

August 14

Scriptures: Read Joshua 15

Key Verse: “Caleb drove out the three sons of Anak... Then, he went up from there to the inhabitants of Debir.” (Joshua 15:14, 15a)

Overview

The tribe of Judah was the first to have its territory delineated from among the tribes that were to receive their inheritance west of the Jordan. This was fitting since they were the royal and most blessed tribe as Jacob had prophesied (Gen.49:8-12). They also had the largest fighting force, which had helped to bring victory for Joshua.

Joshua described Judah’s land of inheritance by its geographic location; roughly the area between the Dead Sea and the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. The specific cities in twelve districts are listed within the four geographical areas: (1) the Negev, “fry land” in the south (vv. 20-32); (2) the Shephelah, “lowlands”, or the region of the foothills (vv. 33-47); (3) the hill country, or the region of the central ridge (vv. 48-60), including the city of Bethlehem and bordering Jerusalem which was in the allotment of the tribe of Benjamin; (4) wilderness, the region sloping down toward the Dead Sea (vv. 61-62).

Judah’s land also bordered several heathen enemies; therefore, they would have to be strong and disciplined so as not to come under pagan influence. The Moabites were to the east, the Philistines to the west, and the Amalikites to the southwest. The Jebusites were in their midst, inhabiting Jerusalem; and although Judah attacked and took Jerusalem (Judges 1:8), it was not a permanent take-over, since they, and the tribe of Benjamin (Judges 1:21) were not completely successful in driving out all the Jebusites from their fortified city (v.63). This, however, would be accomplished during the time of David, almost two centuries later (2 Sam.5:6-7). Judah proved to be strong and true to God for a longer period of time than the other tribes (2 Kings 17:18).

In the midst of describing Judah’s inheritance, Joshua adds further details concerning Caleb and his allotment of land within the tribe of Judah. We learn that Caleb was courageous in fulfilling his desire to drive out the Anakim from the region of Hebron (14:12; 15:14). This was possible because the Lord was with him. The three sons of Anak are likely references to three clans of Anakim, the descendants of Anak (cf. Num.13:22).

Caleb did not stop with this victory. Though he was old, he did not use his age as an excuse to be inactive in the service and mandate of the Lord. As long as God gave him strength to continue, he kept pressing on in obedience to the will of God to gain more victories for the Lord and purge the land of the idolatrous heathen. What a wonderful example is he to the aging servants of the Lord!

Caleb was a good leader. We can see how he did not try to do everything himself but encouraged others to become involved in the obedience to God, Caleb gave the men further motivation by offering his daughter Achsah in marriage to the one who successfully conquered the heathen in Kirjath Sepher, or Debir. Possible to Caleb’s surprise and delight, his nephew Othniel took up

the challenge and bravely won her hand. Othniel was a man of God like his uncle; he was a brave warrior and judge in Israel (Judges 3:9-10).

For their marriage gift, and as a part of Achsah's dowry, Caleb gave them some land south of Hebron, in the Negev, yet in that dry area there was a need for more water. When Achsah respectfully requested a blessing from her father, she meant a tangible gift. Caleb generously offered her not just one but two springs of water (v.19). When we come with a request for blessing from our Heavenly Father, we often find He is pleased to give us more than we expect. He knows what we need even before we ask (Matt.6:8) and delights in generously blessing those of his children who delight in Him. (Ps.37:4)

Prayer

Lord, You said that You know what we need. Therefore, Lord, we trust Your judgment. We need just what you have in mind. We open our lives to Your will. Amen.