

## Notes on Joshua 15

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### C. The Inheritance of the Tribe of Judah – Joshua 15

Verses 1-12

1. Describe the borders of the territory inherited by Judah.

Note: When describing the area inherited by a tribe, try to describe its boundaries in terms of major geographical features (seas, rivers, mountains, etc.) or in terms of borders with other tribes, rather than in terms of cities.

#### *The borders of Judah*

As with the tribes east of Jordan, I will not attempt to give a technical description of Judah's territory. As before, in fact it is difficult to determine the exact location of many places named on the boundaries after so many years have passed.

In general, Judah's territory stretched from the Dead Sea on the east to the Mediterranean Sea on the west. The northern border stretched westward from the northern tip of the Dead Sea, where the Jordan entered the Sea. It passed Jerusalem and went west to the sea. On the south, Judah's territory stretched to Edom and the wilderness of Zin south of Canaan.

Verses 13-19

2. What name did Hebron formerly have? Why?

3. What did Caleb have to do to take the city?

4. What did he offer to the man who captured Debir? Who accomplished this?

5. What request did his daughter make of Caleb?

#### *Caleb captures his inheritance*

As recorded in 14:6-15, Joshua had agreed that Caleb could receive Hebron as his inheritance. This had formerly been named Kirjath-Arba, after the great Anakim leader named Arba, father of Anak.

Caleb and his family were successful in capturing Hebron, driving out in the process three Anak warriors named Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi. This would be no small feat, since these men were giants and great warriors that had so frightened Israel's spies when they first came to Canaan. See notes on chap. 14. As discussed in chap. 14, the chronology here is not clear, but the most likely explanation is that Israel had earlier defeated Hebron driving out the Anakim, but more had returned and had to be driven out at this time by Caleb.

Caleb and his family then went to another nearby city named Kirjath Sepher. This was later renamed Debir. This city too was captured according to chap. 10:38,39. So again some people must have returned in the meanwhile.

Caleb offered to give his daughter Achsah as wife to whomever would attack and capture Debir. This challenge was taken up by Othniel, Caleb's nephew (son of Caleb's brother Kenaz). He attacked and captured Debir, so Caleb gave him his daughter Achsah as promised.

After the victory, Achsah and Othniel agreed to ask Caleb to also give them a field including springs for water. This request was made and Caleb agreed giving her upper and lower springs.

This event is also recorded in Judges 1:11-15. It is obviously the same story, so it cannot have happened both times. Perhaps the story occurred in Joshua's day as recorded in Joshua 15 but is included in Judges 1 for completeness to explain in some detail the victories of Judah and to introduce Othniel who later became a judge. (Or vice-versa, it may have occurred later as recorded in Judges 1, but for completeness it was recorded in the book of Joshua by the one who later wrote the story. But it would seem that would make Caleb a very old man here, since Joshua had already died.)

11. This same Othniel, Caleb's nephew, later became a judge of Israel as recorded in Judges 3:7-11. This event is also discussed in Judges 1:11-15 (see notes there).

Verses 20-63

6. What city did Judah not capture at this time?

### ***The cities given to Judah***

The record then names the cities included in the territory given to Judah. Some of these had been named in the battles Israel fought in capturing the land. Others are named later in subsequent events in Israel's history.

Perhaps the most significant is that the people were not able to drive the Jebusites out of Jerusalem. Even at that time Jerusalem was a great stronghold. When the record was written, Jerusalem still had not been taken. It was later captured by David as recorded in 2 Sam. 5:6-9.

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