

Messages From the Gates of Jerusalem  
#27 - Horse Gate - Part IV - "Hough Your Horses"

God gives a strange command for victory

Joshua 11:6, 9 But the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid because of them (a confederate under the King of Hazor, united to attack the young army of God. According to Jewish historians, some 300,000 foot soldiers, 20,000 horse chariots, and 10,000 soldiers on horses came out to fight Joshua and his army. This number is described as "much people, even as the sands that is upon the sea shore," 11:4.) for tomorrow about this time *I will deliver all of them* slain before Israel. You shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire." <sup>9</sup>So Joshua did to them as the LORD had told him: he hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots with fire.

"Houghing" a horse is done by cutting the sinews of their hind legs so that they are rendered incapable of speed.

Deut. 17:16 when the law of Moses was given, the Lord had forbidden Israel to "multiply horses," i.e., breed them.

Why did God give this strange command?

Couldn't horses make them stronger and more effective fighters?

God knew in order for the nation to be saved, they had to learn to trust wholly in Him for their protection. God wanted to be the wall of fire around Israel so He commanded Israel not to trust in physical objects for their safety, salvation, and freedom. Knowing if they did, they would start to think too highly of themselves, or of their possessions, and turn from the source of all strength, the great I Am.

God was teaching the Israelites:

1. To trust in Him, not in military resources. Obey Him and not question His instructions.

Ps. 20:7 Some *trust* in chariots, and some in horses;

But we will remember the name of the LORD our God.

God wanted them to rely on HIM ALONE for their victory; NOT on their own abilities.

2. There is no need of horses in the Promised Land.

God wanted them to possess Canaan and enjoy the bounty of its soil.

3. God wanted them to settle down in their Promised Land; horses would encourage travel. They were to be an agricultural, not a trading, people.

4. Horses would have encouraged trade and opened the Jews to the influences of the world; influences God was having them destroy.

5. Horses could fall into enemy hands. Use them against us

Truth: God wants us to be "helpless" so we will fully follow Him and rely on Him for victory. We will experience the STRENGTH of following Him. So "Hough your horses & follow Him."

This strength and vitality is exemplified in the life of Caleb. While the rest of the Israelite men were dying in the wilderness, Caleb remained strong and vibrant.

Caleb is a picture of what Christ promises to all those who wholly follow Him > an Abundant Life. We are to walk victoriously and hamstring our enemies. However, we are often "hamstrung" by Satan who works to accuse us, cause defeat and discouragement in our lives. He NEVER wants us to know and revel in the power of God to bring victory.

Praise: Rev. 12:10 for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.

I John 3:8 For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

*Jesus has rendered Satan POWERLESS; He has hamstrung Satan!* There is NO REASON we should allow Satan to defeat us. Focus on the POWER OF GOD in every situation.

Caleb was a man of Extraordinary Faith Caleb represented man in the FULLNESS of God's Strength, man unhindered by the world, by Satan, because Caleb WHOLLY FOLLOWED GOD!

I. Caleb possessed a Carrying Faith

Joshua 14:6-11 <sup>6</sup> Then the children of Judah came to Joshua in Gilgal. And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him: "You know the word which the LORD said to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh Barnea. <sup>7</sup> I *was* forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as *it was* in my heart. <sup>8</sup> Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I wholly followed the LORD my God. <sup>9</sup> So Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land where your foot has trodden (darak > warfare) shall be your inheritance and your children's forever, because you have wholly followed the LORD my God.' <sup>10</sup> And now, behold, the LORD has kept me alive, as He said, these forty-five years, ever since the LORD spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old. <sup>11</sup> As yet I *am as* strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength *was* then, so now *is* my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in.

Caleb, age 85, interrupted the apportionment of the land among the people of Israel when he stepped out of the ranks to claim the portion which God had promised him 45 years before.

Characteristics of Caleb:

1. The Faith of his youth was not dimmed in his old age.
2. The vision of the Lord was clearer as he grew older.
3. He was not content merely to survey his past but he was ready and eager for fresh battles with the enemy.
4. Caleb possessed an unwavering faith.

Return to the scene 45 years earlier recorded in Num. 13 & 14. The children of Israel reached a place called Kadesh-barnea on the very border of the Promised Land.

Problem: The UNBELIEF which had plagued them during their early wilderness journey demanded > We must send in spies to survey the land. So, 12 men (1 from each tribe) were sent in.

After a 6 weeks' tour of inspection they brought back 2 reports.

a. Majority Report > The land does flow with milk and honey.

Num. 13:28 NEVERTHELESS, the people who dwell in the land *are strong*; the cities *are fortified and very large*; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak (GIANTS) there.

Conclusion: We ARE NOT ABLE to go up against them.

b. Minority Report > Caleb & Joshua > It is true there are giants, but we BELIEVE GOD.

Num. 14:8 If the LORD delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land which flows with milk and honey.

Conclusion: We are well able to overcome it.

Imagine Caleb's reaction to the bounties of the Promised Land - the grapes that exploded with sweetness in his mouth after 2 years of manna and quail. He wanted this so very much! He & Joshua took samples of the fruit back to the people so they could experience it. Surely the people will be excited about this wonderful Promised Land! He could hardly believe his ears as the people listened intently to the descriptions of the giants and walled cities. People - can't you see these grapes! Taste! Can't you see that God is with us?

Difference: The majority measured the giants against their own strength.

Caleb & Joshua measured the giants against God's strength.

The majority trembled; the minority triumphed.

The majority had great giants and a little God.

Caleb & Joshua had a great God and little giants. "One with God is a majority."

"IF" - There was an "if" in Caleb's belief. It was NOT an "if" of unbelief; it was an "if" of humility. > If the Lord delight in us.

Remember the past: He recalled:

a. The last year's wilderness journey

b. The day he had been brought out of Egypt by the power of the blood of the Lamb.

c. The sure leading of the pillar of fire by night and the cloud by day.

d. He KNEW the Lord delighted in His people. THEREFORE, we are able to overcome.

Cry of the People: "Let us go back to Egypt." They FORGOT the bondage.

In their desire to avoid further peril and trouble, they dishonored God.

God's Decision: The land of blessing can ONLY be inherited by faith and obedience.

Therefore, the Promised Land will be refused to a whole generation of His people except Caleb & Joshua.

Num. 14:24 But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it.  
"wholly" or "fully" - 2 Hebrew words: ahar > the hind part, behind  
mala - to be filled up Caleb was filled up with the hindpart of God. He kept so close.  
To be filled with the Spirit of God > you are so dependent upon Him, He can't shake you!

Caleb surely treasured that promise from God during 45 years of weary wandering, toil and ceaseless conflict and unfulfilled hopes. As the people continued to murmur, Caleb retained the fixed purpose to wholly follow the LORD; his faith carried him.

Like Abraham in Rom. 4:20-21 He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, <sup>21</sup> and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.

Consider: Caleb was NEVER found among the grumblers, the skeptics and unbelievers. He was NEVER found among the people who yearned for the leeks and garlic of Egypt. He was NEVER found among those who disobeyed God or turned to idolatry.

Why? Caleb had caught a glimpse of the reward of obedience. That hope was sufficient to keep him true for the rest of his life and until that brought him to the place God had promised him.

Consider: If I am lacking in a "carrying" faith, I need to abide in Him, His Word and His Promises. The basis for abiding in Him is obedience to His commands. If I am not abiding in Him, I will not have the faith to carry me through the storms of life. Instead of feasting on the "monster fruit" of God, I am starving on Gerber's processed baby food.

## II. Caleb had a Climbing Faith

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

What a moment when Caleb (at 85) in all the maturity of godly character and in all the authority of one who believed God, stepped out of the ranks alone. He had gone through many difficulties and succeeded in the struggle to overcome those who would have done most anything to dissuade him from his conviction. Can you imagine hearing him:

"Now, after 45 years of waiting, after many an agony of soul, after having been tempted by the crowd to pull back - NOW, give me this mountain whereof the Lord spoke in that day!"

Adoniram Judson - missionary who spent 12 years in Burma without a convert. The board that sent him out didn't sense the situation nor what a tremendous missionary they had in Judson. They wrote him a letter suggesting he come home. What are the prospects in Burma for the future? He replied, "The future is as bright as the promises of God."

His confidence in God was the reason he could stay in the wilderness of Burma. Although he suffered a great deal, revival eventually came.

Testimony from an elderly saint - My favorite verse: "It came to pass." When I get in trouble and problems pile up, I turn to my verse and know my troubles have not come to stay; they have come to pass.

Truth: I can complain all day, but that will only hamstring my walk.

*Focus on God, His Hope, His Future for me.*

Truth: God has shown His love toward us beyond ALL doubt, in that "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Scripture tells us that it is through faith and patience that we will inherit the promises.

Note: Caleb's strength never weakened.

Joshua 14:11 As yet I *am as* strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength *was* then, so now *is* my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in.

Truth: A faith that NEVER wavered enabled him to lay hold on a strength that never weakened - the very power of God Himself.

Caleb fully followed the Lord while everyone around him was dropping dead, complaining, getting bitten by snakes, swallowed by the earth. Caleb was thinking about going mountain climbing; pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus. Caleb kept on drinking from the Rock, thinking about the grapes, his inheritance and climbing the mountain.

Truth: You are either running a winning race or falling down in the wilderness.

No human energy could suffice for all the trials of the way. Caleb could toil, fight and exhaust himself and still be full of the strength of God. This is a great example of II Cor. 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward *man* is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

### III. Caleb had a Conquering Faith

Desire: II Tim. 4:7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Caleb's reward was complete victory.

Joshua 14:13-15 <sup>13</sup> And Joshua blessed him, and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as an inheritance. <sup>14</sup> Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel. <sup>15</sup> And the name of Hebron formerly was Kirjath Arba (*Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim*).

Then the land had rest from war.

Caleb drove out the three sons of Anak from there: Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi, the children of Anak.

We discover of all the people who received an inheritance in the land, Caleb was the only one who succeeded in expelling the enemy. The others made poor headway. The last part of Joshua makes sad reading. Over and over: "They were not able to drive them out."

The chariots of iron were too strong. Caleb was able to drive out ALL the enemy even though

there were 3 giants in the portion allotted to him.

Consider: The man who wholly followed the LORD was the only one who was wholly victorious in the battle.

Truth: The enemy knows the weak points in my armor. Failure to drive out the enemy in my life is due to my failure to wholly follow the Lord. Absolute triumph is achieved only in response to utter obedience. God knows the leakage in my consecration, the flaw in my obedience which has led to failure to exterminate the foe and not victory.

Not only was Caleb totally victorious, he had a blessing that never wasted. In Joshua 15, we learn that Caleb had something to spare for his daughter and her husband. He was able to portion out some of his inheritance to this newlywed couple. He gave them the upper and lower springs. It could be truly said of Caleb: "He was like a watered garden, full of fragrance rare." The blessing of his life overflowed to others. Does your heart yearn to be like that? The secret of Caleb > He had a love that never waned.

When Caleb was 40, he toured and inspected the land. One place captured his heart, not because of its fruit, its milk and honey. He desired Hebron which was situated on a rugged mountain. It was the most powerful stronghold of the enemy and was guarded by the strongest of giants. Gen. 10 tells us that Abraham pitched his tent here. God spoken to Abraham face to face and gave to Abraham the promise of the land.

Hebron's meaning: fellowship, love and communion. This was the place that Caleb cherished. This is the place we all must seek and find. Caleb wanted to PROVE the POWER of GOD. Fear looks at the problems > Faith claims the opportunities.

Truth: Faith filters every giant through the Power of God.

Redpath: "There is a place guarded by powerful forces, a rugged stronghold which Satan attempts to keep from God's people at all costs. He is prepared to barter portions of the land to the children of God. He will give them the plains and the valleys. He will give them the milk and honey. But when Satan sees a soul pressing toward the mountain of Hebron - the soul that is going to be satisfied with nothing in his life other than love, fellowship and communion with God - Satan is stirred to a last-ditch battle."

"Here was the secret of Caleb's patience, of his faith and of his complete victory - in Hebron he had caught a glimpse of the reward of discipleship - the greatest reward of all. Here God had met man face to face. Caleb saw the place of communion, of fellowship, of God's infinite blessing, and regardless of the cost and the hardship, he pressed on until Hebron was his."

Joshua 14:14 Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel.