

## Joshua 15:1-63

### “Establishing the border of praise”

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#### I. Intro

Joshua now records a long description of the division of the land by tribe, this will last from the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter to chapter 19:49 where we are told that “*When they had made an end of dividing the land as an inheritance according to their borders, the children of Israel gave an inheritance among them to Joshua the son of Nun.*” The basic principle of allocation according to Numbers 26 was to be based upon the numeric size of the individual tribe as they would be allowed the first lot chosen by Eleazar and Joshua in a blind draw. According to Joshua chapters 15-17 the three largest tribes Judah, Ephraim and Manasseh were given the allotment at Gilgal while the other tribes were given their allotments at Shiloh.

An examination of the land reveals its diversity in topography, climate, resources, commerce and locations. Friends so to with what God has for us as Paul wrote to the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 2:9 saying, “*Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.*” Ray Stedman once said, “*The world tells us, if you don’t take it now, you’re never going to get another chance. Christians are not to think that way. This life is a school, a training where we are being prepared for something that is incredibly great but is yet to come.*” Life is a school but the distribution of the land is far more than a math class as it contains many lessons that Israel lived through that we can glean from. Saint’s the sheer possibilities of the blessings that await you and I ought to be a source of great excitement and joy as each and every day holds still more of the treasures of Christ awaiting our discovery. I have watched many a child become board with the toy in their hand until another child picks it up. Paul tells us in Romans 11:11 that the Gentiles salvation was to provoke the Jews to jealousy. Hebrews 10:24 tells us that we need to “*consider one another in order to stir up love and good works*”. It is my prayer that these studies will provoke us to go forward in our possession of the things of Christ and that you will never again be satisfied with life as you now know it.

#### II. Vs. 1-12 God keeps His promise

Vs. 1-12 Here we are given the geographical boarders for the tribe of Judah. The word border appears 20 times in this chapter and 55 times from this chapter to the end of the book. So 20 times in one chapter Joshua explains to the nation of Judah its geographical boundaries more than any other of the tribes in the rest of the book. How can we draw application for these verses in our own life? May I suggest two things?

- A. **God has marked out our boundaries:** Friends God as a unique calling and gifting for each and every member of His body with specific functions. Paul describes this to the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 12:14-18 where he wrote them saying “*For in fact the body is not one member but many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.*” I’m afraid there is far too much time wasted in the body of Christ with inactivity simply because of dissatisfaction with God’s plan for us. Hey saint’s you all have a unique place in God’s church so why not plug in we need you exercising His gifts the way in which He designed you.
- B. **There is unity in diversity:** In giving these boundaries for Judah we find that the land requested by Caleb previously fell within the boundaries of Judah. You may recall

that this was done blindly yet with Eleazar and Joshua overseeing the process. My point is that with all the possibilities that could have happened God orchestrated Caleb's land being within the land of as ancestors Judah. God rightly fits things together when we allow Him to do the choosing. I believe we need to consider how this works with the myriad of different personalities and gifts yet when Christ is the center and the Holy Spirit is in charge and empowering the work their will remain unity within the diversity.

Much of these verses are a fulfillment of the prophetic word given by Jacob to his son Judah in Gen. 49:8-12 as three specific words about Judah were given by Jacob and all find there future fulfillment in the land allotted to Judah.

- a. **Judah would be always exposed to her enemies:** In Genesis 49:8-9 we are told that, *“Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's children shall bow down before you. Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He bows down; he lies down as a lion; and as a lion, who shall rouse him?”* Bordering Judah was the Moabites to the East, the Edomites to the South, the Amalekites to the Southwest and the Philistines on the West. As such Judah was surrounded with the exception of the north which was boarder by Dan and Benjamin. So what we learn here is that Judah may have the greatest amount of land by she would also have the greatest amount of enemies.
- b. **Judah would be where the ruler would come from and where his throne would be:** In Genesis 49:10 *“The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people.”* In verse 8 we are told that a part of the geographical boundaries included Jerusalem and of course David as well as the Son of David is from the tribe of Judah. Of further interest is Jacob's words with regards to Shiloh who many Rabbis believed was a reference to the Messiah and we know that at the time that Herod began his reign Jesus was being born.
- c. **Judah would be prosperous and fruitful:** In Genesis 49:11-12 Jacob said that, *“Binding his donkey to the vine, and his donkey's colt to the choice vine, he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes. His eyes are darker than wine, and his teeth whiter than milk.”* What I find interesting is that Judah's fruitfulness was to be in a vineyard and that vineyard was to be found according to verse 8b in the valley of the Giants. In other words Judah would find her fruitfulness in facing the giants in adversity. There is an important principal here and that is that **fruitfulness lies not in the lack of adversity but rather in the midst of adversity.** The truth is most of us spend all our energy avoiding the “giants” and we wonder why we never experience fruitfulness. I suggest it is not that the land of promise doesn't contain fruitfulness rather we have been avoiding the very areas of greatest blessing for fear of the giants that occupy the land. So if you want to find the vineyard it will be where the giants dwell.

### III. Vs. 13-19 Three keys to victory

Vs. 13-19 Here in this section located in within Judah portion is Caleb's land which we noted he chose the highest mountain with the biggest giant as his own. Hidden with in this story are **three keys to victory in possessing the promises of God:**

- a. Vs. 13-15 **The enemy is not easily defeated but it is well worth the effort:** In chapter 11:21-23 we are told in Joshua 11:21-22 that, *“at that time Joshua came and cut off the Anakim from the mountains: from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel; Joshua utterly destroyed them with their cities. None of the Anakim were left in the land of the children of Israel; they remained only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod.”* But here we are told that there remained still three more sons of Anak that needed to be killed. We often think that to possess God's blessings and promises means that there won't be a fight and the truth is there will a fierce battle and you can bet that these giants won't go down with out a fight. Specifically I'm thinking **with regards to the giants of my old nature** those things that keep coming up to rip me off, who put out a sign in the ground of blessings that stays stay out. Those giant's can't be allowed to live in the land they must die in order for me to possess

giant's can be allowed to live in the land, that is in order for me to possess the blessings God has in store for me. Notice for a moment in verse 15 what these giants were keeping Caleb from the possession of a city named “*Kirjath Sepher*” which means “*city of books*” but once the giants were defeated Caleb changed the name of the city to “*Debir*” “*sanctuary of the Word*”. Apparently *Kirjath Sepher* was a university town with a huge library. It was a place where the inhabitants of the city were those who views on life was governed by the books of the world system. Man you will never have peace in your heart saints if what controls your thought life is the information from the world! Those giants have got to be slain “*garbage in, garbage out*” dear ones. So what does old Caleb do? Well he slays the giants who control the information that forms the thoughts of the people and the city is renamed “*sanctuary of the Word*”. Do you read the WORD more than you do the daily rag, more than romance novels, sports magazines? What are you feeding your self, who’s winning the battle for the information you are putting into your life?

- b. Vs. 16-17 **We need continued reminders of the blessings to keep up the fight:** Apparently there was some reluctance in going forward to take the “*city of books*” and Caleb needed to offer some further incentives to take the “*city of books*” in order for it to be transformed into the “*sanctuary of the WORD*” And it just so happened that the incentive was Caleb’s daughter Achsah. Now Achsah according to 1 Chron. 2:49 was Caleb’s only daughter and he named her “*Anklet*” which carried the idea that **she was adorned, literally that she was so beautiful that a veil couldn’t hide her beauty.** I mean this gal was no “*ball and chain*” you couldn’t hide her beauty. So we are told that her cousin Othniel “*Lion of God*” came forward to take the city and claim his bride. Dear ones here is how this works in our own life’s; we will never be wanting to take the cites and areas of our life until we are convinced that they are keeping us from a greater “*beauty*” or treasure. We will be content to let the giants have cites in our hearts and heads until we recognize that they are ripping us off from that which far more beautiful then when come to this conclusion we will be suddenly motivated and become “*Lions for God*” and kick out those giants.
- c. Vs. 18-19 **We will be in constant need of the fresh supply of the Holy Spirit to ensure victory:** Right away after Othniel marries Achsah she encourages her new husband to ask her father Caleb for a field which is granted then Achsah goes to her father to ask for the Springs of water to go with the field and Caleb grants both the upper spring and the lower spring. **This young couple was given the blessing of the land but knew they needed the freshness of the springs to make the land given them fruitful.** Hey saints there is a great truth here for us as we can seek our Father for the blessings of the land but we need to seek Him for the freshness of the Holy Spirit to make the blessing fruitful. God’s grace grant’s to His children both the promised blessings and the power of the Spirit to make them fruitful but you need to ask for both dear ones.

#### **IV. Vs. 20-62 Provisions for the promises**

Vs. 20-62 In this long list of 109 cites we are given the boundaries of the tribe of Judah and they encompassed four regions with very different topography:

- a. Vs. 21-32 The South’s dry plains
- b. Vs. 33-47 The Western foothills which bordered the coastal plain
- c. Vs. 48-60 The Central ridge of hill country
- d. Vs. 61-62 The Wilderness which led to the Dead Sea

Within the 109 cities in these four very different types of terrain and climates is the fact that where ever there was a city it meant that there was also ample provisions such as water and food. **Here is my point all of this territory was given to the tribe of Judah from the dry plains and foothills to the hill country to even the Dead Sea and in every place God provided the land He also provided everything necessary to survive in the land. Simply God never gave Judah any blessing that He didn’t also provide the provisions to enjoy it.** Hear me out saints as there will be seasons in our live as we walk through the *lot* given us where we may very well feel as though we are in the “*South Dry Plains*” but God will always provide a place where we can dwell in the

land full of His provisions my friends. And there will be times where we feel as though we are in the wilderness of the Dead Sea but even there we will find a city to satisfy the needs of our hearts. And yes we will also dwell in the “*foothills by the coast or in the beauty of His mountains*” but **no matter where we find our place is at the moment where God guides and dwells He provides us always with a home of His presence and provisions!** Some stop your complaining and start enjoying the city of blessings where He has placed you and when it’s time to move He will let you know.

#### V. Vs. 63 Climbing under to go over

Vs. 63 There is one final statement to look at with regards to the land of blessing given to the tribe of Judah and is verse 63 where we are given the sobering reality that the Jebusites were not vanquished from Jerusalem during the time of Joshua and in fact weren’t removed for 500 years (2 Sam 5:6-7). When we consider the fact that according to 10:1 Joshua had defeated the king and the army of the Jebusites but left the inhabitants of the city to the tribe of Judah this makes matters worse. How could this happen once the king and his army was defeated? Well apparently the Jebusites repopulated Jerusalem and the tribe of Judah didn’t take strong enough action against them to root them out. After Joshua’s death according to Judges 1:8 Judah burnt and destroyed the unwalled residential area but let the walled city remain and that is where the Jebusites lived for those 500 years until the tribe under the leadership of David decided to do something about it. The king of the Jebusites told David and his men in 2 Samuel 5:6 “*You shall not come in here; but the blind and the lame will repel you*”. David’s response was in verse 8 where he says, “*Whoever climbs up by way of the water shaft and defeats the Jebusites (the lame and the blind, who are hated by David's soul), he shall be chief and captain.*” **The point was that it took 500 years for someone to say enough is enough and scale up the water shaft to defeat the enemy held up behind the walls**. Now remember that it is Jerusalem that will become the capital and place of the temple, the central city of worship. They waited 500 years for David to say, “*What do you mean I can’t come in here*”. “*No way are these walls going to keep me out from enjoying this place. I’m coming in and these are going down.*” So how did David gain entrance to this place that had been a hold out for 500 years? Well a fellow climbed up the water shaft. Hum, **the water shaft, Living Water, the Holy Spirit, was the path way to possession of rooting out those areas that were held in by walls**. Brother’s, sister’s the Holy Spirit is the key to access those areas of your life that are keeping you from greater devotion to our God but you are going to have to over come those walls you have placed around that area of your life to protect you if you are going experience victory.