

TREASURE IN JARS OF CLAY



Caleb

I once told an “older” friend that I wanted to be just like her when I grew up. I admired the way that she never used her age as a reason to stop learning, growing, or serving and she always treated others with such grace. She gently and wisely admonished me with her words, “the way to become a gracious old woman is to be a gracious young woman.”

I think that we first see the qualities of eighty five year old Caleb in the forty year old who explored the Promised Land with Joshua. How did the young Caleb respond to the negative report of his fellow spies in Numbers 13?

According to Numbers 14:9, why were Caleb and Joshua convinced the Israelites could succeed in conquering the land?

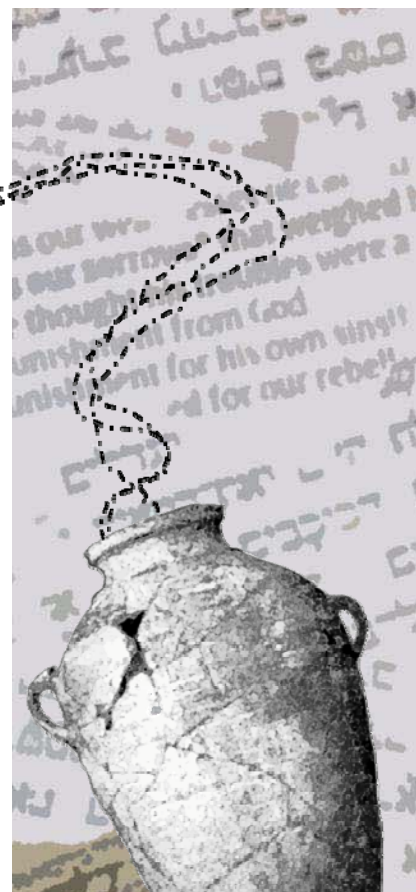
At eighty five years of age, Caleb was as strong and vigorous, both in health and in spirit and vision, as he had been as a young man. What did the elderly Caleb ask for in Joshua 14:12?

Who lived there?

What was Caleb confident that he could do?

Caleb’s confidence and courage are still there, still evident in his actions. He did not see his age as a hindrance in the challenge of tackling the very giants who had struck his countrymen with a debilitating fear over forty years earlier.

What made Caleb’s positive qualities so enduring? I think the answer lies in his wholehearted devotion to God. Caleb’s courage was based not on his own strength, but on the mighty power of a God who does not change. Caleb’s lasting confidence was founded in the reliable promises of God. Caleb had not only seen God’s power displayed in the plagues of Egypt, the crossing of the sea, and God’s provision for the needs of His people, he remembered them. Caleb did not forget what God had done, so he knew what God could and would do. He took God’s promises and God’s commands seriously. He saw the expense of opposing God, not only for the foreign nations, but among the Israelites as well. Caleb had a clear idea of whose side he wanted to be on. His mind was made up before he ever went on that first fateful trip of the twelve spies. The other ten spies illustrate the words of E. Stanley Jones, a missionary to India, “If you don’t make up your mind, your unmade mind will make you.” Caleb did not crumble in the face of giants, because he had a heart fully committed to trusting and loving God.



“But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.”

2 Corinthians 4:7

READ:

- Numbers 13-14
- Joshua 14-15
- Judges 1
- 1 Chronicles 4:15

We first meet Caleb in his appointment by Moses to represent the tribe of Judah as one of the twelve spies sent to check out the Promised Land before entering it (Numbers 13:6). These were men who had been born and raised in Egypt as slaves. They had only heard stories of this land that

was relatively briefly dwelt in by just a few generations of their forefathers. How distant the promises that God had made to their ancestors must have seemed to them as young adults in Egypt. How exciting, as well as formidable, this adventure must have seemed to those who had only known the confines of slavery. Now, these select twelve would actually get to see the land that was to be theirs. I wonder what they imagined it would be like.



When God sends me on adventure, I always hope that He will kind of smooth the way before I even get there. I expect success to come as I have defined and pictured it. I imagine that a sign of God's hand in the venture will be an absence of giants and battles, or for that matter, exposure to anything unpleasant or evil. When God asks something of me, I kind of have the attitude that we are striking some sort of bargain. If I am faithful in following Him, then He owes me blessings x, y and z – all of my choosing. My obedience will earn His endorsement on my life and will ensure peaceful waters. Once in a while that has proved true, but more often not. I have much to learn from Caleb's courageous obedience to God.

Can Do Attitude

The first thing that strikes me is his can-do attitude, even in the face of opposition. Like all the other spies, he saw the abundance of the land of Canaan. Like all the other spies, he saw that the enemy was present there, and that they were big. Perhaps, Caleb even experienced disappointment at their presence. But while ten of the spies seemed surprised and dismayed by this, Caleb and Joshua seemed to take it in stride. The presence of an enemy only meant the opportunity to overcome. As C.S. Lewis wrote, "The disappointment that comes from an unexpected trouble, an unplanned difficulty, can help us die to ourselves, to our attempts at control, to our plans for the perfect life. Disappointment is an agent of the cross." For the ten spies and the rest of the community that listened to them, the disappointing news ended their mission. For Joshua and Caleb, the reality of giants in God's land brought forth a determination and confidence. What were mere mortals to a God who had brought horrific plagues to the world's most powerful nation? Who worried about giants when their God could part the sea? If God said He would give the land, then He would. But maybe the ten spies were like me, and expected the enemy to be absent altogether.

When Caleb continued to insist that they should take the land as God had told them to, what was he in danger of? _____

The greatest obstacle in doing God's work came from among God's people. Do you feel like fear has ever quenched, or delayed God's mission in your own assembly? How? _____

How do you think Caleb and Joshua responded to the disappointment they must have felt? _____

We don't hear anything more of Caleb for another 45 years. How do you think he passed that time? _____

**"We should go up
and take possession
of the land,
for we can certainly
do it."
Numbers 13:30**



Wholehearted

What reason does Numbers 14:24; and Deuteronomy 1:36 give for Joshua and Caleb alone being allowed to enter the land that God had promised? _____

The Hebrew word that is translated “wholehearted” in these verses is *male*. It denotes the filling of something that is empty, or the placement of an object into a receptacle. In the case of Caleb, that receptacle is Caleb’s heart, and he has allowed it to be filled with God. He follows the Lord wholeheartedly. He is that jar of clay that has been filled with the treasure of God’s spirit, and it is evident in his life. Though time passes, the power within does not, because it has remained pure and undiluted.

God has promised us an inheritance as well.

Who did Jesus say would claim that inheritance in Luke 10:25-28? _____

How much of our heart, soul, mind and strength must we love God with in _____ order to claim our inheritance? _____

What are some of the ways that will be evident in our lives? _____

Until what age? _____

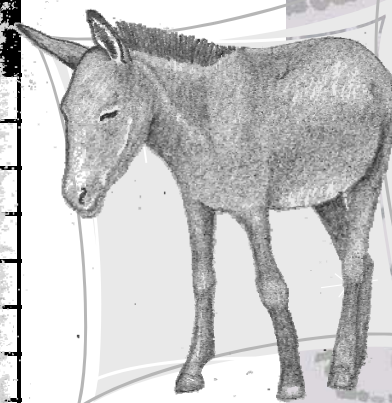
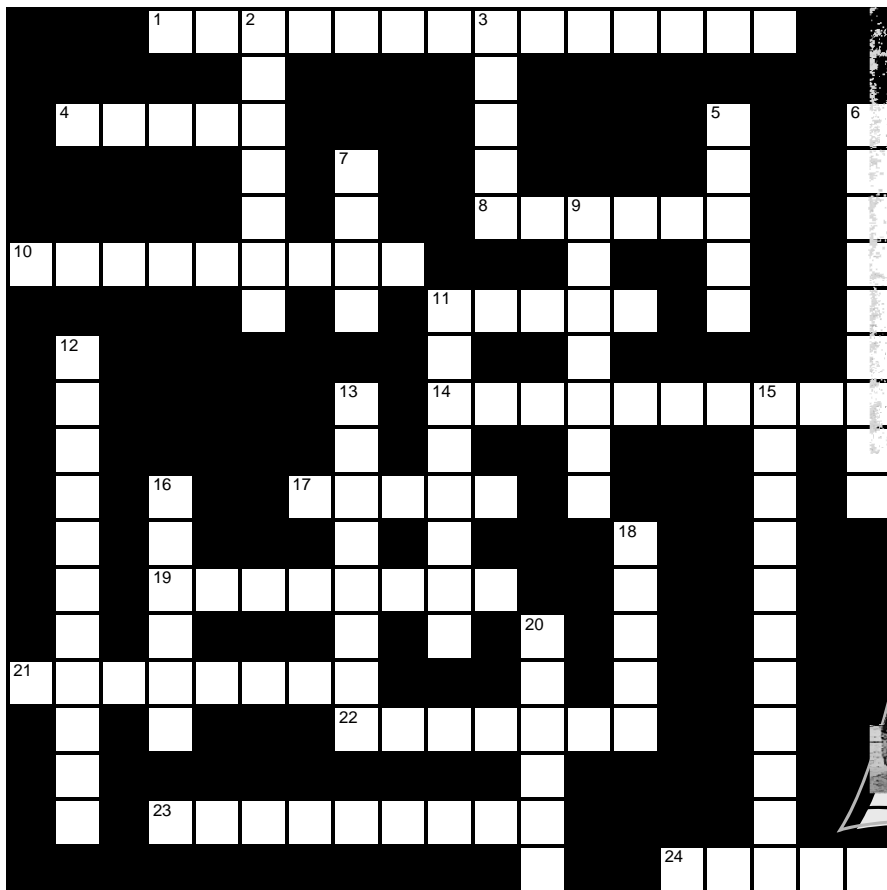
Caleb drove the giants out of Hebron, and then attacked Debir to the southwest of Hebron. What prize did he offer to the man who defeated this town (Joshua 15:16)? _____

How important do you think it was to Caleb to claim this land? _____

How do you think Caleb’s wholehearted determination to follow God influenced Judah’s hold on their inheritance? _____



PUZZLE PAGE



Clues

Across

- 1 way that he followed God Num 14 (14)
- 4 his tribe Num 34 (5)
- 8 given to him Josh 14 (6)
- 10 his son-in-law was raised up as one Jdg 3 (9)
- 11 only he and Joshua would do this Num 14 (5)
- 14 he said they could take this Num 13 (10)
- 17 one was asked of him Jdg 1 (5)
- 19 he and Joshua were the only spies that _____ Num 14 (8)
- 21 the victor was promised _____ to his daughter Josh 15 (8)
- 22 he gave these to Acsah Josh 15 (7)
- 23 his dad was one Num 32 (9)
- 24 Acsah encouraged her husband to ask for this Josh 15 (5)

Down

- 2 his nephew Josh 15 (7)
- 3 his daughter Josh 15 (5)
- 5 his younger brother Jdg 1 (5)
- 6 his dad Num 13 (9)
- 7 land that he set his _____ on given to him Deut 1 (4)
- 9 Joshua did this to him Josh 14 (7)
- 11 was among those who did this Num 14 (8)
- 12 his would inherit the land Num 14 (11)
- 13 had to be driven out of his land Josh 15 (8)
- 15 he received his Josh 14 (11)
- 16 didn't die here Num 26 (6)
- 18 promised him the land he received Jdg 1 (5)
- 20 daughter rode on this to see him Jdg 1 (6)



Map

PLACES

Using the map in the back of your Bible, label the following on this map:

- The land possessed by the tribe of Judah
- Hebron
- Debir
- Jerusalem



Puzzle answers:

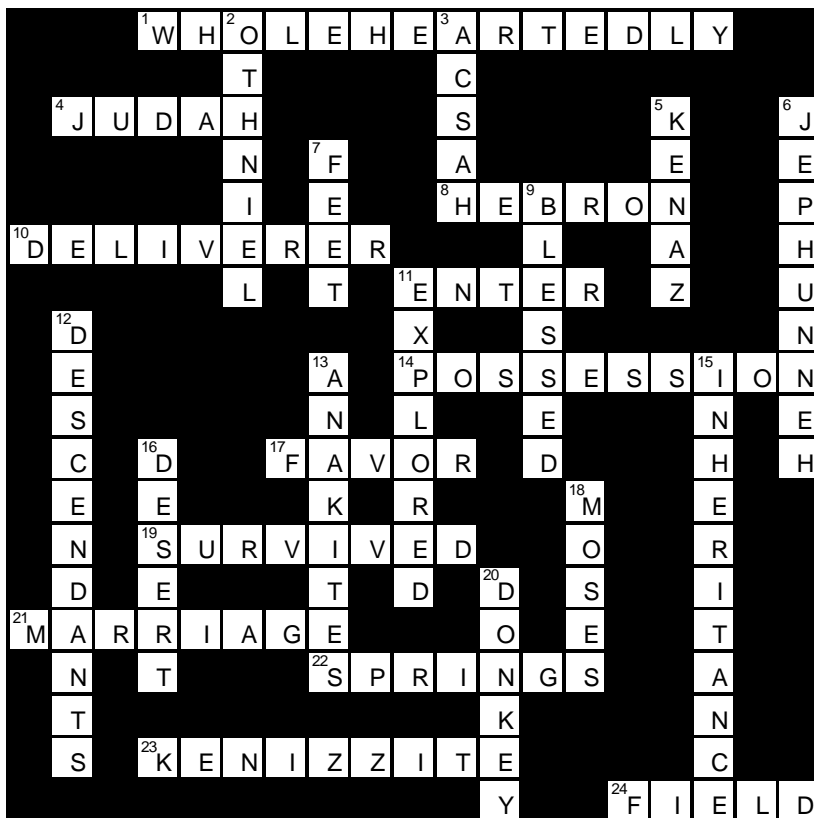
**“A pessimist sees
the difficulty in
every opportunity,
and an optimist
sees the opportu-
nity in every diffi-
culty.”
Winston Churchill**

Which one was Caleb? _____

How was that a reflection of his faith
in God? _____

Which one are you? _____

What would you like to change? _____



**“But because my
servant Caleb
has a different
spirit and follows
me wholeheart-
edly, I will bring
him into the land
he went to, and
his descendants
will inherit it.”**

Num 14:24

For more
studies,



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Sources:

CAN DO ATTITUDE P.2

C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York:
Touchstone, 1996), 87

