

Commander Joshua in the Promised Land - Lesson #57
“West Side Distribution & Caleb's Inheritance” • Chapters 14 & 15 •
•HANDOUT•

► This lesson opens with Chapter 14 and the distribution of the land inheritance on the West Side of the Jordan. The West Side distribution record continues through Chapter 19.

This chapter also provides a a spotlight on Caleb. He was one of the twelve spies sent into the Land. When the ten spies refused to obey God and enter the Land, Caleb and Joshua stood up against them and said they should trust God and enter the Land. God rewarded them for their stand by sparing them from death during the 40 years of wandering. This was a very welcomed spotlight because, until now, the scriptures have been silent about Caleb.

► There were a total of nine and one-half tribes that would occupy the west side of the Jordan and two and one-half tribes would occupy the east side. It is interesting to note that the amount of recorded space devoted to the scriptural description of the territory of each of the tribes, as well as the order of each presentation, corresponds to the importance of these tribe in Israel's history, giving it a prophetic feel. The distribution record begins by spotlighting the following three tribes:

The first was Judah – the tribe of David, Solomon, and their successors--is given the most space and treated with the most detail.

The second spotlight was on Ephraim representing the tribe of Joseph. It was Joseph's two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim who represented the tribe of Joseph. Ephraim, settled in the north, west of the Jordan; it will become an exceedingly powerful tribe in the future.

The third spotlight is the tribe of Benjamin, the tribe of Saul, Israel's first king.

► Following the distribution of the inherited land to each tribe by lot, the scripture declared that it would be the territory west of the Jordan which would be referred to as the “Land of Canaan.”

► Once again the tribe of Levi was called out as Holy unto the Lord.

The text stipulates: “*And they gave no part to the Levites in the land, except cities to dwell in, with their common-lands for their livestock and their property.*”

Q: Why are Ephraim & Manasseh called “half-tribes?” [ref: Gen 29 & 30]

Q: If God permitted the east side of the Jordan to be occupied by the two and one-half tribes, why wouldn't they also be considered as part of the “Land of Canaan?”

Q: Why was the distribution of the land inheritance done by lot – the casting of the Urim and Thummim?

Caleb's Inheritance: At the general time of the distribution of the Land, Caleb, son of Jephunneh, approached Joshua ...

► **Joshua 14:6-15** • Now the men of Judah approached Joshua at Gilgal, and Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, "You know what the LORD said to Moses the man of God at Kadesh Barnea about you and me. I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh Barnea to explore the land. And I brought him back a report according to my convictions, but my brothers who went up with me made the hearts of the people melt with fear. I, however, followed the LORD my God wholeheartedly. So on that day Moses swore to me, 'The land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance and that of your children forever, because you have followed the LORD my God wholeheartedly.'

"Now then, just as the LORD promised, he has kept me alive for forty-five years since the time he said this to Moses, while Israel moved about in the desert. So here I am today, eighty-five years old! I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I'm just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then. Now give me this hill country that the LORD promised me that day. You yourself heard then that the Anakites were there and their cities were large and fortified, but, the LORD helping me, I will drive them out just as he said."

Then Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave him Hebron as his inheritance. So Hebron has belonged to Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite ever since, because he followed the LORD, the God of Israel, wholeheartedly. (Hebron used to be called Kiriath Arba after Arba, who was the greatest man among the Anakites.)

Then the land had rest from war.

Q: What did Caleb and Joshua represent to the people of Israel at this point?

Q: What promise did Moses make to Caleb on the day he stood in support of the Lord and against the negative report the other 10 spies were making?

Q: What does Caleb say about his current age?

Q: What does Caleb ask for?

Q: What oath did Caleb combine with his request?

Q: How did Joshua respond to Caleb's very bold request?

Chapters 15 is a detail description of the inheritance of Judah as well as the warfare Caleb brought against the Anakites.

► This chapter will be presented in a summary, narrative style. In Numbers 33 God commanded that the land be divided into territories that corresponded in size to the size of each tribal clan. But, without any explanation, Judah was given a territory larger than her territory numbers merited. Judah's lot was in the extreme south, with a southern border that represented most of the southern boundary of Canaan as described in Numbers 34. Their territory included Kadesh Barnea in the Desert of Zin, which would have been the original staging point for the Israelite invasion of the land of Canaan had they trusted God. [ref: Numbers 13:26-33] Overall, their territory stretched from the Judean Mountains, including the Jebusite city of Jerusalem, to Hebron, and into the Negev Desert, reaching as far as the wilderness of Zin and the border of Edom. The western boundary was the Mediterranean Sea. Its total territory covered about 2,300 square miles.

Q: Of course this is just a summary and the corresponding scriptural text is a long, extremely detailed list of the names of towns and places. What value does such a detailed list have?

The Inheritance of Caleb's Daughter

► Caleb's vow to rid the land of the Anakites began immediately upon receiving his inheritance. The text names three Anakites which he drove from the land, Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi. [They had been living in Hebron at the time of the first spy mission. (ref: Numbers 13:22)]

From Hebron, Caleb and his men went to Debir, also known as Kirjath Sepher, to capture it and drive out the Anakites.

It was at this place Caleb offered a special incentive for bravery: "He who attacks Kirjath Sepher and captures it, to him I will give Achsah my daughter as wife." It was Caleb's nephew, Othniel, who actually captured the city. Faithful to his word, Caleb gave Othniel his daughter in marriage.

Once married, Achsah persuaded Othniel to ask her father for a field. Caleb responded by giving him land in the south, in the Negev. Then Achsah came to her father and asked him for a special favor. In Hebrew "special favor" is the word "berahak" which means "blessing." When Caleb asked her what she was asking for, she answered "*Do me a special favor. Since you have given me land in the Negev, give me also springs of water.*" And Caleb gave her the upper and lower springs, which in Hebrew translate as reservoirs or cisterns. This was an enormous gift to his daughter and son-in-law.

Othniel would later become one of the twelve judges whom God used to deliver the Israelites from foreign oppressors in the book of Judges.

Q. What does this story tell us about Caleb?

▶ The remainder of Chapter 15 consists of a detailed list of cities, villages and regions that were occupied by the tribe of Judah. We have been shown a remarkable mixture of miracle and human effort, a combination of divinely aided victory and failure that results from Israel's disobedience and unbelief.

But God emerges as the revealed Sovereign who responds to the needs of His covenant people but is not subject to their whims.

In spite of victories, the chapter ends on a negative note:

▶ Joshua 15:63 • Judah could not dislodge the Jebusites, who were living in Jerusalem; to this day the Jebusites live there with the people of Judah.

Q: What is significant about the last part of verse 63?

▶ Chapters 16 & 17

**focus on the land inheritance of the tribe of Joseph
which has been split between his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.
This is where we continue the story ...**



Next Time • Lesson #58
“The Inheritance of Joseph's Sons”

