

“The DOG” who believed.

There is an interesting anecdote about people who are about to die: It asserts that people are more saddened about the things they could have done in life than what they actually did. I'm sure that is not a universal truism but certainly has some basis in reality. The Bible surely gives multiple examples of people who must have rued many things they did in life.

For example, King David had many instances in which he regretted his actions. Other examples are: Solomon, David's son, the wisest man who ever lived. He definitely succumbed to ungodly living. Samson; The strongest man in the world had his moments also. Both were given outstanding divine blessings in their youth. Are there people who had nothing to build upon or were raised not knowing the true God ever get to the place where they reveled in their accomplishments more than their regrets?

There is one individual in the Old Testament who started out living in a society that warred against the people of God. His name was “Dog”. Bible readers know him as Caleb who became a leader in the tribe of Judah. He also was one of the twelve scouts sometimes referred to as spies, who evaluated the promised land prior to entering it.

Caleb is an interesting character. Since dogs were outcasts in the Eastern culture, one wonders why he was given that name. Eventually he found his way into the midst of God's people eventually becoming a leader in the tribe of Judah..

Wait a minute! If he was a leader in the tribe of Judah, how could he not be a Jew.

Caleb was not a Jew; he was an Edomite. This is interesting to reflect upon. He is described as "Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite." The Kenizzites were the sons of Esau, and were related to the Edomites, long-standing enemies of Israel. Throughout most of the history of their relationship, the Edomites carried out border wars and skirmishes against the Israelites. Therefore, Caleb was born outside the covenant people of God; he was not a Jew.

That he identified with the Jews in Egypt is most certain as it is written in the listing of the spies who went into Canaan land; from the tribe of Judah, Caleb son of Jephunneh; **Numbers 13:6,**

It is interesting to discover, in tracing his lineage in the book of 1 Chronicles, that sometime in the history of his family, he was adopted into the tribe of Judah. There was no special category in Israel for people who formerly were Gentiles. **Exodus 12:47-49** makes that very explicit: ⁴⁷“All the congregation of Israel are to celebrate this. ⁴⁸“But if a stranger sojourns with you, and celebrates the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near to celebrate it; and he shall be like a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person may eat of it.

⁴⁹“The same law shall apply to the native as to the stranger who sojourns among you.”

As you know, the Jews looked at people in one of two ways: either you were a Jew, or you were a Gentile. Caleb, and others who came into God's community, were originally Gentiles who were grafted into the Jewish Olive tree. Israel did not establish a thirteenth tribe for such persons; they were absorbed right into God's people and became members of one of the twelve tribes. In this case, Caleb became a member of the tribe of Judah, and was adopted into one of the families.

Whereas apparently he had no family before his adoption - at least none that he could be proud of -- he became a member of the aristocracy, because it was from the tribe of Judah that the kings and great leaders of Israel came.

It struck me that a number of Gentile converts in the Old Testament, such as Rahab the Amorite, Ruth the Moabitess, and Caleb the Kenizzite--these three, at least--were taken into the kingly tribe, the tribe of Judah, the Lord's line. All believers are continually reminded of the statement in the book of Hebrews that Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers. See **Hebrews 2:11** *So now Jesus and the ones he makes holy have the same Father. That is why Jesus is not ashamed to call them his brothers and sisters.* See also **Mark 3:31-35?**

If all the promises of God are to come through the Jews, how did Caleb come to be so privileged? The answer is that was God's plan from the beginning that no man should perish but have everlasting life. Although it was not apparent from the beginning, it can be found even in the Old Testament. As far back as we can determine, the promise of deliverance was given to Eve when God cursed Satan in **Gen 3:15:** *And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.*”

In **Genesis 5**, God gives the genealogy of Adam's line whose name meanings tell the story of the Gospel. **Adam**= Man > **Seth** (Appointed) > **Enos** (Mortal) > **Cainan** (Sorrow) > **Mahalaleel** (Blessed God) > **Jared** (Shall come down) > **Enoch** (Teaching) > **Methuselah** (His death shall bring) > **Lamech** (Despairing) > **Noah** (Rest, Comfort). **Genesis 5:1-29.**

Most Christians would skip over this passage as being meaningless for their edification. But, when we take the meaning of these names beginning with Adam through Noah who of course was the most righteous man at the time of the destruction of the earth by the flood, we get this hidden prophecy: **Man was appointed mortal sorrow, but the blessed God shall come down teaching that His death shall bring to the despairing rest and comfort.** This verse teaches us His divine will by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit given to Moses and others by the living word.

Israel unprepared for Victory

"Israel was quite unskilled in the use and manufacture of implements of war. They had at their disposal only the most primitive weapons--bows, javelins, swords, knives--but certainly no horse-drawn chariots which the Canaanites possessed in vast numbers. Israel was still spoiled by the 'fleshpots of Egypt,' for which the older people among them were continually sighing and bemoaning their present lot. Despite their new faith and the experiences of the Exodus which they had shared together, they were not yet welded into a community which would be prepared to risk a clash with superior forces."

In fact, the murmuring among each other in the camp after hearing the report of the spies was to appoint a captain and return to Egypt. **Numbers 14:4**

The following is an account by Josephus, the Jewish Historian about the reaction of the majority of the people against the good report of Joshua and Caleb. The congregation knew the ten alarmed spies as honorable men, trustworthy, "the bravest among their tribes." So what they said about Canaan and the giants carried a lot of weight. On the other hand, they did not trust Caleb and Joshua, perhaps because those two were too closely associated with Moses and too much under his influence. Supposing, then, from what they had heard from the others, that it was impossible to get possession of the promised land, all the Hebrew men numbered for war--a total of 603,550 above the age of twenty--flatly refused to go up.

Caleb and Joshua tried to change their minds. But the more they sought to persuade the people the more agitated they became. As ill feelings against the two heightened, some in the crowd threatened to stone them. They also rebuffed Moses, shouting him down. They even began murmuring against God for bringing them into the wilderness to die.

"And when the congregation was dissolved," relates Josephus, *"they, their wives and children, continued their lamentation. They also blamed Moses, and made a clamour against him and his brother Aaron, the high priest. Accordingly they passed that night very ill, and with contemptuous language against them; but in the morning they ran to a congregation, intending to stone Moses and Aaron, and so to return back into Egypt."*

The People Rebel

Here is the biblical account of the reaction to their report:

¹ *Then all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night.² All the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness!"³ "Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder; would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"⁴ So they said to one another, "Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt."*

⁵ *Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces in the presence*

of all the assembly of the congregation of the sons of Israel.⁶ Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes;⁷ and they spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, "The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land."⁸ "If the LORD is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us—a land which flows with milk and honey.

⁹ *"Only do not rebel against the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they will be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them."¹⁰ But all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Then the glory of the LORD appeared in the tent of meeting to all the sons of Israel.*

What was it that gave Joshua and Caleb the confidence they had? What set them apart from the others? It wasn't that they had a better time in the Holy Land than the others. You know how people's experience of a place can color how they look at it, but there was nothing contradictory in their reports. They all saw the goodness of the land and the same inhabitants.

It is not that they knew God's promise better than the others. They all knew why they went to check out the land. It was to prepare them for entering the land. There wasn't a question of whether or not they would do it, at least not until they returned.

It wasn't that Joshua and Caleb had experienced more of God's power. All the people were aware of the miracles of God to that point. They had all witnessed the ten plagues, the parting of the Sea, the provision of the manna, and so on.

All twelve of them knew what God had said and what he could do. And yet only Joshua and Caleb had confidence in facing the challenge of entering the Land.

The difference was, unlike the others, Joshua and Caleb believed God. They were the only ones who were able to apply what the whole nation had seen and heard to the current situation. They knew that if their taking the Land was something that God wanted, nothing or no one could stand in their way. Yet for the others all the miracles in the world could not make a difference.

God's viewpoint is the key to the success of Caleb. [24"But My servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it.](#)

There are only 30 verses about Caleb, but six times scriptures state that Caleb *"fully followed the Lord"* (**Numbers 14:24; 32:12; Deuteronomy 1:36; Joshua 14:8, 9 and 14**). In the entire Bible, only two people were called God's servant – Moses and Caleb.

Notice very carefully that God is not a respecter of persons; A Jew and a Gentile entered the promised land together; A Jew and a Gentile were similarly regarded as God's Servant.

Shalom