

Unwavering Determination

CALEB FOLLOWED THE LORD COMPLETELY AND RECEIVED
WHAT GOD HAD PROMISED HIM DECADES EARLIER.

Joshua 14:1-15

1 The Israelites received these portions that the priest **Eleazar**, ^A Joshua son of Nun, and the **family heads** ^B of the Israelite tribes gave them in the land of Canaan. 2 Their inheritance was **by lot** ^C as the LORD commanded through Moses for the nine and a half tribes, 3 because Moses had given the inheritance to the two and a half tribes **beyond the Jordan**. ^D But he gave no inheritance among them to the **Levites**. ^E 4 The descendants of Joseph became two tribes, **Manasseh and Ephraim**. ^F No portion of the land was given to the Levites except cities to live in, along with pasturelands for their cattle and livestock. 5 So the Israelites did as the LORD commanded Moses, and they divided the land. 6 The descendants of Judah approached Joshua at Gilgal, and **Caleb son of Jephunneh** ^G the Kenizzite said to him, “You know what the LORD promised Moses the man of God at Kadesh-barnea about you and me. 7 I was forty years old when Moses the LORD’s servant sent me from Kadesh-barnea to scout the land, and I brought back an honest report. 8 My brothers who went with me caused the people to lose heart, but I followed the LORD my God **completely**. ^H 9 On that day Moses swore to me, ‘The land where you have set foot will be an inheritance for you and your descendants forever, because you have followed the LORD my God completely.’ 10 As you see, the LORD has **kept me alive** ^I these forty-five years as he promised, since the LORD spoke this word to Moses while Israel was journeying in the wilderness. Here I am today, eighty-five years old. 11 I am still as strong today as I was the day Moses sent me out. My strength for battle and for daily tasks is now as it was then. 12 Now give me this **hill country** ^J the LORD promised me on that day, because you heard then that the **Anakim** ^K are there, as well as large fortified cities. Perhaps the LORD will be with me and I will drive them out as the LORD promised.” 13 Then Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave him Hebron as an inheritance. 14 Therefore, **Hebron** ^L still belongs to Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite as an inheritance today because he followed the LORD, the God of Israel, completely. 15 Hebron’s name used to be Kiriath-arba; Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim. After this, the land had rest from war.

Exploring Key Words

- A** Aaron’s third son. He became high priest when his father died (Num. 20:22-29; 26:60-61).
- B** Leaders from each tribe. Previously, they served under the direction of Moses in the wilderness (Num. 32:28).
- C** Casting lots was not a random act. The Israelites trusted the Lord to direct the outcome of the process (Num. 26:52-56; 33:54).
- D** The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh received permission to settle on the eastern side of the Jordan River (Num. 32).
- E** Israel’s priestly tribe. The Levites got no allotment of land. Instead, they received cities scattered across the nation (Deut. 18:1-2).
- F** Jacob had decided that Joseph’s two sons would account for two tribes (Gen. 48).
- G** A family head from Judah. Caleb had served as a faithful spy for Moses forty-five years earlier, and God blessed his faithfulness (Num. 13).
- H** “Wholeheartedly” (NIV); “wholly” (ESV; KJV); “fully” (NASB). The Hebrew wording suggests that nothing is lacking or left out.
- I** At 85, Caleb was as strong as he had been at 40 (v. 11). He enjoyed health and strength because God promised to bring him into Canaan.
- J** Caleb requested specific land from the tribe of Judah (see Num. 14:24). It was not the easiest terrain, but Caleb trusted God to deliver it.
- K** A tribe of fierce warriors, likely giants. They had frightened Israel’s earlier generation (Num. 13:22-33), but Caleb was not afraid.
- L** A leading city in Israel, located nineteen miles south of Jerusalem and fifteen miles west of the Dead Sea. This region had plenty of water and rich soil for agriculture.



Obedience (Josh. 14:1-5)

- The Lord previously had given Moses instructions on how the promised land would be allotted among the Israelite tribes (Num. 34). Following Moses's directives, Joshua, Eleazar the priest, and the selected leaders from each tribe divided the promised land.
- Lots were cast to identify the inheritance of each tribe. This was not a matter of chance. The Israelites were confident that God would reveal His will by determining the result of the lots.

Devotion (Josh. 14:6-9)

- Caleb approached Joshua and reminded him of what Moses promised him in Numbers 14:24.
- Forty-five years earlier, the Lord promised a particular part of Judah as an inheritance for Caleb and his descendants. Caleb was being blessed because he had followed God "completely" (v. 9).

Inheritance (Josh. 14:10-15)

- The land God gave Caleb was hill country and the home of a giant race known as the Anakim.
- Now eighty-five years old, Caleb felt as strong as when he was a young man. He was confident he could defeat any enemy with God's help.
- Joshua blessed Caleb and gave him Hebron as his inheritance.

Summary Statements

Caleb followed the Lord completely and received what God had promised him decades earlier.

- We will face daily opportunities to obey or disobey God's instructions.
- We can be assured that God knows and rewards those who follow Him wholeheartedly.
- We can be assured of God's presence and aid when we follow Him wholeheartedly.

Memory Verse

Joshua 14:8

Key Doctrine

God

To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience.
(See Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Luke 14:27.)



For additional commentary, see the Leader Guide or Adult Commentary, available for purchase at goExploreTheBible.com.

DISCUSSION PLAN

ENGAGE

Bonus: *Would you rate your patience as “high,” “medium,” or “low” in most cases? Why?*

- A lot of people are like the little boy who prayed, “God give me patience, and give it to me right now!”
- The Bible teaches us to trust God’s promises while also trusting His timing. For instance, thousands of years passed from the time God first promised the coming of the Messiah until Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Yet the Bible says God sent His Son at just the right time (Gal. 4:4).
- We can depend on God to keep His promises—no matter how long He takes to do so.

What have you learned about trusting God’s timing? (PSG, p. 55)

EXPLORE

OBEDIENCE (JOSH. 14:1-5)

Bonus: *Do you read instructions or do things on your own? How does that usually work out?*

- Verse 1 introduces the individuals who were central to distributing the land to each tribe. Eleazar was Aaron’s third son and Aaron’s successor as the high priest. Joshua and a leader from each tribe joined him in the work.
- Since Gad, Reuben, and half of Manasseh received an inheritance east of the Jordan River, this distribution focused on the remaining tribes. By God’s command, each tribe’s inheritance was determined by casting lots. This was not a random event because Israel knew God was in control of how the lots fell for each tribe.
- Israel had thirteen tribes, but Levi received no allotment. Instead, this tribe got forty-eight cities scattered across Israel. This would allow them to teach the law in every tribe.
- Verse 5 emphasizes that all of “the Israelites did as the LORD commanded Moses.” This was a stark contrast to the previous generation’s consistent rebellion against God.

How was the dividing of the land a demonstration of trust in God and His wisdom? (PSG, p. 59)

DEVOTION (JOSH. 14:6-9)

Bonus: *What is a hobby or sport you are “devoted” to following? Why?*

- Caleb, from the tribe of Judah, approached Joshua and reminded him of Moses’s promise at Kadesh-barnea. He had served as a spy the first time Israel approached the promised land (see Num. 13–14). Because he trusted God and gave a faithful report, the Lord blessed him. God promised that he would enter the promised land, unlike most of his contemporaries. He also would receive a particular tract of land in Judah’s territory.

- The word “completely” in verse 9 means “wholeheartedly.” For decades earlier, Caleb had followed God completely. He was committed to following God completely in this situation.

What does it look like to follow the Lord wholeheartedly? (PSG, p. 60)

INHERITANCE (JOSH. 14:10-15)

Bonus: *How do you respond to challenges in life? What is the greatest challenge you’ve overcome?*

- Caleb received God’s promise when he was 40 years old. Unfortunately, the rebellion of others forced him to wait another forty-five years. Now, at 85, he was ready to take possession of his inheritance with God’s help.
- The confidence Caleb felt was anchored in what he had seen God do in his own life. Despite his age, he felt as strong as he had been forty-five years earlier. As a result, he was ready to take on the most intimidating foes the promised land had to offer.
- The terrain of the “hill country” alone could make it challenging. The presence of the Anakim, a race of giants, presented another major obstacle. But Caleb claimed Hebron, formerly known as “Kiriath-arba” in honor of an Anakim leader, for his own.
- Joshua blessed him; and, based on the writer’s words, Caleb conquered the land. It remained in his family’s possession at the time the book of Joshua was written.

Which of God’s promises do you rely upon when facing unknown challenges? (PSG, p. 62)

CHALLENGE

As a group, discuss various situations where people have a choice to obey or disobey God.

What can people do to prepare themselves for these situations before they face them? (PSG, p. 63)

Encourage individuals to reflect on areas where they face a choice to obey or disobey God personally.

What should you remember and do in order to make the right decision and obey God? (PSG, p. 63)

FURTHER DISCUSSION



Scan here for additional discussion questions for this week’s study.

BIBLE SKILL (PSG, P. 62)

Use a cross reference to learn more about what the Bible says about a particular subject.

The word “inheritance” essentially refers to a “legal transmission of property following death.” However, the Hebrew terms translated “inheritance” did not necessarily presuppose a death; they could be used in other ways. Determine how many times “inheritance” or a similar term appears in Joshua 14:1-15. Then read and reflect on these verses to learn more about how it’s used in Scripture: Joshua 1:15; 13:33; Jeremiah 10:16; Matthew 19:29; 25:34; and Romans 8:17.

Allow volunteers to share inheritances they may have received over the years. Talk about what made those gifts so special. Direct the group to complete the Bible Skill activity on page 62 of the PSG. After a few minutes, discuss similarities and differences between Israel’s inheritance and inheritances we receive today.

OBJECT LESSON: PIZZA

Prior to the session, cook a frozen pizza but don’t slice it. Bring the pizza and a pizza cutter with you to the session.

To supplement the group plan, explain that Joshua 14 describes how the promised land was divided among the Israelite tribes. Display the pizza. Ask: ***What are some different ways we could divide this pizza among the group? Would it be fair for some people to get larger pieces? Why or why not? What would be a good way to determine the order for people to get pieces of pizza?***

Discuss responses. Direct a volunteer to read Joshua 14:1-5 as the group listens for how God decided which tribes would get which land in Canaan. Emphasize that casting lots did not produce a random result. Explain that God was in control of the outcome, so chance played no part in the decisions. Affirm that God still can be trusted with the decisions we make in life.

JOSHUA’S BLESSING

Joshua gave Caleb the inheritance that God had promised. Caleb had followed the Lord fully and had waited forty-five years to receive his inheritance. The depth of his loyalty set an excellent example of faithfulness for God’s people then and now.

Along with the inheritance, Joshua also gave Caleb a blessing. In those days, blessings involved more than wishing someone well. The blessing invoked God’s power on the one receiving it. Joshua’s blessing placed Caleb in the Lord’s hands and under the Lord’s protection. He asked God to grace Caleb and his family with success and prosperity.

When Joshua blessed Caleb, he exhibited the unique bond they shared. Forty-five years earlier at Kadesh-barnea, they stood together when other Israelites stood against them (Num. 13:30; 14:6-9). Both of them registered unshakable devotion to the Lord by believing that He would enable them to conquer the promised land. They urged the people of Israel to trust Him too.

Without a doubt, the courageous stand they had taken linked them to one another inseparably. Consequently, Caleb registered no hesitation when

approaching Joshua forty-five years later and making his bold request for the hill country (Josh. 14:12).

Joshua gave a blessing to other Israelites who played a critical role in taking possession of the land and settling it. He blessed the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. After the conquest of the land, they returned to the land that Moses had given to them on the eastern side of the Jordan River.

When he became the leader of the Israelites, these tribes pledged their loyalty to him and to the western tribes of Israel. In keeping with their pledge, they joined the other tribes in conquering the land on the western side of the Jordan River (1:12-18). As they made their way back to their homes, Joshua blessed them (22:6-7).

BONUS CONTENT***The Tribal Allotments of Israel***

Learn more about where the Israelite tribes settled in the promised land.