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PREFACE

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.
Romans 15:4

The *hope* gained from the older Scriptures depends on our *learning*, which *learning* then relies on what *comfort and patience* those Scriptures bring. Learning about honest prayer from the older Scriptures brings both *comfort and patience*, that is, it conducts one along side God's Reality and then delivers the faculty to bear up under unpleasant Providences. Truly, the Scriptures secure us Christians in both, and especially does the honest reality of honest prayer as it moves us up into the preeminent realm of God's Presence. Preeminent honest prayer is especially encouraging and especially steadying in its experientially known authenticity.

Therefore, to convince you, my reader, of its authenticity becomes a prime objective. My honest prayer for all readers of this study on Preeminent Honest Prayer is for the illustrative and parabolic lesson on prayer, seen in Caleb's approach to and request of Joshua followed by Achsah's approach to and request of Caleb, will be realized fully as a source of encouragement and steadfastness. Then the *hope* referenced by Paul will find its place in the bosom and life as we together make our requests known to our very personal and loving and gracious God. Amen.

Have no anxiety about anything, but by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God.

And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7 RSV

THE PREEMINENT HONEST PRAYER

Numbers 14:24; Joshua 14:6-14; Joshua 15:13-19

²⁴*But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereunto he went; and his seed shall possess it.*

Numbers 14:24

⁶*Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the LORD said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea.*

⁷*Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart.*

⁸*Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God.*

⁹*And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God.*

¹⁰*And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old.*

¹¹*As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in.*

¹²*Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD has said.*

¹³ And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance.

¹⁴ Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day; because he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel.

Joshua 14:6-14

¹³ And unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a part among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, even the city of Arba the father of Anak, which city is Hebron.

¹⁴ And Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmi, the children of Anak.

¹⁵ And he went up thence to the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before was Kirjath-sepher.

And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife.

¹⁶ And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife.

¹⁷ And it came to pass, as she came unto him [i.e. to Othniel as his wife], that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted off her ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wouldest thou?

¹⁸ Who answered, Give me a blessing; for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water.

¹⁹ And he gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs.

Joshua 15:13-19

The Boundless Realm of Preeminent Honest Prayer

Where is your realm of prayer? Does it exist exclusively in the articulated mandates of God? Does your prayer always reside within some rule, or is it regularly limited by some legal or preconceived edict? Some Christians never go beyond certain prescribed limits for finding greater blessings from God. When Paul wrote, *Let your requests be made known unto God*,¹ he meant exactly that—requests,

¹ *Philippians. 4:6*

petitions, supplications, even **proposals**. That word, *requests*, opens up for Christians a limitless area. The sphere of prayer stretches from horizon to horizon, with no boundaries. This is the limitlessness of honest or real prayer. It enters into the realm of God's unascertained and incomprehensible potentiality. God is not limited in any way or in any thing; He is boundlessly omnipotent, and honest prayer may enter into this unrestrained expanse of spiritual wealth. This is **preeminent prayer**, which is entered into by the spiritual asker, seeker, and knocker at God's enormous prayer door. To enter into that realm of prayer is to enter into God's domain.

Our text emphasizes this kind of prayer—preeminent prayer—as elevated prayer. The story of our text centers upon Achsah, the daughter of Caleb. Caleb was one of the twelve spies sent into Canaan by Moses to bring a report on the land into which they were about to enter. Over forty years earlier, Caleb and Joshua had brought reports of a grand land, which with the Lord's help they could successfully possess. However, the ten other spies swayed the nation to balk at the challenge, and to desire to return to Egypt, and to its burdensome drudgery rather than to continue on with the Lord. While that scenario brought judgment to the ten and to that generation, it brought praise from God and a promise to Joshua and Caleb that they would indeed taste and see that the Lord was good, that the land He promised was truly flowing with milk and honey. They would gain entrance into the blessing of God, but that unbelieving and unfaithful generation would perish in the wilderness. Yet Caleb was given a specific promise of a particular inheritance at that time:

³⁵*Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I sware to give unto your fathers.*

³⁶*Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the LORD.*

[Added emph.]

Deuteronomy 1:35-36

The underlined portion above seems to suggest that a definite promise to a particular portion of land is meant, even more so because of the language of Caleb's request years later in *Joshua 14:12*, *Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day.* [Added emph.] Caleb used this language concerning Hebron when he approached Joshua with his request for what had been promised him forty-five years earlier. That promise might have been a "blank check" sort of pledge from God, which would have allowed Caleb to have any allotment of land that he desired. However, such an unconditional guarantee as that would have given Caleb the right to have chosen an allotment outside the limits of his tribes' allotted territory, and would have been contrary to God's plan and purpose in the division of the land. Consequently, we believe that this promise from God to Caleb was concerning a definite section of land, which according to God's control by Providence, was within the extent of Caleb's tribal allotment. God had made a definite promise to Caleb about a definite portion of Canaan, its being Hebron; and Caleb was calling upon Joshua for the fulfillment of that explicit promise given him forty-five years earlier.

Our Scripture texts in Joshua are taken from amid the account of Israel's possession of the land of Canaan. After having defeated the enemies, at least enough to have taken the periphery of God's provision in Canaan, Joshua, through the lot, divided the land among the several tribes. God was working through His servant Joshua, and he represented God to the people.² Through him God gave to each tribe, family, and household their particular heritage in the land, sworn by God to be Abraham's and his seeds' some many years earlier.³ In all of this a picture is presented of God's granting to His children their spiritual inheritances in Christ. He gives to each believer in Christ that portion of Christ, which is theirs in accord with God's prescribed will for their lives. Caleb represents the child of God, receiving those apportioned

² *Joshua 1:5,6,18; 4:14* ³ *Genesis 12:7; 15:13-16; 17:8*

allotments of grace from Christ as His prepared purpose has measured.⁴ Each believer receives from Christ a share in God's Kingdom according as He has prepared it and determined it.

⁴⁰*But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared.* [Added emph.] *Mark 10:40*

Any limitation of the authority of Christ to give positions of power in His Kingdom was only during the days of His humiliation on earth, but since His exaltation and glorification as Supreme, He now holds and exercises that right of choices. Also, the amounts and places of responsibility have indeed already been determined within the Godhead, and He reveals those gifts of His grace in His Word to each believer as He calls them to their several places of Kingdom work. This giving by Christ to His own their inheritance is what is represented by Caleb and Achsah's requests. Caleb approached Joshua and asked for the inheritance, which was formerly promised to him by God. Then, Achsah approached Caleb, her father, and asked of him more than what was formerly appointed as hers by Caleb's former word. These two approaches—one to Joshua, a symbol of Christ; and the other to Caleb, Achsah's father, a symbol of our heavenly Father—depict two approaches one might take in asking of God in prayer. The former (Caleb) pictures the believer going to Christ Jesus for what is his own by right of promise in God's Word as His disciple. It concerns what is found in God's Word to be the possession of the believer in Jesus. However, the latter (Achsah) pictures the believer going to God the Father in the very Holy of Holies, into the secret chambers of God and with God alone, and before His Person, for what is beyond the promise of the Word. This kind of request considers the promise with its provisions not enough, and reaches out further past just promises or guarantees of certain standard blessings. It makes *request* of God Himself, and not of His Word only. The one is eminent prayer, while the other is preeminent prayer. Both are

⁴ *Ephesians. 4:7*

good and necessary. Both are excellent and proper approaches to God with our supplications. The one is good, but the other is more than good, it is better honest prayer.

Most Christians think of temporal or material things when they think of *requests* in prayer, and our prayers are confined largely to that animal level. But God would have our prayers revolve around His high and lofty throne. He would have our prayer life be up on the level of Himself, be beyond mere outward promises of sure and binding deduction. While those prayers are necessary, good, entirely proper and spiritually expedient, they are not the ultimate in prayer. God honors His Word, blesses His Word, works through His Word, attends to His Word, but is not confined to His Word as regards blessings to His people. He would have us go up beyond words and promises, up beyond expressions and statements, up beyond mandates of His prescribed utterances of provisions, up to Him personally. This is where He resides as a Person full of excellent glories and blessings, where He is approached upon what He has said, yes, but more than that. This is the approach in prayer that is dependent upon what He has said about Himself. This is the place in prayer where He resides as a unique and special Person, good and gracious, Who loves to love, Who loves to be God to His creatures beneath Him, Who loves to be good to those who do no more than simply and honestly ask, seek, and knock at His door of preeminent prayer.

The Realm of Christ

This lofty realm of preeminent prayer is the realm of Christ. He is the beyond-expression resource of preeminent prayer. If He is the center of one's prayer life, then that center will be raised to this preeminent range of experience. He is the area of our utmost need. He is the genuine totality of our inheritance; therefore His personal good for and acquaintance with our lives must be the real sought-for blessing. Whatever will bring the reality of Christ into our prayer life will work this preeminence in prayer. He is to be the

spiritual and much sought out request. Since He is our inheritance, it only follows that more of Him is our need, and is the key to prayer that is prayed *in the Spirit*. He is our preeminence in prayer; He is both the prayer itself, and for what is really prayed.

We shall in this consideration of honest preeminent prayer,

First, look at **Caleb's Eminent Prayer of Faith**, *Numbers 14:24; Joshua 14:6-14; 15:14-17*.

Second, mark **Achsah's Preeminent Prayer of Faith**, *Joshua 15:18-19*.

Third, take note of the **Contrasts Between Their Requests**.

While what is represented in the requests of both Caleb and Achsah are good and proper prayer, there are contrasts which teach much about both eminent and preeminent prayer and their special value to the Christian.

I. CALEB'S EMINENT PRAYER OF FAITH, *Numbers 14:24; Joshua 14:6-14; 15:14-17.*

²⁴But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereunto he went; and his seed shall possess it.

Numbers 14:24

¹²Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD has said.

¹³And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance.

¹⁴Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day; because he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel.

Joshua 14:12-14

Caleb's request pictures the believers' prayers of faith, which are eminent prayers, prayers that are based upon God's promises to the believer in His Word. It is prayer that responds always to God, and is in accord with God's prescribed or revealed will for that Christian. It is prayer that is prominent and notable in that it follows God's lead always and is for what God has led the believer to pray. That was the thrust of Caleb's request. It followed God's lead.

Caleb's Request Followed Where God Led.

The emphasis in God's commendation of Caleb was that he *followed* God. Caleb, as opposed to the ten other spies' with their reports, had followed *another spirit* Who was with him. Caleb had the disposition of God's own will. His Spirit had led and Caleb had followed. Therefore, Caleb followed God—His Word and His Spirit. It was God Who directed Caleb in believing precisely what God had said about Israel's being able to take the land. Moreover,

Caleb *fully* followed God. This refers to his belief in all that God had said. He had no reservations about any promises of God. That *fully following of another Spirit* is what marked Caleb as one who could expect to receive from God what he asked. He had no reservations about any of the promises of God. When one has another Spirit, and on top of that, is following that Spirit, and on top of even that, is fully following that Spirit, then Caleb and every believer so doing will have those petitions asked for.

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

John 15:7

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

John 5:14-15

And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

Matthew 20:21

Caleb was a man believing because he fully followed God. He abode in Christ and God's Word abode in him. It was according to what God promised Caleb that controlled what he asked. It was His will; therefore he fully expected Joshua, who was God's representative, to grant the petition made of him. This is the way of eminent prayer. Prayer that is *in the Spirit* has what is asked; it is powerful prayer; it is prominent prayer; it is answered prayer. It is prayer that follows God's leadership. That is eminent prayer and it is good and beneficial prayer because it follows God's lead.

Caleb's Request Claimed from God What was Promised

⁶Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the LORD said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea.

⁷Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart.

⁸Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God.

⁹And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God.

¹⁰And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old.

¹¹As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in.

¹²Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD has said.

¹³And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance.

¹⁴Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day; because he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel.

Joshua 14:6-14

This request of Caleb has a counterpart in the New Testament experience of the Christian. Caleb's faith was according to the Word of God as will be the Christian's source of faith as well. It is as we have our spiritual minds enlightened that we will be enabled to pray this kind of eminent prayer that is assured of positive Divine approval.

¹⁷*That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:*

¹⁸*The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what [is] the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,*

¹⁹*And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.*
Ephesians 1:17-19

Through the Word of promise and the *another Spirit* that was in Caleb, he certainly did have his *understanding enlightened* and did have the knowledge of *the hope of his calling, and what [were] the riches of the glory of his inheritance*. Paul prayed that the saints would have that understanding also. If we have it, then our prayers will be guided by it, and we will, as Caleb, receive those requests of God, because they are according to His will and He will hear us. By faith Caleb secured what God promised, and then specifically asked for what He had said was his. That is always proper prayer. It is the prayer that is excellent in God's view because it *wholly follows God*. It meets with the approbation and acceptance of God, because God already willed those blessings to be the possession of that child of God. It is a foregone conclusion that it will be answered affirmatively. *The hope of his calling, the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints* is essentially Christ and His special foreordained and ultimate essence, and includes all that would tend its fulfillment. Christians can ask in prayer for what is conducive and contributory to their ultimate inheritance in Christ, believing fully in its positive approval from God. That kind of faith is anchored in the direct promise and reliable Word of God. It is prayer that is according to the will, Word, and way of God. Caleb requested according to what was declared by Moses and by Joshua as his inheritance, and that assured its influence with God.

Caleb's prayer was powerful prayer; it was good prayer. Oh, that we all would believe what God has actually said in His Word is ours in Christ. Oh, that we would ask and receive those possessions which will glorify God, and that will fulfill God's own will for our lives. May every Christian know what the inheritance in Christ is and pray accordingly. As we learn Christ we will learn to pray for more of Him in our lives.

Caleb's Energizing Faith

*¹⁴And Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmi, the children of Anak.
Joshua 15:14*

Caleb's faith was active in empowering his own efforts to accomplish what he sought from God in prayer. That is ever the way of the faith that really lays claim upon God's Word. The Word produces power to work out the things asked. When prayer rests upon promises, the promises themselves supply holy energies for the believer effectually to accomplish what is asked. The living Word is the spiritual energy, which furnished Caleb with the strength to drive out the Anakims. They were giants, men oversized and terrifying to ordinary men. But the faith which is based upon the Word of God finds resource in the Word to attack even the giants which oppose our requests, and to defeat them, thus furnishing the answer to the request through sanctified efforts of Word-inspired and promise-inspired stimulus.

Caleb's Inspiring Faith

¹⁵And he went up thence to the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before was Kirjath-sepher.

¹⁶And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife.

¹⁷And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife.

Joshua 15:15-17

Caleb's faith was so Word-based that it inspired others to similar faith and action. Caleb challenged any man to take

possession of Kirjath-sepher and he could have his daughter for his wife. The venture was accepted by his own nephew, Othniel, who, no doubt, had seen in Caleb what real faith in the promises of God could accomplish. He, therefore, went up to Kirjath-sepher, took it through the same energizing power which had empowered Caleb, and took Achsah for his wife. Caleb's faith had a contagion that affected similar faith and effort in Othniel. Even so is it with a Christian. As faith is shown to be active and energetic, it will inspire others to similar faith. The faith that works out into one's life will have a contagion that will affect those around it. It will challenge others to comparable bold action for God as Caleb's faith did for Othniel.

Adding Preeminent Prayer To Eminent Prayer

Yet for all this, though this prayer is so necessary and powerful and good, still, there is more to be added to eminent prayer. Caleb's prayer was according to his inheritance as the Word of promise made it clear. Caleb's prayer was regulated by what God had said about things, and lacked something of going beyond to reach the Person of God. Caleb's eminent prayer stood on God's Word, but what if Caleb asked of God wholly on Who and How God was without regard to promised inheritance, but only on the basis of immediate need? Sometimes our inheritance in Christ seems rather far off. Though God grants always in accord with the inheritance of Christ, and though all things of this life are somewhat regulated in the light of that inheritance, the pressing needs are now. Therefore, we sometimes must touch God's personal presence with a special request which seeks from God that lofty aura of heaven's intimate whisper from God's quiet place, "Yes, my beloved. I grant you your request because I am moved to give to My own from My own because you are My own." Caleb's prayer extended into the realm of God's storehouse, where He is indeed present, but prayer should expand into God's personal residence, where He can be appealed to on the basis of His personal love and grace, uppermost.

II. ACHSAH'S PREEMINENT PRAYER OF FAITH

Joshua 15:18-19

¹⁸*And it came to pass, as she came unto him [i.e. to Othniel as his wife], that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted off her ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wouldest thou?*

¹⁹*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.*

Joshua 15:18-19

Achsah had already received her inheritance, but saw a need and felt a desire for more. At her marriage, as they journeyed to her new home, she, as subject to her new husband, asked Othniel for permission to seek an additional *field* from her father, Caleb. This field would augment and compliment her already received inheritance. With Othniel's consent, she, at some later date, traveled to her father, dismounted her donkey in an act of reverence and respect for her father, and asked Caleb to add to her inheritance *springs of water*. They had, at his word, received a *south land*, literally, a dry and arid land, which no doubt lacked water resources. She was seeking added blessings beyond what she had already received in order to further what she already had. How proper is this prayer! She sought to upgrade what portion she had already of her inheritance. She sought to advance her already received portion into more usefulness.

Every believer's portion is Christ. He is our inheritance. In symbol, Achsah's request to Caleb is a picture of our very fitting prayers to God that He increase our share of Christ in this life beyond what He has apportioned to us already. "The lessons here are manifold and rich. This situation should teach the Christian that there is no completeness of experience here on earth, that there is no present perfection, but that...[at all times and in all ways,] we

should have a vision of unattained possibilities. However far we have gone in appropriating what is ours, it is still true that..."⁵ there remains very much of Christ yet to be possessed in this life for all of us Christians. Preeminent prayer seeks to add to however much of Christ is already ours. It is to attempt to gain from God's presence what will make our portions in this life with Christ even more spiritually prosperous. Achsah sought from her father what would be only decided by his character and nature as she perceived it. She depended not upon pledges as to what was promised to be given her—indeed she had none in this matter—, but upon her intimate relationship with the one who had loved her and had revealed himself to her as a loving and caring father. Achsah would have more if it was the will of the one in whom the decision lay. She knew him well and had no specific word from him, but counted upon their close attraction and attachment to each other for the sought for blessing. Achsah went to Caleb. With us Christians, we go to God.

An Acknowledged Eminent Inheritance,
Thou hast given me.

Through the blessings of God, and through the efforts and sacrifice of Othniel, she had been given a generous share in the inheritance of Israel (15:13-17). She had been given the area of the city of Kirjath-sepher, which means literally, "the city of books." This is symbolic of the Word of God; that is, what is contained in the written promises of God's Book as the inheritance of the Christian. These are the same kinds of eminent blessings that Caleb had received by faith. She had these already; it was written down. This was a foreshadowing of what is contained in the written promises of God as the inheritance of the Christian, as in Ephesians Chapter One. They are ours through the efforts and sacrifice of Christ, the Source by which all blessings come. We go to God in prayer and always say, "Thou hast given me; it is written

⁵ Scroggie, W. Graham, The Land and Life of Rest (Fincastle: Scripture Truth Book Company, n.d), p.50.

down in Thy Book, and I thank thee; therefore give me what is written (promised).” This kind of eminent prayer is good, for it takes hold of and acknowledges the work of Christ as written in the Book. But preeminent prayer is more than just taking what is written or what is solely an acknowledgement of the same. It says in addition, “But now I approach Thee to seek from Thee added blessings, which are not written down, but come to me by the same means in Christ.” It does not seek only to obtain and acknowledge what is ours as Christians, but Who is ours as Christians.

Preeminent Prayer, Give me also.

Symbolically, this is an appeal to the Person of God, Who is our very caring *heavenly Father*.⁶ He goes far beyond what is in the general Word, but would have His own come to Him as to a father and ask for what will be the complimentary fulfillment of all that we have already received in Christ. While *Ephesians 1:17-19* fits Caleb’s prayer (q.v. pp.5,6 above), it is *Ephesians 3:20* that best characterizes Achsah’s appeal to a caring heavenly Father.

*Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly
above all that we ask or think, according to the power that
worketh in us. Ephesians 3:20*

Persons who seek this preeminent prayer life receive more than they ask or even think. God has resources and blessings beyond even our imaginations. It is not possible to think of too high or too great a blessing if we seek God in this kind of preeminent prayer as Achsah did of her father, Caleb. We may ask of God what is beyond the ordinary, what is preeminent and outstanding, and what is distinguished from all prescribed and written blessings. This is the kind of prayer that attaches itself upon God’s Person, and enters into His realm. Jesus spoke of it in clear terms, along with the psalmist of old:

⁶ *Luke 11:5-11*

For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

Psalms 84:11

Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

Mark 11:24

Real preeminent prayer seeks God's better and better blessings. These are those *good* things that He will not withhold from those who walk uprightly. These are those things that the supplicant *believes* God will grant, because he knows intimately the Person of God. That is, he is fully acquainted with His ways and manners. He knows what is proper and in accord with His methods. He has entered into the closest chambers with God and knows Him well. He requests according to His nature, and according to his relationship with Him. Achsah knew her father well. She had no doubt of his readiness to grant her request, because she grasped her father's heart and felt her father's heart; therefore she asked for what moved her father's heart. That is preeminence in prayer, when the supplicant goes beyond what is given by the promises of God, and seeks what God is like, and asks of God in accordance with His Person. Preeminent prayer is the superior prayer that goes to God for Himself because of Himself and asks of Him what He is only pleased to grant.

Preeminent prayer is based on relationship above any other thing. There are no outward signs or assurances, only the surety of a heartfelt acquaintance with Him, which acquaintance knows what to ask, how to ask, and why to ask. It is the prayer that approaches God, not His Word, and no promises are even mentioned. But this kind of prayer seeks favors of Him because He is known and loved and understood for what He is in Himself. Preeminent prayer gets hold of God, and gains from Him *what things soever ye desire*, because He is believed for What and Who and How He is.

Preeminent Response, And he gave.

This is the result of the appeal to the Person of God Who is our very caring heavenly Father. He exists in an environment beyond obligatory commitments, and also performs beyond the customary Word. Caleb gave Achsah what her *south land* had lacked, *the upper springs and the nether springs*. The dry land given as her inheritance needed water to be unreservedly useful; therefore she asked beyond what was given, and received it, and more. She received the *upper springs*, a great blessing, more than her allotment prescribed, and the *nether springs*, even more than she had asked or thought.⁷ The *upper springs* were those in the higher lands, but the *nether springs* were down in the lower regions where needed most. What is pictured here is the living water of the Holy Spirit and His abundance given to every Christian, but more to those who seek Him in inner relationship and prayerfulness. That is, not more in the sense of something of Him withheld from some Christians, but more capacity, more abundance, more prevalence, more appropriation of Him into living life here and now.

³⁷In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

³⁸He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

³⁹(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

John 7:37-39

Through the Holy Spirit, God grants to us the privilege of preeminent prayer. The Holy One Who gives us our initial inheritance in Christ through the Word, will give rivers of living water to fulfill even the most perplexing request, if it is handled as Achsah's preeminent request of Caleb, her father. It is this sweet

⁷ *Ephesians 3:20*

communion with God which makes preeminent prayer possible. His spiritual Presence is the intimate knowledge necessary to engage God in this kind of prayer. *And he gave* are blessed words in answer to a preeminent prayer, which stirred the heart of a father, and will rouse the heart of our heavenly Father as we learn to pray *in the Spirit*.

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.
Ephesians 6:18

As the Christian seeks an extra portion of Christ through prayer, the Holy Spirit will be more and more influential in one's life. After Caleb granted her request, Achsah's inheritance was pre-eminently useful in her life. And so it is in our experience. It is as we seek in meekness and humility those things that will augment and expedite the portion of Christ that God has apportioned to us, that we really know the blessings of the upper springs and the nether springs of the Holy Indwelling Christ. He manifests Himself to those of us who seek to gain complete and maximum good from what He has apportioned to us as our lot.

²⁰***At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.***

²¹***He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.***

²²***Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?***

²³***And Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.***

John 14:20-23

Nor can there ever be rest in what we have attained. "Our prosperity is to be measured not so much by the point we have reached as by the fact and measure of the progress we are making."⁸

⁸ Scroggie, loc.cit.

We must never fail to seek from our God and His Christ those blessings which will challenge the vast undone and unaccomplished. Whatever is lacking is what is needed in prayer. Perhaps it will take preeminent prayer that challenges His resources and resolve to give to us. But added resources of His spiritual power must be boldly, yet reverently, sought from Him. May God grant a bold assurance in Him that finds full preeminent prayer a habitual experience in our prayer lives. Amen.

*And God is able to make all grace abound toward you;
that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may
abound to every good work. II Corinthians 9:8*

III. CONTRASTS BETWEEN EMINENT AND PREEMINENT PRAYER

The differences between eminent prayer and preeminent prayer to God is **illustrated** in the difference between Caleb's request of Joshua, and Achsah's request of Caleb. The one is prayer which is according to God's Word, the other is prayer which is according to God's Person. Caleb requested simply what had been promised him by God, but Achsah requested what was in addition to the promised inheritance. Caleb asked for what would fulfill the divine Word to him, while Achsah sought what would help in the usefulness of what had been already given as the fulfillment of the divine Word to her. Caleb came boldly in full confidence of the divine promise in the Word of God, claiming what had been committed to him years previous; however Achsah came humbly and reverently in full awareness that her request depended upon the will of God, not fully expressed. Caleb's plea rested upon what God said to him about **Caleb** and what belonged to **Caleb**, but Achsah's entreaty rested upon **what she knew about her father only**. Caleb came seeking **what was due him** because he had *fully followed* God in the past, while Achsah came seeking in order to fulfill the maximum use of her inheritance **that she might fully follow God in the future**. Caleb came fully believing in what was promised, but Achsah came believing in the principle of requesting blessings based upon real need and what had not been promised at all. Truly, Caleb came to request in accord with His written Word, and to take hold of God by His promise. On the other hand, Achsah came to God in accord with His unwritten goodness that considers wisely and graciously every appeal that centers upon His own Person as a giving and gracious God.

Shall we approach God as Caleb or as Achsah? Both approaches are absolutely correct and good and spiritual; however it is best to approach God on the basis of Who He is rather than on what He must give, even when it is what He has promised. Certainly, the former does not in any way preclude the latter! One can and should always approach God on the basis of Who He is when His promise is or is not involved.

Many times His Word is clear on a certain matter. By all means, we are to take God at His Word, and lay claim upon what He has said in His Holy Word. It is good to take His promises as an inheritance belonging to us, for indeed they are. Yet, another need may arise that is not so plain in His Word. On what do we base that petition? Why, upon Him of course. We go to Him in the secret place of His abiding Presence and we ask Him, as Achsah did of her father, Caleb, simply because He is our Father in heaven. And even those issues that are clear in His Word ought to rest upon Him, and not just upon His obliging promises. It is our **relationship with Him** that determines all petitions in the end.

Caleb's request was made through and sanctioned by his own prior faithfulness and faith in God, yet Achsah came seeking to add to what was hers through the courageous action and faithful endeavors of her husband. This is the greatest of all resources of preeminent prayer versus eminent prayer. As Achsah came on the merits of her husband's capture of the enemies' city and surrounding territory, and upon her relationship with her father, Caleb: even so the prayer which holds most sway with God is similarly placed before His Person on the sole merits of Another, His beloved Son, Jesus Christ. He stood in the place of us true supplicants and gained our inheritance through the courageous work of the cross. By way of His endowment gained for us on the merits of His cross, prayer will be changed from eminent prayer into preeminent prayer. Preeminence in prayer is ours when God is approached upon the basis of Who and What and How He is as the good and gracious and loving heavenly Father, having become such through faith in the cross of Jesus Christ His Son. Amen.

For ye all are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:26

Having therefore brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.

Hebrews 10:19

For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. [Added several emph.]

II Corinthians 1:20