2 Samuel - Commentaries by G.S. Byford

Hebron, Hebron: Part 2

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Hebron then became the property of Abraham by right of purchase, and we know that Christ has acquired rights (besides His creatorial) over this world and all in it, and these will be made good in a coming day. But now these rights are in abeyance, and another principle is called into requisition. It is good to be an heir of promise; but for actual possession and enjoyment “overcoming” is necessary. “He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son” (Rev. 21:7). The approbation and encouragement here extended to the “overcomer” is the same as to the “stranger” of Heb. 11:15, “God is not ashamed to be called their God.” Thus the man who stands aside and refuses to be a citizen of a world that is guilty of the death of Christ is approved of God. And the man, who at a time when evil prevails and the foundations of faith are everywhere loosened, makes a stand for Christ and the word of God, who opposes and by faith overcomes the world, is approved of God— “I will be his God.”

If Hebron was in the first place the “purchased” possession, it becomes afterward the “conquered” possession in Josh. 14:6-15. Here, too, we may notice how intensely individual a thing is faith; it was “me and thee.” Joshua and Caleb were the two who faced the rebellious assembly of unbelieving Israel in Kadesh Barnea; and it was the same two—the same “me and thee” —who forty-five years later engaged in earnest conversation about the same possession. The man of faith used the same argument in each case, but he was as much alone on the latter occasion as on the first. For although God fulfilled His word and manifested His power and presence with Joshua, yet when it came to be a question of the tribes separately taking possession of their respective positions, again and again do we read of their failure to drive out the Canaanites who “would dwell in that which had been their own land.” Hebron seems to have been a famous stronghold of the Anakim. The difficulties in the way of its conquest and possession only stimulated the courage and determination of Caleb. He had waited forty-five years for the opportunity. Meanwhile faith had wrought in him, producing patience, strength, and patriotism, so that he had not a hard word to say of his people who by their unbelief had kept him so long out of his inheritance. Yet to Caleb it was well worth waiting for; and his words, “But I wholly followed Jehovah my God,” give us such an insight into his character as reminds us of Barnabas in the early days of the church’s history. Of him the Spirit has testified, “who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith; and much people was added to the Lord” (Acts 11:23, 24).

Here, again, we may notice that the distinguishing characteristics of Caleb were as illustrated in his private and family life as in public. Having no sons, he determines that he who marries his daughter shall prove himself worthy of her and of Hebron. And so Othniel proved himself to be. He afterward became Israel’s first judge and deliverer, while Achsah his wife, on her part, manifested similar energy of faith and intelligent appreciation of the inheritance which Jehovah had given His people. “And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife. And Othniel the son of Kenaz, brother of Caleb, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife. And it came to pass as she came unto him, that she moved him to ask of her father a field; and she lighted off her ass; and Caleb said to her, What wouldst thou? Who answered, Give me a blessing; for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs” (Josh. 15:16-19).

Hebron was yet again connected with God’s government of His people by means of the kingdom. After the death of Saul, David sought the guidance of God as to his actions, for faith and dependence characterized David as truly as they had Caleb. “And it came to pass after this, that David inquired of Jehovah, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And Jehovah said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hebron. So David went up thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail, Nabal’s wife, the Carmelite. And his men that were with him did David bring up, every man with his household; and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron” (2 Sam. 2:1-3). The kingdom had its commencement there, for God had not yet set His king upon. His holy hill of Zion. There was still room for the exercise of faith and patience, and dependence upon God. We might have thought that with the death of Saul, the last obstacle had been cleared out of David’s way, but it was not so. To have a discernment of the purpose of God is not enough, we must be subject to Him, and be dependent upon Him for bringing it about. It was at Hebron that David learned important principles of divine guidance, which brought forth precious fruit for God’s glory, and for Israel’s blessing. It was there that he became more perfectly instructed in God’s way. “As for God, his way is perfect; the word of Jehovah is tried: he is a buckler to all them that trust in him. For who is God save Jehovah? and who is a rock, save our God? God is my strength and power: and he maketh my way perfect... and thy gentleness hath made me great” (2 Sam. 22:31-36).

We find, then, firstly, Hebron closely associated with the faith and strangership of the patriarchs, who died in faith and desired to be buried there, having no present portion in the land of promise except a grave. Secondly, the actual possession and reward of such as believed in God and overcame the enemies and drove them out. “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” Thirdly, when the man of God’s choice had been manifested to a people not yet ready to receive him, Hebron became the center and the rallying-place for all those in Israel who were true to God and His king. They formed a great host, “like the host of God.” If challenged as to why they had come, they would reply, “Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse; peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be unto thine helpers; for thy God helpeth thee” (1 Chron. 12:18). So, too, the disciples of the Lord, the true David— “To whom shall we go? Thou hast words of eternal life, And we believe and are sure that thou art the Holy One of God” (John 6:68, 69). David’s men were “men of war that could keep rank,” they “came with a perfect heart to Hebron to make David king over all Israel, and all the best also of Israel were of one heart to make David king. And there they were with David three days eating and drinking: for their brethren had prepared for them... for there was joy in Israel” (1 Chron. 12:38-40); it was the hour of David’s triumph and of Israel’s joy.

The present application of these principles would be manifested in the intelligence of the wonderful counsels of God as now revealed to us in His word, and in faith in God to fulfill them. “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee out of the hour of trial

which is about to come upon the whole habitable world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. I come quickly: hold fast what thou hast, that no one take thy crown” (Rev. 3:10, 11). May we answer to this!

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G. S. B.

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