

## *Johnny Hunt's President's Address*

### THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION AT ITS KADESH BARNEA

Joshua 14:6-14

Numbers 13-14

**INTRODUCTION:** In these passages we read the story of a committee of 12 appointed by the Lord (**Numbers 13:1**) to spy out the land of Canaan and bring back a report to the congregation of Israel. In their reporting, 10 brought back a **“bad report”** (**Numbers 13:32**) and 2 (Caleb/Joshua) brought back a **“bold report.”** (**Numbers 14:8-9**)

In the 2009 meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, which met June 23-24, 2009, in Louisville, Kentucky, the President of the Southern Baptist Convention was authorized to appoint a Great Commission Task Force charged to bring a **report** and any **recommendations** to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Orlando, Florida, on June 15-16, 2010, concerning how Southern Baptists can work more **faithfully** and **effectively together** in serving Christ through the Great Commission.

The story of the 12 spies is one of contrast: 10 of the spies **magnified the problems** and, in the process, missed God. Caleb and Joshua, on the other hand, did not minimize the problems, the giants, and the fortified cities, but they **magnified the power** of God and the **promises** of God. (**Numbers 13:1-2a**)

**“And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel..’”**

#### **I. CALEB’S PRODUCTIVE YEARS. (Joshua 13:1)**

**“Now Joshua was old, advanced in years. And the LORD said to him: ‘You are old, advanced in years, and there remains very much land yet to be possessed.’”**

Joshua is 100 years old – even the Lord thought he was old! Life has flown by so rapidly and soon will be gone. Caleb is 85 years old

These men had an entire lifetime of experience. They had seen:

- 1. THE POWER OF GOD.** Egyptians at Red Sea
- 2. THE PROVISIONS OF GOD.** Manna, water from the rock, shoes/clothes didn’t wear out
- 3. THE PRESENCE OF GOD.** Cloud by day – pillar of fire by night
- 4. THE PROVISION OF GOD.** **“Land I will give you”**

Caleb testified to God’s faithfulness over the many years. He was so grateful for a **Prolonged Life.** (**Joshua 14:10**)

**“the Lord has kept me alive these forty-five years”** He could certainly say, *“I have seen a lot of changes in my lifetime.”*

Caleb could honestly speak of **“Dreams Never Realized.”**

I wonder how many nights Caleb and Joshua laid out under stars in the wilderness and considered the **“What if’s?”**

- ♦ **What if** Israel had believed God and inherited the land 45 years earlier?

**STATEMENT:** What a **Price for Unbelief!**

**TRUTH TO BE NOTED:** We don't have 45 years! Look around the room, note the graying or balding.

- ♦ **What if** Israel had not rebelled against the good report of Joshua and Caleb?

Numbers 14:29-33, "The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness."

**EXAMPLE:** Church Planter Randy bringing his son to observe change. History-making Convention.

**STATEMENT:** What a Privilege to Believe!

**TRUTH TO BE NOTED:**

Proverbs 20:7, "The righteous man walks in his integrity; His children are blessed after him."

Caleb's commitment and faithfulness to the Lord made a difference in the generation coming behind him and his own children, son-in-law, Othniel, and daughter, Achsah. Othniel became a judge with the Spirit of the Lord upon him. (**Judges 3:10**)

Caleb and Joshua were Senior Adult Saints who left spiritual wealth to those behind them.

Proverbs 19:20, "Listen to counsel and receive instruction, that you may be wise in your latter days."

Once in Promised Land, most followers were younger. All 20 year olds and above died in the wilderness. (**Numbers 14:29**)

## II. CALEB'S PERSPECTIVE. (Numbers 13:30)

Numbers 13:30, "Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, 'Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it'"

**3 KEY WORDS:** GO, TAKE, OVERCOME

Numbers 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."

**"Different Spirit"**

Galatians 1:10, "For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ."

Proverbs 29:25, "The fear of man brings a snare, But whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe."

Caleb was willing to "*stand out*" and "*stand alone*." He did not sacrifice his own convictions.

**A. CALEB CONTENDED WITH A WORST-CASE SCENARIO.**

Numbers 13:31-33, "But the men who had gone up with him said, 'We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we.' And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, 'The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.'"

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT:** A bad report can lead to the people having a bad memory; good old days.

Numbers 14:1-4, "So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, 'If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?' So they said to one another, 'Let us select a leader and return to Egypt.'"

v.4 Let's find a leader who will take us back to the good old days! Return to what we are comfortable with, what we already know, nothing new, least line of resistance.

**DISCOURAGED:** Numbers 32:9, "For when they went up to the Valley of Eshcol and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, so that they did not go into the land which the LORD had given them."

**B. CALEB COMMITTED TO A BEST-CASE SCENARIO.**

Numbers 14:7-9, "and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying 'The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. 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.' Only do not rebel against the LORD, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the LORD is with us. Do not fear them.'"

This is Caleb's Compelling Vision – Bold Mission Thrust!

"for they are our bread" – Manley Beasley

Bread satisfies, fills, enlarges, grows you; it's our nourishment.

- ◆ Charles Spurgeon, "*We have misjudged our capacity for God.*"
- ◆ Eddie Carswell, "*He's more God than I can imagine.*"

Numbers 13:23, "Then they came to the Valley of Eshcol, and there cut down a branch with one cluster of grapes; they carried it between two of them on a pole. They also brought some of the pomegranates and figs."

The land to which the Lord was calling Israel was a productive land; fertile as opposed to futile

It is also true for us today as Southern Baptists.

John 4:35, "Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!"

The nations, and our nation, is white for harvest. If we are not careful, we put ourselves and our desires above the Gospel.

### III. CALEB'S PASSION. Joshua 14:11-12a

Joshua 14:11-12a, "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. Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the LORD spoke in that day..."

- ◆ 10 saw the danger
- ◆ 2 saw the opportunity

I'm told that the Chinese word for crisis is comprised of 2 characters: *way* and *gee*. Each of these is a word – the first meaning danger, and the second meaning opportunity; quite literally a dangerous opportunity.

#### PERSONAL ILLUSTRATION:

- ◆ 1986 FBC Woodstock
- ◆ 1989-90 Relocate/purchase land (19 acres for \$1 million)
- ◆ More money than we had taken in over a 3-year period in the late '80's and we needed it in 30 days
- ◆ Prayed/Fasted
- ◆ I sensed the Lord saying that He desired to show Himself strong on our behalf. *"Believe Me for all the money, do not borrow it."*

Some people said that I had the people *out on a limb*.

John Morgan said, *"That's where the fruit is."*

Caleb did not look for an easy task.

*John Greenleaf Whittier, "For all sad words of tongue and pen, the saddest are these, 'It might have been.'"*

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."

Caleb was a "hill-taker," not an "occupier"

#### ILLUSTRATE: Vietnam "hill-takers" and "occupiers"

He was a mountain "climber" and a giant "conqueror." not looking for an easy assignment.

As one ages, oftentimes passion wanes and we are more anxious to talk about old conflicts than to take on new ones. Caleb was ready for one more good battle. He was eager to fight the Anakim at Hebron and take the city for his possession.

It has been said that you can always tell a man's size by the bigness or smallness of the things he attacks.

Caleb chose a large and foreboding task. Not that he was filled with pride in his own ability, but rather that he believed God would be with him.

Joshua 14:12, "it may be that the Lord will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the Lord said."

**ILLUSTRATION:**

What inspires me most about Caleb's request was that he still wanted, what he wanted, when he started.

Do you remember what you wanted when you first started out with the Lord?

- **Wanted to win my family** (Norman, Mary, Barbara, Buddy, Freddy)
- **Wanted to win my friends** (Rex, Donald, Sammy, etc.)
- **Wanted to win my neighbors**
- **Wanted to win my neighborhood**
- **Wanted to win my city**

Now, I still am burdened over the same things.

Listen to Caleb's request, **"give me this mountain..."**. Caleb made a **BIG REQUEST!** What are Southern Baptists requesting? Status quo, business as usual, no great challenge – don't put us in a situation where we would have to trust God!

Could it be that after the Conservative Resurgence (1979-1990) that now as we have boldly declared what we believe about our Bible, we are now at a **"History-Making Convention"** where we will declare to the watching nations and watching denominations what we will do with what we believe? We need a **Great Commission Resurgence** where we will whole-heartedly, without apology, embrace Jesus' final words to the church to make disciples of every nation, beginning with our own.

Caleb was not as I have often found myself, one looking for the **"Israelite Dream."** He did not wish to live his life out in comfort and ease, but he chose instead a hazardous but important mission. He forsook the comfortable life to go where God directed him. Are we willing to forsake the American Dream for the Great Commission?

We must realize with William Borden of yester-year who wrote, *"In every person's life there is a throne and a cross. If Christ is on the throne, self is on the cross; and if self, even a little bit, is on the throne, Jesus is on the cross in that man's heart... If Jesus is on the throne, you will go where He wants you to go."*

**CONCLUSION: What separated Joshua and Caleb from the other 10 spies?**

- ♦ **10 spies** – fear of the known and the unknown. Giants, fortified cities, military expertise of Canaanites, etc.
- ♦ **Caleb/Joshua** – faith in God's *promises*, God's *power*, God's *provision*. The economy nor our Convention controls the Great Commission, only Almighty God and His sovereign control
- ♦ **10 spies** – saw the *danger*
- ♦ **Caleb/Joshua** – saw the *opportunity* and accepted the *challenge*

With a lifetime of experiences in proving the faithfulness of God, we should be well-equipped in old age to claim our greatest mountains for God.

**Think with me?** I am 57 years old, 58 next month. Should I live as long as my mentors/ heroes, Adrian Rogers and Jerry Falwell, both 74 years of age, I am already in the last quarter of my ministry/life. Most sporting events are won in the last quarter, last lap, last minute. Let's win together, for the Gospel, in these last days!

The Great Commission can be accomplished in our lifetime. Let's do it!

- ♦ **Six times** Scripture records that Caleb **"wholly followed the Lord"**

Let's make a **Radical Statement** to the watching world that we are more committed than ever to go to the 6 billion lost people on this planet, the 6,426 people-groups with little or no access to the Gospel, the underserved states of our own nation, the large metropolitan cities in need of more churches. **Let's go to the world!**

**WHAT WILL IT TAKE?**

- ◆ A greater commitment of ourselves
- ◆ A greater commitment of our churches
- ◆ A greater commitment of our associations
- ◆ A greater commitment of our state conventions
- ◆ A greater commitment of all of our entities

**LET'S DO IT!**

**LET'S DO IT NOW!**

**LET'S START TODAY!**

*—from the office of Johnny Hunt*