

# Joshua

## Lesson 13

### Chapter 14

The Bible is full of promises. Promises for me and you. But it is also filled with promises for many people who have already spent their time here on earth and passed on into eternity. Be that as it may, while those people were still alive on earth, the LORD made sure His promises to them were fulfilled. Such is the case with the division of the Promised Land to the people of the Nation of Israel. But there was also a promise to a spy who searched out the land of Canaan with the twelve spies at the beginning of the second year out of the Promised land. It was time for that promise to be fulfilled also – forty years later.

#### 4. Land Apportioned in the Promised Land

##### a) The Land Taken by Joshua

###### (1) The Land on the West of the Jordan River

The taking of Canaan Land began with the crossing of the Jordan River in ca. 1424 BC, forty years after leaving Egypt. As we will discover in this chapter, it is a little more than five years later, and it is time for Joshua and Eleazar to apportion the land in the Promised Land. In the last chapter, land taken by Moses on the east side of the Jordan was granted. It is now time for the land taken by Joshua to be granted. We start with the land on the west side of the Jordan River by calling the heads of the households to apportion the inheritances. Chapter 14, verse 1. *“Now these are the territories which the sons of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the households of the tribes of the sons of Israel apportioned to them for an inheritance, <sup>2</sup> by the lot of their inheritance, as the LORD commanded through Moses, for the nine tribes and the half-tribe.”* (14:1-2)

Two and the half-tribes already had their land on the east side of the Jordan River. Nine and a half-tribes remain to receive their land on the west side of the Jordan River. The LORD gave the assignment by lot to the tribes in Numbers 26:55; 33:54; 34:13.

###### (2) The Land on the East of the Jordan River

###### (a) Land for the Levites Not Given on the East Side

To be thorough, the writer repeats the gift of the inheritance to the two and half-tribes on the east side of the Jordan River. Verse 3. *“For Moses had given the inheritance of the two tribes and the half-tribe beyond the Jordan; but he did not give an inheritance to the Levites among them.”* (14:3)

###### (b) Land for the Levites Not Given on the West Side

In addition, land for the Levites was not given on the west side of the Jordan River in the areas of Manasseh and Ephraim. Verse 4. *“For the sons of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim, and they did not give a portion to the Levites in the land, except cities to live in, with their pasture lands for their livestock and for their property. <sup>5</sup> Thus the sons of Israel did just as the LORD had commanded Moses, and they divided the land.”* (14:4-5)

Cities will be granted as donations to the Levites on the east and west sides, but no farm and herd lands other than those needed to keep the livestock donated in those places from the tribes. The donated livestock is part of the tithe of each tribe.

## b) The Request of Caleb

### (1) Caleb's Introduction

It was time to begin dividing the land at the main camp in Gilgal, where the request of Caleb was made. We start with Caleb's introduction. Verse 6. *"Then the sons of Judah drew near to Joshua in Gilgal, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, 'You know the word which the LORD spoke to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh-barnea.'" (14:6)*

To set the scene, the time of the land division on the west side of the Jordan River and the first tribe to receive land was Judah. It is for that reason that the leaders of Judah have drawn near to Joshua. Caleb was a descendant of the tribe of Judah. The lineage of Jacob's son Judah to Caleb was Judah, Pharez, Herzon, Kenez, Jephunneh, and Caleb.

Caleb reminded Joshua of Moses's promise to Caleb when he and Joshua were at the camp in Kadesh-barnea more about forty years before, at the beginning of the second year after leaving Egypt. Caleb will include the promise in his story that we will see next.

### (2) Caleb's Story

We come to Caleb's story. Verse 7. *"I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land, and I brought word back to him as it was in my heart. <sup>8</sup> Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt with fear; but I followed the LORD my God fully. <sup>9</sup> So Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land on which your foot has trodden will be an inheritance to you and to your children forever, because you have followed the LORD my God fully.' <sup>10</sup> Now behold, the LORD has let me live, just as He spoke, these forty-five years, from the time that the LORD spoke this word to Moses, when Israel walked in the wilderness; and now behold, I am eighty-five years old today. <sup>11</sup> I am still as strong today as I was in the day Moses sent me; as my strength was then, so my strength is now, for war and for going out and coming in." (14:7-11)*

The promise for Caleb to inherit the land that the twelve spies searched out came from the LORD through Moses in Numbers 14:24. At that time, the full impact of the promise was vague. With Caleb's testimony, it becomes clear. We hear the word of the LORD in Numbers 14:24. *"But My servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it (Numbers 14:24).*

Hebron was the land which Caleb entered to spy out the land and it is Hebron that will be given to Caleb as his inheritance.

Unless you did not notice it, the writer has once again established the time the divisions of the land began at Gilgal. It also established the time it took for the Nation of Israel to carry out the central, southern, and northern campaigns. It took five years. In verse 7, we hear Caleb say, *"I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land."* In verse 10, we hear Caleb say, *"Now behold, the LORD has let me live, just as He spoke, these forty-five years, from the time that the LORD spoke this word to Moses, when Israel walked in the wilderness; and now behold, I am eighty-five years old today."* Caleb was forty years old when he spied out the land at the beginning of the second year out of Egypt. The crossing of the Jordan River occurred at the beginning of the fortieth year after coming out of Egypt, or thirty-nine years later. Caleb would be seventy-nine years old when he crossed the Jordan River. Caleb is now eighty-five years old when he asks for Hebron to be his. Caleb has surely had a birthday but has not completed the year. Eighty-five minus seventy-nine equals six. However, six full years have not transpired. Just over five years have transpired. It took a little more than five years for the nation of Israel to capture all the land under Joshua's command and then begin to divide it to the tribes. The year is about 1419 BC.

### (3) Caleb's Request

At the end of Caleb's story, we come to Caleb's request. "Now then, give me this hill country about which the LORD spoke on that day, for you heard on that day that Anakim were there, with great fortified cities; perhaps the LORD will be with me, and I will drive them out as the LORD has spoken." (14:12)

The Anakim have already been killed by the nation by the time Caleb makes this request (11:21-22). Caleb's purpose in mentioning the LORD's promise is simply to identify with surety the city with which he wanted.

### (4) Caleb's Gift

#### (a) The Town of Hebron

The decision was made for the gift to Caleb, the town of Hebron. "So Joshua blessed him and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance. <sup>14</sup> Therefore, Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite until this day, because he followed the LORD God of Israel fully." (14:13-14)

Hebron means *alliance*. The name was originally attached by the Israelites to the valley of Hebron, meaning *the valley of alliance*. The main name of the valley is *the valley of Eschol* because it runs by Eschol also. According to Numbers 13:22, the city was established seven years before the city of Zoan in Egypt (Genesis 23:2). We also call city Tanis, its Greek name. Hebron was originally divided into four cultural sections, with each group living in alliance with the others.

#### (b) The Town of Kiriath-arba

Our writer tells of the town of Kiriath-arba being the former name of the city of Hebron. Verse 15. "Now the name of Hebron was formerly Kiriath-arba; for Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim. Then the land had rest from war." (14:15)

We have mentioned Hebron many times in this study. In Genesis 35:17, we find that name attached to the name "Mamre" as in the oaks of Mamre (*manliness*) where Abraham bought a cave as a burial tomb for Sarah. He would be buried there along with Isaac, Rebekkah, and Jacob (Genesis 23:2-20). He purchased the cave from Ephron the Hittite. *Kiriath* means *the city of*. Arba is the name of the father of the Anakim. It was his city because he had conquered it. It was the *city of Arba*. Therefore it was the city of Arba – Kiriath-arba. Even though it has been called Hebron in places in Genesis and Joshua until the town is given to Caleb, the name of the town was Kiriath-arba. Caleb changed the name to Hebron.

## Chapter 15

### I. The Division of the West Promised Land

#### 1. The Tribal Area Assigned to Judah (15:1-63)

##### a) The Southern Border of Judah

With the gift of the vicinity of Hebron given to Caleb, Joshua and Eleazar could continue with the division of the West Promised Land and the tribal area assigned to Judah. Before we proceed, we must interject a thought. Forty-five years before, Moses had promised Caleb that he would inherit the area that he spied out as part of the twelve spies. Caleb was of the tribe of Judah. Therefore, with Caleb's gift fulfilled, it must have forced Joshua and Eleazar to carve Judah's land around that of Caleb. Thus, the lot fell first to Judah. What was a lot? The word literally means *a pebble*. In this case, ten pebbles would be used. Each pebble had the name of a tribe on it. They would be put in a bag or jar. The leader would select a pebble for each division. The Jews expected the LORD to control the drawing of each pebble from the bag or jar in order of His



Judah's Southern Border

divine will. As such, Judah's pebble must have been drawn first. In the LORD's divine will, Caleb's Hebron fell within the gift of the first lot of Judah.

The writer gives the borders of Judah in four directions, south, east, west, and north. We begin with the southern border of Judah. Chapter 15, verse 1. "Now the lot for the tribe of the sons of Judah according to their families reached the border of Edom, southward to the wilderness of Zin at the extreme south. <sup>2</sup> Their south border was from the lower end of the Salt Sea, from the bay that turns to the south. <sup>3</sup> Then it proceeded southward to the ascent of Akrabbim and continued to Zin, then went up by the south of Kadesh-barnea and continued to Hezron, and went up to Addar and turned about to Karka. <sup>4</sup> It continued to Azmon and proceeded to the brook of Egypt, and the border ended at the sea. This shall be your south border." (15:1-4)

Some of these places mentioned can no longer be identified. However, enough can be identified that the southern border can be set with ease. Starting at the bottom of the bay of the Dead Sea, the border ran directly south past the land of Edom to the furthest point in the Wilderness of Zin, which was a dead-end at the Sea of Aqaba. From the sea of Aqaba, the line ran northwest past Kadish-barnea and up the Brook of Egypt to dead-end into the Great Sea (Mediterranean). The southern border is shaped like a large "V." Although the eastern line ran through the land of Edom, the LORD had it apportioned to the tribe even before it was taken by Israel.

#### b) The Eastern Border of Judah

The eastern border of Judah started where the southern border started. However, the east border description runs north. Verse 5. "The east border was the Salt Sea, as far as the mouth of the Jordan. And the border of the north side was from the bay of the sea at the mouth of the Jordan. <sup>6</sup> Then the border went up to Beth-hoglah, and continued on the north of Beth-arabah, and the border went up to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben. <sup>7</sup> The border went up to Debir from the valley of Achor, and turned northward toward Gilgal which is opposite the ascent of Adummim, which is on the south of the valley; and the border continued to the waters of En-shemesh and it ended at En-rogel." (15:5-7)

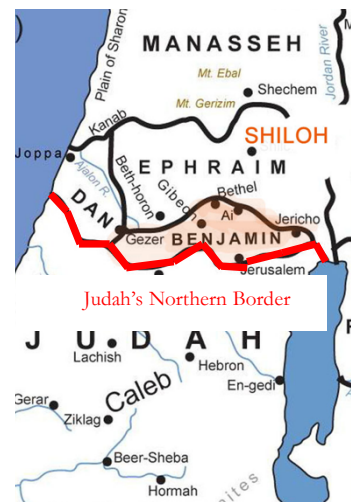
Starting at the bottom of the bay of the Salt Sea (Dead Sea), the eastern border runs directly north, passed Gilgal to En-shemesh (fountain of the sun), a spring about a mile east of Bethany (house of misery) on the road to Jericho. It is called the "well of the apostles." En-rogel (fount of the fuller) is also a spring and mentioned here because the eastern border turned at the spring of En-shemesh and headed west to En-rogel. Today, En-rogel is called the "Fountain of the Virgin." It is associated with Gihon Springs, which is the source that provides water to the pool of Siloam in Jerusalem.

#### c) The Northern Border of Judah

The writer gives direction to the northern border of Judah. Verse 8. "Then the border went up the valley of Ben-hinnom to the slope of the Jebusite on the south (that is, Jerusalem); and the border went up to the top of the mountain which is before the valley of Hinnom to the west, which is at the end of the valley of Rephaim toward the north. <sup>9</sup> From the top of the mountain the border curved to the spring of the waters of Nephtoah and proceeded to the cities of Mount Ephron, then the border curved to Baalab (that is, Kiriath-jearim). <sup>10</sup> The border turned about from Baalab westward to Mount Seir, and continued to the slope of Mount Jearim on the north (that is, Chesalon), and went down to Beth-shemesh and continued through



Judah's Eastern Border



Judah's Northern Border

*Tinnab. <sup>14</sup> The border proceeded to the side of Ekron northward. Then the border curved to Shikkeron and continued to Mount Baalah and proceeded to Jabneel, and the border ended at the sea.” (15:8-11)*

From the En-rogel springs, the northern border of Judah runs west through valleys and across mountains until it ends in the Great Sea north of Ekron in the land of the Philistines. As directed by the LORD, the Philistine land was yet to be conquered, yet it was to be apportioned to the tribes at any rate.

#### d) The Western Border of Judah

The western border of Judah is easy. Verse. 12. *“The west border was at the Great Sea, even its coastline. This is the border around the sons of Judah according to their families.” (15:12)*

The whole of the western border was the sands of the shores of the Great Sea (Mediterranean).

#### e) Caleb’s Borders in Judah

After explaining the borders of Judah’s allotment, the writer circles back around to specify Caleb’s borders in Judah’s territory; Caleb’s receipt of the gift of land was covered first in chapter 14:6-15. In this second pass of telling the story, the writer gives more details of the capture of the land. It is very common in Hebrew literature for the author to tell a simple version of the story and then make several passes over time through the story to add details each time. This is our second pass with Caleb’s story. Verse 13. *“Now he gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh a portion among the sons of Judah, according to the command of the LORD to Joshua, namely, Kiriath-arba, Arba being the father of Anak (~~that is, Hebron~~.)” (15:13)*

Here we have the same information as previously covered in chapter 14. This time the writer will speak about Caleb’s part in capturing Hebron just a few months before.

#### (1) Caleb and the Three Sons of Anak

To capture Hebron, we come to Caleb and the three sons of Anak. Verse 14. *“Caleb drove out from there the three sons of Anak: Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmai, the children of Anak.” (15:14)*

Back in chapter 11, we learned the following about the attack on the Anakim.

*“Then Joshua came at that time and cut off the Anakim from the hill country, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab and from all the hill country of Judah and from all the hill country of Israel. Joshua utterly destroyed them with their cities. <sup>22</sup> There were no Anakim left in the land of the sons of Israel; only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod some remained.” (11:21-22)*

Here in chapter 15, we learned that it was Caleb who led the charge for Joshua and the nation of Israel to cut off the three sons of Anak. No doubt, Caleb was one of the twelve chiefs in Joshua’s army of Israelites – the chief of the tribe of Judah. Because of that, Caleb may have been one of the chiefs who put his foot on the necks of one of the five Amorite kings who hid in the cave at Makkedah (*place of shepherds*). But that is not for sure.

#### (2) Caleb and Debir

##### (a) The Offer of a Prize

From Hebron, Caleb led the attack on Debir, just as was mentioned in chapter 11. But this time, circling through the story, we learn of the offer of a prize to the man who captures Debir. Verse 15. *“Then he went up from there against the inhabitants of Debir; now the name of Debir formerly was Kiriath-sepher. <sup>16</sup> And Caleb said, “The one who attacks Kiriath-sepher and captures it, I will give him Achsah my daughter as a wife.” (15:15-16)*

Before Debir was taken by Caleb and the Nation of Israel, the town’s name was Kiriath-sepher. As we have stated before, *Kiriath* means *a city*. *Sepher* means *instruction*. Therefore, the Amorite name of the town was *the city of instruction or the city of books*. Debir, the new name, means *a sanctuary*.

The gift to the victorious man would be Caleb's daughter, Achsah. Her name means *ankle chain* or *anklet*.

(b) The Winner of the Prize

With the prize offered, we come to the winner of the prize. Verse 17. *“Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, captured it; so he gave him Achsah his daughter as a wife.<sup>18</sup> It came about that when she came to him, she persuaded him to ask her father for a field. So she alighted from the donkey, and Caleb said to her, “What do you want?”<sup>19</sup> Then she said, “Give me a blessing; since you have given me the land of the Negev, give me also springs of water.” So he gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.”* (15:17-19)

Othniel was Caleb's nephew. Kenaz was Caleb's younger brother. We will hear of Othniel again after the death of Joshua when the king of Mesopotamia seeks to reign over the nation of Israel (Judges 3:8-9). Othniel will be called by the LORD to be the first judge of Israel.

For now, Othniel has won the hand of Achsah for a wife. She was unhappy with the desert and barren land of the Negev where she was going to be forced to live with Othniel. So she asked for one of the most important things to sustain life, water. Caleb obliged. He gave her land with two springs on it – the upper spring was on high ground and lowered spring on low ground. Today, we cannot identify this specific piece of land or the two springs.