**Joshua**

Chapter 15

*Allotment for Judah*

**The allotment for the tribe of Judah, clan by clan, extended down to the territory of Edom, to the Desert of Zin in the extreme south. 2 Their southern boundary started from the bay at the southern end of the Salt Sea, 3 crossed south of Scorpion Pass, continued on to Zin and went over to the south of Kadesh Barnea. Then it ran past Hezron up to Addar and curved around to Karka. 4 It then passed along to Azmon and joined the Wadi of Egypt, ending at the sea. This is their southern boundary. 5 The eastern boundary is the Salt Sea as far as the mouth of the Jordan. The northern boundary started from the bay of the sea at the mouth of the Jordan, 6 went up to Beth Hoglah and continued north of Beth Arabah to the Stone of Bohan son of Reuben. 7 The boundary then went up to Debir from the Valley of Achor and turned north to Gilgal, which faces the Pass of Adummim south of the gorge. It continued along to the waters of En Shemesh and came out at En Rogel. 8 Then it ran up the Valley of Ben Hinnom along the southern slope of the Jebusite city (that is, Jerusalem). From there it climbed to the top of the hill west of the Hinnom Valley at the northern end of the Valley of Rephaim. 9 From the hilltop the boundary headed toward the spring of the waters of Nephtoah, came out at the towns of Mount Ephron and went down toward Baalah (that is, Kiriath Jearim). 10 Then it curved westward from Baalah to Mount Seir, ran along the northern slope of Mount Jearim (that is, Kesalon), continued down to Beth Shemesh and crossed to Timnah. 11 It went to the northern slope of Ekron, turned toward Shikkeron, passed along to Mount Baalah and reached Jabneel. The boundary ended at the sea. 12 The western boundary is the coastline of the Great Sea. These are the boundaries around the people of Judah by their clans. 13 In accordance with the Lord’s command to him, Joshua gave to Caleb son of Jephunneh a portion in Judah—Kiriath Arba, that is, Hebron. (Arba was the forefather of Anak.) 14 From Hebron Caleb drove out the three Anakites—Sheshai, Ahiman and Talmai—descendants of Anak. 15 From there he marched against the people living in Debir (formerly called Kiriath Sepher). 16 And Caleb said, “I will give my daughter Acsah in marriage to the man who attacks and captures Kiriath Sepher.” 17 Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb’s brother, took it; so Caleb gave his daughter Acsah to him in marriage. 18 One day when she came to Othniel, she urged him to ask her father for a field. When she got off her donkey, Caleb asked her, “What can I do for you?” 19 She replied, “Do me a special favor. Since you have given me land in the Negev, give me also springs of water.” So Caleb gave her the upper and lower springs. 20 This is the inheritance of the tribe of Judah, clan by clan: 21 The southernmost towns of the tribe of Judah in the Negev toward the boundary of Edom were: Kabzeel, Eder, Jagur, 22 Kinah, Dimonah, Adadah, 23 Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan, 24 Ziph, Telem, Bealoth, 25 Hazor Hadattah, Kerioth Hezron (that is, Hazor), 26 Amam, Shema, Moladah, 27 Hazar Gaddah, Heshmon, Beth Pelet, 28 Hazar Shual, Beersheba, Biziothiah, 29 Baalah, Iim, Ezem, 30 Eltolad, Kesil, Hormah, 31 Ziklag, Madmannah, Sansannah, 32 Lebaoth, Shilhim, Ain and Rimmon—a total of twenty-nine towns and their villages. 33 In the western foothills: Eshtaol, Zorah, Ashnah, 34 Zanoah, En Gannim, Tappuah, Enam, 35 Jarmuth, Adullam, Socoh, Azekah, 36 Shaaraim, Adithaim and Gederah (or Gederothaim)—fourteen towns and their villages. 37 Zenan, Hadashah, Migdal Gad, 38 Dilean, Mizpah, Joktheel, 39 Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon, 40 Cabbon, Lahmas, Kitlish, 41 Gederoth, Beth Dagon, Naamah and Makkedah—sixteen towns and their villages. 42 Libnah, Ether, Ashan, 43 Iphtah, Ashnah, Nezib, 44 Keilah, Aczib and Mareshah—nine towns and their villages. 45 Ekron, with its surrounding settlements and villages; 46 west of Ekron, all that were in the vicinity of Ashdod, together with their villages; 47 Ashdod, its surrounding settlements and villages; and Gaza, its settlements and villages, as far as the Wadi of Egypt and the coastline of the Great Sea. 48 In the hill country: Shamir, Jattir, Socoh, 49 Dannah, Kiriath Sannah (that is, Debir), 50 Anab, Eshtemoh, Anim, 51 Goshen, Holon and Giloh—eleven towns and their villages. 52 Arab, Dumah, Eshan, 53 Janim, Beth Tappuah, Aphekah, 54 Humtah, Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron) and Zior—nine towns and their villages. 55 Maon, Carmel, Ziph, Juttah, 56 Jezreel, Jokdeam, Zanoah, 57 Kain, Gibeah and Timnah—ten towns and their villages. 58 Halhul, Beth Zur, Gedor, 59 Maarath, Beth Anoth and Eltekon—six towns and their villages. 60 Kiriath Baal (that is, Kiriath Jearim) and Rabbah—two towns and their villages. 61 In the desert: Beth Arabah, Middin, Secacah, 62 Nibshan, the City of Salt and En Gedi—six towns and their villages. 63 Judah could not dislodge the Jebusites, who were living in Jerusalem; to this day the Jebusites live there with the people of Judah.**

**15:1–63** Judah is the first of the west bank tribes to have its territory delineated. First the outer limits are listed, then the area apportioned to Caleb and Othniel; finally the Canaanite cities allotted to the clans of Judah are named region by region. (CSB)

**15:1** *tribe of Judah.* Judah’s priority is anchored in the oracle of Jacob (Ge 49:8–12) and upheld in the history of the nation (2Ki 17:18). (CSB)

First to receive allotment, as he was given greater prominence than his three older brothers, who had committed acts that caused them to lose their inheritance as firstborn (cf Gn 49:1–12). Jacob’s prophecies confer a leadership role on Judah, but not the double portion of material blessings, which went to Joseph (Gn 48:17–22). (TLSB)

**15:4** *southern boundary.* The points listed formed a curved line beginning at the lower tip of the Dead Sea and moving under Kadesh Barnea to join the Mediterranean coast at the mouth of the Wadi el-Arish (see note on 13:3). (CSB)

**15:5** *northern boundary.* Judah’s border with Benjamin ran in a westerly line from the mouth of the Jordan through the Hinnom Valley, just south of Jerusalem, over to Timnah, then northwest to the coastal city of Jabneel (later called Jamnia), about ten miles south of Joppa. (CSB)

**15:8** *the Jebusite (that is, Jerusalem)*. City is identified first by its inhabitants; then by the name it will be known by when David dislodges those inhabitants. (TLSB)

**15:12** *west boundary was the Great Sea*. Both the southern (v 4) and northern boundaries were to extend to the Great Sea, but the Philistines continued to occupy and control the coastal plain. (TLSB)

**15:13** *the commandment of the Lord* *to Joshua*. It is Joshua’s responsibility (Dt 1:38) to carry out this command, first conveyed through Moses (Nu 14:24; Dt 1:36). (TLSB)

**15:15** *he marched against … Debir.* See note on 10:38. (CSB)

**15:16–19** *give Achsah my daughter as wife*. Though the action here suggests that men might marry women for political advancement, note the response to Achsah’s boldness and requests in vv 18–19. (TLSB)

**15:17** *Othniel.* See Jdg 3:7–11 for his service as judge in Israel. (CSB)

**15:19** *Give me a blessing*. Achsah asks that she be given rights as one who could receive inheritance; thus also her husband is to be included as a descendant of Caleb. (TLSB)

*upper and lower springs.* They still water the local farms in Hebron. (CSB)

Hbr for “blessing” is similar to “pool” or “pond,” and the blessing Achsah seeks is that their life on the land be sustainable. Caleb’s response is double what she expects, overflowing (cf Jn 4:13–14; 7:37–39). (TLSB)

**15:20–63** Lists of cities possessed by Judah are grouped with a description of the region within Judah. Apparent discrepancies between the numbers given and the actual number of names mentioned may be due to the inclusion of alternate names or the listing of “villages” as well as “cities.” Many cities with enclosures also had outlying communities without enclosures that were not considered large or significant enough to note here. (TLSB)

**15:21** *southernmost towns.* Most of the first 29 villages were assigned to the tribe of Simeon (cf. 19:1–9). (CSB)

**15:33** *western foothills.* The Hebrew for this term is *Shephelah*, meaning “lowland.” This area between the highlands of central Judah and the Philistine coast was for the most part not occupied by Israel until the victories of King David. Some of the places on this list were reassigned to the tribe of Dan (cf. 19:41–43). (CSB)

**15:48** *hill country.* The high region south of Jerusalem. The Septuagint adds 11 names, including Tekoa and Bethlehem, to this list. (CSB)

**15:61** *desert.* The chalky, dry region east and south of Jerusalem that borders the Dead Sea. (CSB)

Along the western shore of the Salt Sea. (TLSB)

**15:62** Only En Gedi can be positively located, though the “City of Salt” is believed by many to be Qumran, where, centuries later, the scribes who produced the Dead Sea Scrolls lived. (CSB)

**15:63** *Jebusites.* A victory over the city of the Jebusites by the men of Judah is recorded in Jdg 1:8, but evidently this did not result in its permanent occupation. Both Benjamin and Judah failed to take the Jebusite fortress of Jerusalem (Jdg 1:21). (CSB)

Borders of Judah come very close to Jerusalem around the south. The city was in Benjamin’s territory (18:28). Neither tribe had complete success in dislodging the Jebusites (Jgs 1:8; 1:21), unlike David (2Sm 5:6–7). (TLSB)

 **Ch 15** Judah receives precedence in the allotment of land. The assigning of land to Judah points to our end-times promised land through Christ, who came from the tribe of Judah. As Judah was assigned land before fully possessing it, so the Lord gives us eternal life even before we fully possess it in the resurrection. • Lord, grant me faith to receive the promises You have laid before me for the sake of Your Son. Help me also to be faithful to those promises until they are fulfilled completely in heaven. Amen. (TLSB)