

Against the Grain

Joshua 14:6-11

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A. His Word Never Fails (Vs. 6; 1 Peter 1:22-25):

1. Caleb drew near – The sons of Judah came before Joshua as if they were coming to a court hearing with high respect for the authority the Lord God provided Joshua.
2. Said – Caleb continuously kept speaking to Joshua about his concerns before all the people present.

a) Standing before General Joshua, his old friend and fellow spy (Num. 14:6), 85-year-old Caleb (Josh. 14:10) told the story of that never-to-be-forgotten day, 45 years before (v. 10), when the two of them stood alone against the other ten spies and the cowardly mob. For Moses had sent 12 spies into Canaan (Num. 13:2); two of them were Caleb and Joshua (Num. 13:6, 8). When the spies returned, ten of them praised the land itself but fearfully concluded Israel could not conquer it (Num. 13:27–29, 31–33).^[1]

- Caleb stated (v. 7) that he was 40 years-old when he went to spy out the land. The wilderness wanderings lasted 38 years, thus bringing Caleb's age to 78 at the beginning of the conquest. Caleb then said he was 85 at the end of the conquest. So the conquest lasted seven years. This is confirmed by Caleb's reference (v. 10) to God's sustaining grace for 45 years since Kadesh Barnea (38 years of the wanderings plus seven years of the conquest).^[2]

b) The people turned away from God because of their fear, and Joshua turned to God because of his commitment to trust God's Word.

3. You know, teach – Caleb told Joshua that they had the same experience from the message provided by the Lord through Moses. They both remained faithful to the Lord, when spying out the land, so the Lord blessed them for trusting Him.

4. You know, teach – When we have a clear understanding, that is a result of our practical application of God’s Word (1 John 2:3-6), it does not matter what we may experience from that time forward; we must trust the Lord for the blessings He has for us in the future.

a) Pained at the cowardice of the people, Caleb and Joshua rent their garments and still urged the people to a bold and resolute deed, which so enraged the latter that they were ready to stone them both (Num. 14:10). On account of their fidelity, Caleb and Joshua alone were deemed worthy to enter into the land of Canaan (14:24, 30, 38; 26:65; 1 Macc. 2:56; Sirach 46:11, 12).

5. Jehovah – The Lord who reigns supreme is always faithful to execute His promises especially when we trust and obey Him.

6. Word which the Lord spoke – After 45 years the Lord proved what Joshua and Caleb knew He would do the first time around. With the powerful manifestation of His fulfilled promises right before them, Caleb expects Joshua to honor the authoritative Word of God.

a) To him, God was greater than the biggest problem. Caleb had faith in *the power of God*. Not so for the other spies. They magnified the problems and thereby minimized God, but Caleb would not follow the crowd. He did not once consider sacrificing his own convictions in order to make the majority report unanimous. Instead, he followed the Lord his God wholeheartedly (cf. v. 14).^[3]

7. Word which the Lord spoke – What the Lord said in the past is still good in the present, and it must be honored.

a) Caleb received as his personal inheritance the city of Hebron, known earlier as the city of Arba (15:13). Joseph's sons, Manasseh and Ephraim (16:4), took his place as tribal heads among the tribes of Israel (Gen. 48:5). Gezer (Josh. 16:10), a strategic fortress city on the coastal plain, did not come under full Israelite control until the days of Solomon (1 Kings 9:16). Shiloh (Josh. 18:1), located in the hill country of Ephraim twenty miles north of Jerusalem, was to serve as Israel's political and religious center for the next three hundred years.^[4]

B. Remain Faithful Against the Odds (vs. 7-8):

1. Forty years old – Caleb was forty years old when the Lord said everyone that was twenty and below should live. This means that the Lord kept His promises to Caleb and Joshua, and they are now in their eighties and still strong enough to fight in the war and lead their tribes. They have no doctors or medications. The Lord is faithful to His promises and is committed to fulfilling all His covenants.

a) But 45 years is a long time to wait for the fulfillment of a pledge - a long time for faith to live on a promise. Yet Caleb did wait through the weary years of the wilderness wanderings and the demanding years of the Conquest. Caleb had a strong faith in *the promises of God*. They sustained him in his difficult times.^[5]

2. Moses the servant of the Lord – Moses respected the Lord's authority and power and served the Lord humbly as His slave.

3. Sent – Moses, under the authority of the Lord God, directed Caleb to go into the Promise Land and spy it out energetically .

4. Brought word back – Caleb endlessly did what Moses directed him to do and departed and came back with a commitment to do what the Lord instructed the nation of Israel to complete in fulfillment to the Lord's covenant with Abraham. He faithfully executed Moses' orders.

5. Mine heart – When Caleb reported to Moses what he saw, he was passionately committed to, despite the obstacles, willfully do what he had set his mind to do.

6. Brethren – Even though the ten spies did not support what Caleb and Joshua said Caleb still viewed them as his brothers.

7. Went up with me made their heart – The other spies that left with Caleb did not obey Moses, instead they moved the will of the people to become fearful not to do what the Lord ordered Moses to do.

a) These verses review the events of Numbers 13 and 14. While Caleb's (and Joshua's) report was positive, the other spies' report had the effect of making the Israelites' hearts melt because of the fearsome nature of the land's inhabitants (vv. 7–8). Ironically, this was precisely the reaction of Canaan's inhabitants earlier, when they had heard of Israel's exploits (Josh 2:9, 11, 24; 5:1).¹⁶¹

8. Went up with me made their heart – Caleb had a complete understanding of the gravity of the challenge before Israel. Caleb made an intentional decision to magnify the power of God rather than the enormity of the problem before them. We spend so much time talking about the problems we experience rather than the answers the Lord God provides.

9. Melt with fear - Fear completely turned their hearts away from being determined to being totally against going into the Promise Land.

10. I follow the Lord my God – Despite the vicious and powerful nature of the enemy, the large walls, and the decision of the ten spies to cause the people to turn against the will of God, Caleb willfully got behind all that the Lord commanded Moses to do. This was willful and intentional because it was done with complete knowledge of all that was taking place in the Promise Land. Against all odds, Caleb determined in his heart to obey God and became purposeful about it.

11. The Lord my God fully – Caleb completely, to the fullest extent, trusted the covenant the Lord had made (Lord) and the sovereign power of God (God) and, with determination, overflowed with the desire to obey God despite the odds.

12. So Moses swore that day – Because of Caleb's faithful commitment to obey the Lord God, Moses made an oath that he expected the Lord to faithfully execute Caleb His promises. God promises the same for us (John 15:1-11).

a) Moses' promise to Caleb (v. 9) is recorded in Num 14:24 and especially Deut 1:36, where the wording is similar to that here. We learn here that Moses had actually sworn (*šb'*) to Caleb, a fact not recorded in the earlier passages. (See also the commentary on 19:49–50.) Caleb was not being self-serving by claiming that he had fully followed the Lord; he was simply stating a fact that Moses also had recognized (see the words at the end of v. 9, which are found in the Lord's mouth almost verbatim in Num 14:24 and in Moses' mouth in Deut 1:36).^[7]

13. The land on which your foot has trodden – What Caleb did in the past was completely what the Lord God was going to implement in the present based on wherever he had walked when spying out the Promise Land.

14. Inheritance – This gift of land that the Lord God has pledged to Caleb and his tribe will be with them forever.

15. Followed – Caleb was rewarded by the Lord God for getting behind His plan to invade the Promise Land and take it despite the overwhelming odds. God recognized Caleb's trust in Him and obedience by providing Caleb an inheritance that he would not obtain for another forty years. God did not just bless Caleb with land, but He was implicitly promising Caleb long life and a strong legacy.

16. The Lord my God fully — God had made such a powerful impact in Caleb's life that Caleb called God "my God."

17. The Lord my God fully - Caleb's commitment to the Lord was so sincere he was completely committed to doing whatever the Lord God requested of him.

C. Remember, God is for REAL! (vs. 10-11):

1. Now behold – Caleb now wants to draw everyone's attention to the fact that what the Lord promised has to be true because, after forty years of wondering and conquering the Promise Land, he is still alive.

2. Lord has let me live - The Lord, who has demonstrated that He has all authority and power and truly desires to have a relationship with Israel, has kept His Word and provided Caleb

eighty-five years of protection and vitality to deal with the wilderness, and to be successful with the invasion into the Promise Land.

3. Just as He spoke — The Lord God faithfully executed everything He verbally communicated to Caleb. Eighty-five years later, it proves that the Lord's Word is dynamic and true.

4. When Israel walked – When it seemed like God was not doing anything for Israel as they wandered in the wilderness, God's Word was still completely at work. The fact that Caleb is alive and has his inheritance is evidence that God will fulfill what He said He will do, no matter how helpless things may seem.

5. Now behold – Everyone that was present that day needs to pay strict attention to what the Lord has done.

6. I am still as strong today – God's Word is perfect, and He is faithful. Caleb is just as physically strong today as he was when God made this promise. Just like he could have gone into the land and fought 40 years earlier, he can fight now with the same strength 45 years later.

a) The might of the hero is still unbroken, although he is now eighty-five years old. A similar statement is made of Moses, Deut. 34:7.^[8]

b) Caleb lost nothing after 45 years.

7. As my strength was then, so my strength is now – Caleb's fighting ability did not change 45 years later.

8. For going out and coming in – No matter what challenge was provided to Caleb, he was physically equipped to get it done; whether it was going into the Promise Land or coming out.

^[1] Campbell, D. K. (1985). [Joshua](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 357). Victor Books.

^[2] Campbell, D. K. (1985). [Joshua](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 357). Victor Books.

^[3] Campbell, D. K. (1985). [Joshua](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 357). Victor Books.

- ^[4] Hughes, R. B., & Laney, J. C. (2001). [*Tyndale concise Bible commentary*](#) (pp. 89–90). Tyndale House Publishers.
- ^[5] Campbell, D. K. (1985). [Joshua](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 357). Victor Books.
- ^[6] Howard, D. M., Jr. (1998). [Joshua](#) (Vol. 5, p. 328). Broadman & Holman Publishers.
- ^[7] Howard, D. M., Jr. (1998). [Joshua](#) (Vol. 5, p. 328). Broadman & Holman Publishers.
- ^[8] Lange, J. P., Schaff, P., Fay, F. R., & Bliss, G. R. (2008). [*A commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Joshua*](#) (p. 124). Logos Bible Software.