

Joshua 15

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 20 February 2018 18:03

Here we see the giving of the inheritance to Judah and Caleb, as promised by God. Today, we can expect our inheritance in Christ to operate, though the days are dark and foreboding, with many trials. If we fail to realise that God always keeps his promises to help His children, then we may never witness it, or will not 'see' them even when they are given.

Verses 1-11

1.

This then was the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah by their families; even to the border of Edom the wilderness of Zin southward was the uttermost part of the south coast.

2.

And their south border was from the shore of the salt sea, from the bay that looketh southward:

3.

And it went out to the south side to Maalehacrabbin, and passed along to Zin, and ascended up on the south side unto Kadeshbarnea, and passed along to Hezron, and went up to Adar, and fetched a compass to Karkaa:

4.

From thence it passed toward Azmon, and went out unto the river of Egypt; and the goings out of that coast were at the sea: this shall be your south coast.

5.

And the east border was the salt sea, even unto the end of Jordan. And their border in the north quarter was from the bay of the sea at the uttermost part of Jordan:

6.

And the border went up to Bethhogla, and passed along by the north of Betharabah; and the border went up to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben:

7.

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And the border went up toward Debir from the valley of Achor, and so northward, looking toward Gilgal, that is before the going up to Adummim, which is on the south side of the river: and the border passed toward the waters of Enshemesh, and the goings out thereof were at Enrogel:

8.

And the border went up by the valley of the son of Hinnom unto the south side of the Jebusite; the same is Jerusalem: and the border went up to the top of the mountain that lieth before the valley of Hinnom westward, which is at the end of the valley of the giants northward:

9.

And the border was drawn from the top of the hill unto the fountain of the water of Nephtoah, and went out to the cities of mount Ephron; and the border was drawn to Baalah, which is Kirjathjearim:

10.

And the border compassed from Baalah westward unto mount Seir, and passed along unto the side of mount Jearim, which is Chesalon, on the north side, and went down to Bethshemesh, and passed on to Timnah:

11.

And the border went out unto the side of Ekron northward: and the border was drawn to Shicron, and passed along to mount Baalah, and went out unto Jabneel; and the goings out of the border were at the sea.

The documentation kept by Israel and Judah was precise and accurate. It has always been that way. Readers should note that in Jewish life, exact and proper accounts must be made of every aspect of generational history; errors are not tolerated, so everything written is precise, and information from millennia ago continue to be authoritative, without error.

So, in this chapter we see a legal dividing of the land, between the various families within the tribe of Judah. Edom/Idumaea) was south and south-east of Canaan. The wilderness of Zin was a part of the desert between the Dead Sea and Arabah in the east, where Kadesh-barnea was

located.

By 'south coast' is meant the southernmost inland border. The most eastern border was at the bottom shore of the Dead Sea. It stretched downwards, south to below the desert of Kadesh-barnea, before sweeping back up again, to north-east of Gath (verse 3). I would repeat that the details given are a sign of the historicity of the text, to be trusted as fact. At the very top north western point, the border turned right on the map running just above Jerusalem until it reached the topmost point of the Dead Sea. Land belonging to Simeon was in the centre of this area.

Once the whole inheritance was given out, the tribe divided up the total land mass between the families, and each family further divided up the land between individual households. The tribe of Judah was warlike, so it helped to guard the southernmost flank of Israel, especially from the enemies of Edom (the descendants of Esau and origin of Arab people, who now so hate Israel today). Just as this chapter is precise, so is familial documentation.

Sadly, Christians today play fast and loose with truth and facts; they allow error to creep in and so biblical truth is scattered and tainted by error. It takes a long time – a lifetime – to accumulate accurate facts contained in scripture. It takes but a split-second to discern truth from lies, but learning what God says is a lifelong practice.

The northern border took in the 'stone of Bohan', a marker or headstone over the grave of a military commander of Judah who died in Gilgal. Much of Jerusalem was in the hands of the Benjamites, but Judah had the area of Mount Zion and Mount Moriah. The tribe of Dan later took part of the Mediterranean coastal area.

Verses 12-19

1.

And the west border was to the great sea, and the coast thereof. This is the coast of the children of Judah round about according to their families.

2.

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

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Hebron.

3.

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

4.

And he went up thence to the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before was Kirjathsepher.

5.

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

6.

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

7.

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 unto her, What wouldest thou?

8.

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.

Though the western border was originally for Judah, the coastal region eventually came to Dan (see above). Caleb was of the tribe of Judah, and his particular portion was Hebron and its mountain range, as promised by God.

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Caleb killed or drove out the remaining Anakim, the tribe of giants, along with the three son-kings of Anak. When his family had finished with this conquest, Caleb and his men travelled north-west to Kirjathsepher ('city of the book' or 'city of learning') west of Hebron, and then renamed 'Debir' ('sanctuary').

Before they attacked the city, Caleb promised land and the hand of his daughter, Achsah, in marriage to the commander who took the city. The one who accomplished this was Caleb's own 'brother', Othniel ('lion of God'), who played a significant part in saving the Israelites from a future oppressive regime. As is often the case the term 'brother' is applied to one of the same kin: Othniel was a young nephew.

Caleb had already granted land to his daughter, but it was in the arid dry south. Then, when Caleb took her to her new husband's home, she asked a favour. She knew her own land was dry, so pleaded with Caleb to also give her access to water, found in two fields which had springs.

As Matthew Henry says, it is no unholy thing to seek a modicum of comfort from our possessions, the emphasis being on what is reasonable and modest. No Christian should show an undue regard for gaining properties, goods, or money, if his brethren are in need. Better to lose one's riches than to allow a fellow believer to suffer, if it is within our power to give help. Nor should we keep our children in penury when we have the means to assist them towards a better life.

We are told that few people will lay down their lives for a friend, but those few are honourable. I personally cannot comprehend why fellow believers should gather money and goods into their personal barns, whilst other Christians lay hungry or in trouble outside those barns. Open the barns! Give to your needy fellow believers! (Before God removes what you have).

Verses 20-47

The text now defines which cities belonged to Judah, so there would be no mistake. These are simply listed, so I will not enter into details – they are self-evident. Note that each city had its own satellite villages, and so we may assume each city shown below had these additional properties and people. It can be seen that these places were in all kinds of terrain – mountains, valleys, plains.

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1.

This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families.

2.

And the uttermost cities of the tribe of the children of Judah toward the coast of Edom southward were Kabzeel, and Eder, and Jagur,

3.

And Kinah, and Dimonah, and Adadah,

4.

And Kedesh, and Hazor, and Ithnan,

5.

Ziph, and Telem, and Bealoth,

6.

And Hazor, Hadattah, and Kerioth, and Hezron, which is Hazor,

7.

Amam, and Shema, and Moladah,

8.

And Hazargaddah, and Heshmon, and Bethpalet,

9.

And Hazarshual, and Beersheba, and Bizjothjah,

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10.

Baalah, and lim, and Azem,

11.

And Eltolad, and Chesil, and Hormah,

12.

And Ziklag, and Madmannah, and Sansannah,

13.

And Lebaoth, and Shilhim, and Ain, and Rimmon: all the cities are twenty and nine, with their villages:

14.

And in the valley, Eshtaol, and Zoreah, and Ashnah,

15.

And Zanoah, and Engannim, Tappuah, and Enam,

16.

Jarmuth, and Adullam, Socoh, and Azekah,

17.

And Sharaim, and Adithaim, and Gederah, and Gederothaim; fourteen cities with their villages:

18.

Zenan, and Hadashah, and Migdalgad,

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19.

And Dilean, and Mizpeh, and Joktheel,

20.

Lachish, and Bozkath, and Eglon,

21.

And Cabbon, and Lahmam, and Kithlish,

22.

And Gederoth, Bethdagon, and Naamah, and Makkedah; sixteen cities with their villages:

23.

Libnah, and Ether, and Ashan,

24.

And Jiphtah, and Ashnah, and Nezib,

25.

And Keilah, and Achzib, and Mareshah; nine cities with their villages:

26.

Ekron, with her towns and her villages:

27.

From Ekron even unto the sea, all that lay near Ashdod, with their villages:

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28.

Ashdod with her towns and her villages, Gaza with her towns and her villages, unto the river of Egypt, and the great sea, and the border thereof:

Note how the southern border of Israel should be the border of northern Egypt. Also, Gaza belonged to Israel, as it does today in God's plan and according to divine inheritance laws.

Verses 48-62

The following places are shown apart, simply for ease of reading; they were all part of the inheritance of Judah. The total number of cities was large, especially as they included their villages, often built around a main fortified city.

1.

And in the mountains, Shamir, and Jattir, and Socoh,

2.

And Dannah, and Kirjathsannah, which is Debir,

3.

And Anab, and Eshtemoh, and Anim,

4.

And Goshen, and Holon, and Giloh; eleven cities with their villages: (This is Goshen in Judah, not Egypt)

5.

Arab, and Dumah, and Eshean,

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6.

And Janum, and Bethtappuah, and Aphekah,

7.

And Humtah, and Kirjatharba, which is Hebron, and Zior; nine cities with their villages:

8.

Maon, Carmel, and Ziph, and Juttah,

9.

And Jezreel, and Jokdeam, and Zanoah,

10.

Cain, Gibeah, and Timnah; ten cities with their villages:

11.

Halhul, Bethzur, and Gedor,

12.

And Maarath, and Bethanoth, and Eltekon; six cities with their villages:

13.

Kirjathbaal, which is Kirjathjearim, and Rabbah; two cities with their villages:

14.

In the wilderness, Betharabah, Middin, and Secacah,

15.

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And Nibshan, and the city of Salt, and Engedi; six cities with their villages.

The 'city of salt' was in the wilderness of Judah/Judaeen Desert. It is thought by scholars to be the archaeological site of Khirbet Qumran, about one mile from the Dead Sea. It is where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found.

Verse 63

1.

As for the Jebusites the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out: but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day.

The Jebusites literally held the high ground of what became known as Jerusalem. Try though they did, Judah could not dislodge them from their mountain fortress city. For this reason the Jebusites lived amongst the people of Judah for many years. It was this failure to oust godless pagans that led to continued raids along the borders of Israel and Judah, and even deeper incursions by a variety of pagan tribes.

Note: though the Jebusites were not ousted, they still remained under Judaeen rule, as Judah was located all around their city. The city of Jebus did not become Jerusalem until renamed by the Jews. Interestingly, all non-Jewish historical references call the city 'Jerusalem'. One chieftain called it Urusalim, after the god of the setting sun and the nether world, Shalim. Jebus was only a part of what became Jerusalem. These facts are pertinent, of course, to the ongoing modern, erroneous claim that Jerusalem does not belong to Israel. It has done so for almost 3000 years.

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