

BRIDES - Achsah (4)

Reading: Joshua 15 v 13 – 19 (repeated in Judges 1 v 9 - 15)
Judges 3 v 5 - 11

The fourth bride in our series is Achsah, daughter of Caleb. Her hand in marriage was the prize for the man who overcame Kirjathsephar (Debir). That man was Othniel (lion of God) the first judge of Israel. There are not many references to Achsah, so we will also consider some of those connected to her.

Caleb at Hebron - Joshua 15 v 13 – 15 – A man of faith

Achsah and Debir - Joshua 15 v 16 - 19 - A woman of faith

Othniel the Deliverer - Judges 3 v 5 - 11 - A saviour for Israel

Caleb at Hebron:

In these chapters of Joshua, Joshua is dividing the land among the tribes of Israel for an inheritance (see chap 13 v 7). In chapters 14 and 15 the inheritance of the tribe of Judah is allocated and 15 v 13 *“And unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a part among the children of Judah”*. In 14 v 12 Caleb expressed his desire to Joshua *“give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spake”*. Caleb was a man of faith, a man who believed God, a man who expected great things of God. He was thinking back over 40 years to a previous occasion when he had ascended to Hebron. The events of these previous days are recorded in Numbers 13 and 14. As one of 12 spies Caleb spent 40 days exploring the land of Canaan and found, as the Lord had said, *“it floweth with milk and honey.”* However, for 10 of these men Hebron was a problem *“moreover we saw the children of Anak there...the giants...for they are stronger than we”*. These men saw the benefits of what the Lord had prepared for them, but they were not willing to face the difficulties, the problems and the dangers – *“we are not able to go up”*. Does this describe us? Are there times when we are put off following the Lord, missing the best that he has prepared for us, because we are unwilling or unable to face the difficulties...because we do not believe God?

Caleb and Joshua were different men, men of faith. They saw all that the Lord had prepared for them in Canaan and believed God, that with the Lord's help they would overcome, Num 14 v 8 *“If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us”*. Do we believe in God? Do we have faith? The Lord Jesus said to a centurion Matt 8 v 13 *“Go thy way: and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.”* Where would we be, if the Lord said this to us?

In Joshua 15 over 40 years have passed since Caleb saw the giants at Hebron and stated his faith in God. It was Hebron that Caleb desired, Hebron that had been promised by God and now he had the opportunity to prove God. Forty years previously his exhortation to a fearful and unbelieving people was *“Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.”* His attitude, his faith, his desire had not changed and he wasted no time v 14 *“And Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak”* - as he believed, so it came to pass. Caleb was a man of consistency: as a young man he believed God and now at 85 years old he still believed God. This should be our aim, consistency and faithfulness. It is this that characterises men and women who make a difference for God.

Caleb's desire was Hebron and having fought the giants he possessed it. When we come to Joshua 21 he willingly gives Hebron up. Hebron is one of the cities given to the children of

Aaron for a city of refuge. In 21 v 12 we read *“But the fields of the city, and the villages thereof, gave they to Caleb”*. Caleb was a man who recognised what was truly valuable and important in life. Hebron was his dream, his prized possession, but he willingly gave it up for the service of God. Like Moses Heb 11 v 26 *“for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.”* What about us? The poet has said ‘I cannot give it up, The little world I know, The innocent delights of youth, The things I cherish so..’

Achsah and Debir:

With Hebron conquered Caleb moves to Debir (Kirjathsephar). Like Hebron, the enemy had reoccupied Debir after Joshua’s victory recorded in chapter 11. There was a prize to be won for taking Debir v16 *“He that smiteth Kirjathsephar, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife.”* Kirjathsephar has the meaning ‘city of the book’. Can we draw a lesson from this; there is a prize, a reward, for possessing the city of the book. Do we seek to possess, to know the book, the Bible? Achsah was the prize for taking Kirjathsephar and David in the psalms says of the law of the Lord *“in keeping of them there is great reward.”*

It was Othniel, described in v 17 as *“the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb”*, who took the city. He considered Achsah a prize worth having and led the attack on the city to win her. The father gives the bride to her husband. In the Bible we come to know the Lord Jesus, are we as exercised in this, as Othniel was to claim his bride?

Like her father Achsah had ambitions for good, and looked for great things through faith in God’s promise of the land. In v18 *“she came unto him”*, she came unto her husband leaving her father’s tent. Caleb had given them a south land; a dry land exposed to the south wind, but Achsah desired more. She desired a field with springs of water, to bring life giving water to the south land. As she approaches her father *“she lighted off her ass”*, that she might address her father in a humble posture. She came seeking a blessing, confident that her father would respond favourably. When asked, *“What wouldest thou?”* she replied *“Give me a blessing (a gift)”* (compare the desire of Caleb 14 v 12). She acknowledged what she had already received, she was specific in her request and she received more than she asked for. Achsah asked for *“springs of water”* and received *“the upper springs, and the nether springs.”* She received a field with springs of water both above and below the south land. In this we have a lesson in prayer. We come to the Father seeking a blessing, we ought to ask humbly and expect confidently and God will *“do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.”*

Othniel the Deliverer:

In Judges 3 we meet Othniel again, the saviour of Israel. Othniel had been proved at Kirjathsephar, his courage and leadership had been demonstrated. God had prepared Othniel for a great task 3 v 9 *“the Lord raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel”*. Othniel’s name means ‘lion of God’ and God was to use him in a mighty way.

All too soon the people had forgotten the Lord and all he had done for them. In v5 and 6 the people of God are living among and intermarrying with the enemy. They were drawn into idolatry and wickedness by the example and persuasion of their wives and associate – 11 Cor 6 *“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers”*. As a consequence of their sin, the people were brought into bondage, serving the king of Mesopotamia for 8 years. When *“they cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer...who delivered them”*. It was the Spirit of God that empowered Othniel, enabling him to accomplish what with his natural strength he could not. A lesson for us, if we are to achieve anything for God we must be raised up and prepared by God to do the task and strengthened by the Spirit to accomplish it.

As a judge Othniel restored Israel to a right attitude to God. The Lord Jesus overcame the oppressor, the devil, and made us right with God.