevented; and by striking at the root of whatever might occasion jealousies and disputes among the tribes, he evidently secured the honesty of those who were to be appointed to distribute to them the conquered countries in the land of Canaan. Besides, the success of this method gave a fresh proof of the Divinity of the Jewish religion, and the truth of its oracles. Each tribe finding itself placed by lot exactly in the spot which Jacob and Moses had foretold, it was evident that Providence had equally directed both those predictions and that lot. The event justified the truth of the promises. The more singular it was, the more clearly we discern the finger of God in it. The portion, says Masius, fell to each tribe just as Jacob had declared two hundred and fifty years before in the last moments of his life, and Moses, immediately before his death; for to the tribe of Judah fell a country abounding in vineyards and pastures; to Zebulun and Issachar, seacoasts; in that of Asher was plenty of oil, wheat, and metals; that of Benjamin, near to the temple, was, in a manner, between the shoulders of the Deity; Ephraim and Manasseh were distinguished with a territory blessed in a peculiar manner by Heaven; the land of Naphtali extended from the west to the south of the tribe of Judah. Since

therefore the lot so well corresponded to these predictions, would it not be insolence and stupidity in the highest degree, not to acknowledge the inspiration of God in the word of Jacob and Moses, the direction of his hand in the lot, and his providence in the event?" How the lot was cast in this case cannot be particularly determined. It is probable,

1. That the land was geographically divided into ten portions.
2. That each portion was called by a particular name.
3. That the name of each portion was written on a separate slip of parchment, wood, etc.
4. That the names of the claimants were also written on so many slips.
5. The names of the portions, and of the tribes, were put into separate vessels.
6. Joshua, for example, put his hand into the vessel containing the names of the tribes, and took out one slip; while Eleazar took out one from the other vessel, in which the names of the portions were put.
7. The name drawn, and the portion drawn, being read, it was immediately discerned what the district was which God had designed for such a tribe. This appears to be the most easy way to determine such a business.

JOSHUA 14:3 For Moses had given the inheritance of the two tribes and the half-tribe beyond the Jordan; but to the Levites he gave no inheritance among them.

JOSHUA 14:4 For the children of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim: and they gave no portion to the Levites in the land, except cities to dwell in, with their suburbs for their livestock and for their property.

Verse 4

The children of Joseph were two tribes - This was ascertained by the prophetic declaration of their grandfather Jacob, Gen 48:5, Gen 48:6; and as Levi was taken out of the tribes for the service of the sanctuary, one of these sons of Joseph came in his place, and Joseph was treated as the first-born of Jacob, in the place of Reuben, who forfeited his right of primogeniture.

With their suburbs for their cattle - For the meaning of this passage the reader is referred to the note on Num 35:6.

JOSHUA 14:5 The children of Israel did as the LORD commanded Moses, and they divided the land.

Verse 5

They divided the land - This work was begun some time before at Gilgal, and was finished some time after at Shiloh. It must have required a very considerable time to make all the geographical arrangements that were necessary for this purpose.

JOSHUA 14:6 Then the children of Judah drew near to Joshua in Gilgal. Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, "You know the thing that the LORD spoke to Moses the man of God concerning me and concerning you in Kadesh Barnea.

Verse 6

Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite - In the note on the parallel place, Num 32:12, it is said Kenaz was probably the father of Jephunneh, and that Jephunneh not Caleb, was the Kenezite; but still, allowing this to be perfectly correct, Caleb might also be called the Kenezite, as it appears to have been a family name, for Othniel, his nephew and son-in-law, is called the son of Kenaz, Jos 15:17; Jdg 1:13, and 1Chr 4:13; and a grandson of Caleb is also called the son of Kenaz, 1Chr 4:15. In 1Chr 2:18, Caleb is called the son of Hezron, but this is only to be understood of his having Hezron for one of his ancestors; and son here may be considered the same as descendant; for Hezron, of the tribe of Judah, having come into Egypt one hundred and seventy-six years before the birth of Caleb, it is not at all likely that he could be called his father in the proper sense of the term. Besides, the supposition above makes a very good sense, and is consistent with the use of the terms father, son, and brother, in different parts of the sacred writings.

Thou knowest the thing that the Lord said - In the place to which Caleb seems to refer, viz., Num 14:24, there is not a word concerning a promise of Hebron to him and his posterity; nor in the place (Deu 1:36) where Moses repeats what had been done at Kadesh-barnea: but it may be included in what is there spoken. God promises, because he had another spirit within him, and had followed God fully, therefore he should enter into the land whereinto he came, and his seed should possess it. Probably this relates to Hebron, and was so understood by all parties at that time. This seems tolerably evident from the pointed reference made by Caleb to this transaction.

JOSHUA 14:7 I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land. I brought him word again as it was in my heart.

Verse 7

As it was in mine heart - Neither fear nor favor influenced him on the occasion; he told what he believed to be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

JOSHUA 14:8 Nevertheless, my brothers who went up with me made the heart of the people melt; but I wholly followed the LORD my God.

JOSHUA 14:9 Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land where you walked shall be an inheritance to you and to your children forever, because you have wholly followed the LORD my God.'

Verse 9

The land whereon thy feet have trodden - This probably refers to Hebron, which was no doubt mentioned on this occasion.

JOSHUA 14:10 "Now, behold, the LORD has kept me alive, as he spoke, these forty-five years, from the time that the LORD spoke this word to Moses, while Israel walked in the wilderness. Now, behold, I am eighty-five years old, today."

Verse 10

These forty and five years - See the note on Jos 13:1.

JOSHUA 14:11 As yet I am as strong today as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now for war, to go out and to come in.

Verse 11

Even so is my strength now - I do not ask this place because I wish to sit down now, and take my ease; on the contrary, I know I must fight, to drive out the Anakim, and I am as able and willing to do it as I was forty-five years ago, when Moses sent me to spy out the land.

JOSHUA 14:12 Now therefore give me this hill country, of which the LORD spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim were there, and great and fortified cities. It may be that the LORD will be with me, and I shall drive them out, as the LORD spoke."

Verse 12

I shall be able to drive them out - He cannot mean Hebron merely, for that had been taken before by Joshua; but in the request of Caleb doubtless all the circumjacent country was comprised, in many parts of which the Anakim were still in considerable force. It has been conjectured that Hebron itself had again fallen under the power of its former possessors, who, taking the advantage of the absence of the Israelitish army, who were employed in other parts of the country, re-entered the city, and restored their ancient domination. But the first opinion seems best founded.

JOSHUA 14:13 Joshua blessed him; and he gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance.

Verse 13

Joshua blessed him - As the word bless often signifies to speak good or well of or to any person, (see the note on Gen 2:3), here it may mean the praise bestowed on Caleb's intrepidity and faithfulness

by Joshua, as well as a prayer to God that he might have prosperity in all things; and especially that the Lord might be with him, as himself had expressed in the preceding verse.

JOSHUA 14:14 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.

Verse 14

Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb - Joshua admitted his claim, recognized his right, and made a full conveyance of Hebron and its dependencies to Caleb and his posterity; and this being done in the sight of all the elders of Israel, the right was publicly acknowledged, and consequently this portion was excepted from the general determination by lot; God having long before made the cession of this place to him and to his descendants.

JOSHUA 14:15 Now the name of Hebron before was Kiriath Arba, after the greatest man among the Anakim. The land had rest from war.

Verse 15

And the name of Hebron before was Kirjath-arba - That is, the city of Arba, or rather, the city of the four, for thus קִרְיַת אַרְבַּע kiryath arba may be literally translated. It is very likely that this city had its name from four Anakim, gigantic or powerful men, probably brothers, who built or conquered it. This conjecture receives considerable strength from Jos 15:14, where it is said that Caleb drove from Hebron the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi: now it is quite possible that Hebron had its former name, Kirjath-arba, the city of the four, from these three sons and their father, who, being men of uncommon stature or abilities, had rendered themselves famous by acts proportioned to their strength and influence in the country. It appears however from Jos 15:13 that Arba was a proper name, as there he is called the father of Anak. The Septuagint call Hebron the metropolis of the Enakim, μητροπολις των Ενακιμ. It was probably the seat of government, being the residence of the above chiefs, from whose conjoint authority and power it might have been called חֶבְרוֹן chebron; as the word חָבַר chabar literally signifies to associate, to join in fellowship, and appears to be used, Job 41:6, for "associated merchants, or merchants' companions, who traveled in the same caravan." Both these names are expressive, and serve to confirm the above conjecture. No notice need be taken of the tradition that this city was called the city of the four because it was the burial-place of Adam, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Such traditions confute themselves.

The land had rest from war - There were no more general wars; the inhabitants of Canaan collectively could make no longer any head, and when their confederacy was broken by the conquests of Joshua, he thought proper to divide the land, and let each tribe expel the ancient inhabitants that might still remain in its own territories. Hence the wars after this time were particular wars; there were no more general campaigns, as it was no longer necessary for the whole Israelitish body to act against an enemy now disjointed and broken. This appears to be the most rational meaning of the words, The land had rest from war.

The Jewish economy furnishes, not only a history of God's revelations to man, but also a history of his providence, and an ample, most luminous, and glorious comment on that providence. Is it possible that any man can seriously and considerately sit down to the reading even of this book, without rising up a wiser and a better man? This is the true history which everywhere exhibits God as the first mover and prime agent, and men only as subordinate actors. What a miracle of God's power, wisdom, grace, justice, and providence are the people of Israel in every period of their history, and in every land of their dispersions! If their fall occasioned the salvation of the Gentile world, what shall their restoration produce! Their future inheritance is not left to what men would call the fortuitous decision of a lot; like Caleb's possession it is confirmed by the oath of the Lord; and when the end shall be, this people shall stand in their lot at the end of the days, and shall again be great to the ends of the earth.