

JOSHUA

CHAPTER 15

The Allotment for Judah

The allotment for the tribe of the people of Judah according to their clans reached southward to the boundary of Edom, to the wilderness of Zin at the farthest south. 2 And their south boundary ran from the end of the Salt Sea, from the bay that faces southward. 3 It goes out southward of the ascent of Akkrabbim, passes along to Zin, and goes up south of Kadesh-barnea, along by Hezron, up to Addar, turns about to Karka, 4 passes along to Azmon, goes out by the Brook of Egypt, and comes to its end at the sea. This shall be your south boundary. 5 And the east boundary is the Salt Sea, to the mouth of the Jordan. And the boundary on the north side runs from the bay of the sea at the mouth of the Jordan. 6 And the boundary goes up to Beth-hoglah and passes along north of Beth-arabah. And the boundary goes up to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben. 7 And the boundary goes up to Debir from the Valley of Achor, and so northward, turning toward Gilgal, which is opposite the ascent of Adummim, which is on the south side of the valley. And the boundary passes along to the waters of En-shemesh and ends at En-rogel. 8 Then the boundary goes up by the Valley of the Son of Hinnom at the southern shoulder of the Jebusite (that is, Jerusalem). And the boundary goes up to the top of the mountain that lies over against the Valley of Hinnom, on the west, at the northern end of the Valley of Rephaim. 9 Then the boundary extends from the top of the mountain to the spring of the waters of Nephtoah, and from there to the cities of Mount Ephron. Then the boundary bends around to Baalah (that is, Kiriath-jearim). 10 And the boundary circles west of Baalah to Mount Seir, passes along to the northern shoulder of Mount Jearim (that is, Chesalon), and goes down to Beth-shemesh and passes along by Timnah. 11 The boundary goes out to the shoulder of the hill north of Ekron, then the boundary bends around to Shikkeron and passes along to Mount Baalah and goes out to Jabneel. Then the boundary comes to an end at the sea. 12 And the west boundary was the Great Sea with its coastline. This is the boundary around the people of Judah according to their clans. 13 According to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, he gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh a portion among the people of Judah, Kiriath-arba, that is, Hebron (Arba was the father of Anak). 14 And Caleb drove out from there the three sons of Anak, Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmai, the descendants of Anak. 15 And he went up from there against the inhabitants of Debir. Now the name of Debir formerly was Kiriath-sepher. 16 And Caleb said, "Whoever strikes Kiriath-sepher and captures it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter as wife." 17 And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, captured it. And he gave him Achsah his daughter as wife. 18 When she came to him, she urged him to ask her father for a field. And she got off her donkey, and Caleb said to her, "What do you want?" 19 She said to him, "Give me a blessing. Since you have given me the land of the Negeb, give me also springs of water." And he gave her the upper springs and the lower springs. 20 This is the inheritance of the tribe of the people of Judah according to their clans. 21 The cities belonging to the tribe of the people of Judah in the extreme south, 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, Chesil, Hormah, 31 Ziklag, Madmannah, Sansannah, 32 Lebaoth, Shilhim, Ain, and Rimmon: in all, twenty-nine cities with their villages. 33 And in the lowland, Eshtaol, Zorah, Ashnah, 34 Zanoah, En-gannim, Tappuah, Enam, 35 Jarmuth, Adullam, Socoh, Azekah, 36 Shaaraim, Adithaim, Gederah, Gederothaim: fourteen cities with their villages. 37 Zenan, Hadashah, Migdal-gad, 38 Dilean, Mizpeh,

Joktheel, 39 Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon, 40 Cabbon, Lahmam, Chitlish, 41 Gederoth, Beth-dagon, Naamah, and Makkedah: sixteen cities with their villages. 42 Libnah, Ether, Ashan, 43 Iphtah, Ashnah, Nezib, 44 Keilah, Achzib, and Mareshah: nine cities with their villages. 45 Ekron, with its towns and its villages; 46 from Ekron to the sea, all that were by the side of Ashdod, with their villages. 47 Ashdod, its towns and its villages; Gaza, its towns and its villages; to the Brook of Egypt, and the Great Sea with its coastline. 48 And in the hill country, Shamir, Jattir, Socoh, 49 Dannah, Kiriath-sannah (that is, Debir), 50 Anab, Eshtemoh, Anim, 51 Goshen, Holon, and Giloh: eleven cities with their villages. 52 Arab, Dumah, Eshan, 53 Janim, Beth-tappuah, Aphekah, 54 Humtah, Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron), and Zior: nine cities with their villages. 55 Maon, Carmel, Ziph, Juttah, 56 Jezreel, Jokdeam, Zanoah, 57 Kain, Gibeah, and Timnah: ten cities with their villages. 58 Halhul, Beth-zur, Gedor, 59 Maarath, Beth-anoth, and Eltekon: six cities with their villages. 60 Kiriath-baal (that is, Kiriath-jearim), and Rabbah: two cities with their villages. 61 In the wilderness, Beth-arabah, Middin, Secacah, 62 Nibshan, the City of Salt, and Engedi: six cities with their villages. 63 But the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the people of Judah could not drive out, so the Jebusites dwell with the people of Judah at Jerusalem to this day.

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 *south 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 *north side.* 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)

15:16–19 *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 *extreme south.* Most of the first 29 villages were assigned to the tribe of Simeon (cf. 19:1–9). (CSB)

15:33 *lowland.* 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 *wildernesst.* 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)