

CHAPTER 14

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA 14

This chapter proceeds to give an account of the countries divided to the children of Israel in the land of Canaan, (^{<0640>}Joshua 14:1-5); but previous to that division relates the claim of Caleb to Hebron, through a promise made unto him by Moses forty five years ago, upon his report of the good land, whither he was sent a spy by him, (^{<0646>}Joshua 14:6-12); and the grant which Joshua made of it to him, with his blessing, (^{<0643>}Joshua 14:13-15).

Ver. 1. *And these [are the countries] which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan*, etc.] Of which an exact account is given in the following chapters, particularly in the (^{<0650>}Joshua 15:1-19:51);

which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, distributed for an inheritance unto them; namely, ten princes, one of each tribe, who, with Eleazar and Joshua, were appointed of the Lord by name to do this business, even seven years ago, before their entrance into the land of Canaan, (^{<0647>}Numbers 34:17-29).

Ver. 2. *By lot [was] their inheritance*, etc.] Every tribe had its part and portion assigned to it, by the casting of lots; which was done to prevent any future quarrels, animosities and strifes among the tribes, the disposition being of the Lord; and to show the exact agreement between the lot and the divine predictions by Jacob and Moses; and to make it appear that the division of the land was not owing to the private combination of the above men, and their private settlement of it; but to the providence of God, the directors of the lot; their chief business was to see that the lot was executed in a faithful manner, and that every tribe had its allotment according to it. In this Canaan was a type of the heavenly inheritance, which the saints obtain by lot, in and through Christ, the antitypical Joshua, (^{<0611>}Ephesians 1:11);

as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses, (^{<0655>}Numbers 26:55,56);

for the nine tribes, and [for] the half tribe; (see ^{<1637>}Joshua 13:7); the reason why this number of them is particularly mentioned follows.

Ver. 3. *And Moses had given the inheritance of two tribes, and an half tribe, on the other side Jordan*, etc.] The two tribes of Gad and Reuben, and the half tribe of Manasseh, whose inheritance is described in (^{<1638>}Joshua 13:8-33):

but unto the Levites he gave none inheritance among them; this is frequently observed, that it might be taken notice of, to show the disinterestedness of Moses in this affair, Levi being his own tribe; and to recommend the care of the Levites to the other tribes, according to the provision God had made for them.

Ver. 4. *For the children of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim*, etc.] For the birthright being forfeited by Reuben, was given to Joseph, who had the double portion, the privilege of the firstborn; by which means the number of the twelve tribes was kept up in the division of the land, though that of Levi had no share in it; and which is also a reason why they had none, that Joseph's two sons might be reckoned two tribes:

therefore they gave no part unto the Levites in the land; to make way for the sons of Joseph to have the double portion:

save cities to dwell [in]; and that only, for they might not sell them, as other Israelites could theirs:

with their suburbs, for their cattle, and for their substance; the Targum is,
 “for all their beasts, and for their cattle;”

that is, for convenient places to put them into, and for pasturage for, them; which Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret of their larger and lesser cattle, their herds and their flocks, their oxen and sheep.

Ver. 5. *As the Lord commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did*, etc.]. Particularly with respect to the division of the land, and making provision for the Levites; this they did by their heads and representatives, the high priest and chief ruler, and the princes of the several tribes:

and they divided the land; met about it, and began to take measures in order to do it; they prepared for it, though as yet it was not actually done, and previous to it was the following incident.

Ver. 6. *Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal*, etc.]

Whither he was returned after the conquest of the kings and their kingdoms; these were not the whole tribe of Judah, but some of the chief men of it who accompanied Caleb, for the honour of him, as Ben Gersom observes, he being their prince; and to second his petition, and to show their consent unto, and an approbation of such an assignment to him as he desired;

and Caleb, the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, said unto him; whether Caleb or Jephunneh called the Kenezite, and what the reason of the name, are not very material; and of which (see Gill on "⁻⁰⁴⁹¹²Numbers 32:12"); and as Caleb was personally and singly concerned in the following affair, he alone dressed Joshua, attended with some principal men of his tribe:

thou knowest the thing the Lord said unto Moses the man of God, concerning thee and me, in Kadeshbarnea; the place from whence the spies were sent, and whither they returned to Moses there, of whom Caleb speaks with great respect and veneration, which he knew would be very pleasing and endearing to Joshua, who could not but remember what had been said by him concerning himself and Caleb, though it was now forty five years ago; it being so very striking and memorable, that only two of that generation then present should enter into the land of Canaan; the fulfilment of which, in all its circumstances, they had lived to see.

Ver. 7. *Forty years old [was] I when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadeshbarnea to spy out the land*, etc.] Not he alone, but eleven more with him, one out of every tribe; his age he mentions, and of which, or near it, it is highly probable the rest of the spies were, to show that he and they were in the prime of their days, both as to bodily strength and intellectual capacity, which were requisite for such service as to spy out the land, of what quality that and its inhabitants were; and Moses he calls the servant of the Lord, because it was by the order and appointment of God, signified to Moses, that this was done; and the place from whence they were sent forth is named, which ascertains what that Kadesh was, where Israel was encamped when the spies were sent, (⁻⁰⁴⁹³⁶Numbers 13:26);

and I brought him word again, as [it was] in mine heart; that is, he gave to Moses upon his return a sincere, honest and faithful representation of the land, and its inhabitants, as it appeared to him.

Ver. 8. *Nevertheless, my brethren that went up with me*, etc.] Meaning the rest of the spies, excepting Joshua, that went up with him into the land of Canaan to spy it, which they might be properly said to do, since they went up a hill or mountain, in order to go into it, (^{<04137>}Numbers 13:17);

made the heart of the people melt; discouraged them, filled them with fears, sunk their spirits, that their hearts flowed, and became as weak as water, having no strength left in them, or hope of possessing the land; being told what stout and gigantic men the inhabitants of it were, and how strongly fortified were their cities:

but I wholly followed the Lord my God; and did not join with them in an ill report of the good land; but having the fear of God before his eyes, walked after that, and delivered in his report faithfully, according to the dictates of his conscience, and the real sentiments of his mind; of this phrase, (see Gill on “^{<04124>}Numbers 14:24”).

Ver. 9. *And Moses sware on that day, saying*, etc.] Or declared the oath of the Lord, for it was the Lord that sware to what follows; (see ^{<00134>}Deuteronomy 1:34-36);

surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever: not the whole land of Canaan, nor all the parts of it Caleb travelled through, but particularly Hebron; which though not expressly mentioned in the aforesaid oath, yet was understood and known to be the meaning of it, and which Joshua by the following grant owned, and it is elsewhere expressly affirmed, (^{<00120>}Judges 1:20); and it is remarked, that it is not said “they”, but “he” came to Hebron, (^{<04132>}Numbers 13:22); that is Caleb, so that it was literally true that his feet had trodden there: now the reason of this oath, and the inheritance assured by it to Caleb, was,

because thou hast wholly followed the Lord thy God; in all his ways, and with full purpose of heart, and particularly had acted the upright and faithful part in the report he made of the good land; (see Gill on “^{<04124>}Numbers 14:24”).

Ver. 10. *And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as he said*, etc.] Had upheld him in life, and preserved him from many dangers in the wilderness; and had continued him not only in life, but in health to that day, according to his promise to him, that he would bring him into the land of

Canaan, and that he should see and possess it, (^{<04:24>}Numbers 14:24)
(^{<01:36>}Deuteronomy 1:36);

these forty and five years, even since the Lord spake this word unto Moses, and while [the children] of Israel wandered in the wilderness; not that the children of Israel were wandering in the wilderness forty five years, but it was while they were in the wilderness this word or promise, concerning Caleb, was spoken by the Lord to Moses; and it was in the second year of their coming out of Egypt, after which they wandered in the wilderness thirty eight years, so that they had now been in the land of Canaan seven years; and from hence the Jewish chronologers ^{f290} gather, that the land was seven years in subduing, and which their commentators in general take notice of. Maimonides ^{f291} seems to be displeased with the Arabs for calling the wilderness, through which the Israelites travelled, “the desert of wandering”; but it appears from hence to be a very proper epithet of it; and Kadesh the place where they were first threatened, that they should be wanderers in the wilderness for such a time, had the additional name of Barnea, which signifies the son of a wanderer:

and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old; being forty years of age when sent a spy into the land, (^{<04:07>}Joshua 14:7); thirty eight years he was with Israel in the wilderness, and seven years more since they entered into the land, in all eighty five; there is no necessity of understanding it that this was his precise birth day, but that about this time, or that he was now completely of such an age, which was more by fifteen years than the age of man in common at that time, (see ^{<09:10>}Psalms 90:10).

Ver. 11. *As yet I [am as] strong this day as [I was] in the day that Moses sent me*, etc.] To spy the land, forty five years ago; suggesting that he was as sound in his mind, understanding, judgment and memory, and as hale, strong, and robust in his body now, as he had been so long ago; which was a wonderful instance of the care of divine Providence over him in upholding him in life, and continuing him in vigour and health at such an age, when the carcasses of so many thousands had pined away and fell in the wilderness:

as my strength [was] then, even so [is] my strength now for war; he had the same strength of body and courage of mind to engage in warlike enterprises as he had so many years ago; and this he the rather mentions, to prevent any objection Joshua might make to the giving of Hebron to him,

since being inhabited by giants, it required a large share of strength and courage to attempt the conquest of it: but Caleb had strength

both to go out, and to come in; to do any civil business, to preside over his tribe, or to govern any city, and its appendages, that should be put into his hands.

Ver. 12. *Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spake in that day*, etc.] The mountainous part of the country, the hill country of Judea, in which Hebron, Debir, and other cities were; for it was not one particular city only that Caleb requested, but a large tract of ground;

for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims [were] there, and [that] the cities [were] great and fenced; that the giants, called Anakims, dwelt in the mountainous country, and their cities, Hebron, Debir, and Anab, were very large, and well fortified; this Joshua heard at the time the spies were sent into the land, he being one of them; and this he heard, not from the report of the spies, but from the people of the country, and therefore must know that to conquer these men, and subdue their cities, was an arduous undertaking; but since he had strength and courage, he hoped his request would be granted:

if so be the Lord [will be] with me; which he spake not as doubting of his presence and power to be with him, and assist him, but as placing his confidence therein, and, distrusting his own power and ability, having no dependence on that, but believing that the Lord, or, as the Targum, the Word of the Lord, would be with him for his help:

then, says Caleb,

I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said; that is, to drive the Anakims out of their cities, or out of the mountains, the caves and dens there, to which they betook themselves, since the taking of Hebron, Debir, and Anab, by Joshua, (^{¶11:22}Joshua 11:22); and he relied upon the promise of God to enable him to do this, and not upon his natural strength and courage, or the number and prowess of the warlike tribe of Judah, of which he was prince.

Ver. 13. *And Joshua blessed him*, etc.] By granting him his request, congratulating him upon it, and praying for and wishing him success in his attempt to drive out the giants, and possess their country:

and gave unto Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, Hebron for an inheritance; being satisfied of the justness of his suit, of its being the will of God, and the order of Moses, that he should have this for an inheritance, which he had heard himself, had knowledge of, and well remembered: this is to be understood not of the city of Hebron itself, for that was given to the Levites, and was a city of refuge, but the country round about in the fields and villages annexed to it, as appears from (^{<1212>}Joshua 21:12).

Ver. 14. *Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day,* etc.] The time of the writing of this book:

because he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel; as in (^{<1648>}Joshua 14:8,9); Hebron signifies fellowship or communion; and this in a spiritual sense is very desirable by all the people of God, as Hebron was by Caleb, even communion with God, Father, Son and Spirit, with angels and saints, both now and hereafter; and they are willing to engage with their spiritual enemies in the name and strength of Christ, though ever so potent, may they but enjoy this blessing, and which is more or less granted, to all the hearty, sincere, and faithful followers of Christ; (see ^{<1842>}John 14:21-23 ^{<1008>}1 John 1:3,7).

Ver. 15. *And the name of Hebron before [was] Kirjatharba,* etc.] According to Jerom^{f292}, it had its name of Hebron from a son or grandson of Caleb of that name, (^{<1782>}1 Chronicles 2:42); and if so, then it is here, and in some other places, so called by anticipation: Kirjatharba may be rendered “the city of the four”; and had its name, as some think, from the four couple buried there, or near it, Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah; or from four eminent persons, who formerly dwelt there, Aner, Eshcol, Mamre, and Abraham; or rather from four persons that more lately dwelt there, Anak and his three sons, Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai; or Arba is the name of some great man, to whom this city belonged, and so was called the city of Arba, which is the sense of our version, as appears by the following supplement:

[which Arba was] a great man among the Anakims; both in stature and in dignity, and in authority, which some take to be Anak himself, the father of the Anakims; so Jarchi and Kimchi:

and the land had rest from war; as is observed in (~~16123~~ Joshua 11:23); after Joshua had finished his conquest; and here again it is remarked just before the division of the land, as being now a proper time for it.