

15. *What was the meaning of the old name of Hebron?*
14:15

Hebron had been known as Kirjath-Arba. This name indicated it had been the home of a man named Arba. He is described as a great man among the Anakim, who were the descendants of Anak. The word ARBA means "four" but it is hard to see any significance to this name for the man. Arba is the name given to the father of Anak (Genesis 35:27). It is significant to note that at this time "the land was at rest from war."

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 14

1. Who assisted Joshua in distributing the land to the tribes of Israel?
2. Which tribe received no inheritance of land?
3. How many tribes received land east of Jordan?
4. How many tribes were left to receive an inheritance?
5. Who were the children of Joseph?
6. How old was Caleb when he went to spy out Canaan?
7. How old was he when he asked for land to be given to him?
8. What city was given to Caleb as his inheritance?
9. What was the former name of the city?
10. Why was Caleb granted this special request?

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 15

Vv. 1-12 *Borders of Judah.* The territory which was given to Judah was outlined with specific points mentioned on each of the borders. The southern border reached from the south tip of the Dead Sea to a point farther south at Kadesh-barnea. From Kadesh-barnea the southern border ran to the Mediterranean Sea. The Mediterranean Sea formed the west border.

STUDIES IN JOSHUA-JUDGES-RUTH

The north border was on a line from the northern end of the Dead Sea west to the Mediterranean Sea. The east border was, therefore, the Dead Sea itself.

Vv. 13-19 *Caleb's inheritance.* Caleb had asked Joshua for the territory of his choice. This was generally outlined in chapter 14, but the material in chapter 15 added some of the details of Caleb's inheritance. His daughter was given in marriage to Othniel, who helped Caleb to conquer the land.

Vv. 20-63 *Cities of Judah.* The territory of Judah included some of the outstanding cities of all the land of Canaan. Many of them figured prominently into later Jewish history. Special notice was made of the fact that the Jebusites continued to live in Jerusalem, and the children of Judah did not drive them out. The city of Jerusalem later became the capital of all Israel.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *It is good to be first in God's sight.* Judah was not the first son of Jacob. Three other sons were born to Jacob before Judah was born. Each of these had been of such character that Jacob by-passed them when he was bestowing his blessing and announcing the birth-right among his sons. When he came to Judah, Jacob said: "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise" (Genesis 49:8). It is significant that Judah was the first of the tribes to be settled in Canaan. Later on, Judah was the first to go up to battle to exterminate the remaining Canaanites (Judges 1:1-2).

2. *Children are like arrows.* The psalmist said: "As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them" (Psalms 127:4-5). Caleb was blessed with a daughter who was dear to his heart, and he arranged for her to be married to a valiant man in Israel. When he set out to conquer the land which had been allotted to him, he promised the hand of his daughter in marriage to the man who would go up and successfully capture Debir. Caleb, himself, was a valiant warrior and his son-in-law proved to be of the same mettle. One of the great blessings of service in the army of the Lord is to be associated with those of like courageous spirit.
3. *No city is like the Holy City.* More than one hundred cities are mentioned by name in the closing verses of chapter 15. Some of them were very important and figured prominently in the later history of Israel. None was as prominent as Jerusalem, and it was quite appropriate for special mention to be made of its status. Although the children of Israel did not drive the Jebusites out of Jerusalem, it was later captured by David and became "the City of the Great King." God used this city as a type of the Holy City which is to come down out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband (Revelation 21:2).

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Borders of Judah 15:1-12

This then was the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah by their families; even to the border of Edom the wilderness of Zin southward was the uttermost part of the south coast.

2 And their south border was from the shore of the Salt Sea, from the bay that looketh southward:

3 And it went out to the south side to Maaleh-acrabbim, and passed along to Zin, and ascended up on the south side unto Kadesh-barnea, and passed along to Hezron, and went up to Adar, and fetched a compass to Karkaa:

4 From thence it passed toward Azmon, and went out unto the river of Egypt; and the goings out of that coast were at the sea: this shall be your south coast.

5 And the east border was the Salt Sea, even unto the end of Jordan. And their border in the north quarter was from the bay of the sea at the uttermost part of Jordan:

6 And the border went up to Beth-hogla, and passed along by the north of Beth-arabah; and the border went up to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben:

7 And the border went up toward Debir from the valley of Achor, and so northward, looking toward Gilgal, that is before the going up to Adummim, which is on the south side of the river: and the border passed toward the waters of En-shemesh, and the goings out thereof were at En-rogel:

8 And the border went up by the valley of the son of Hinnom unto the south side of the Jebusite; the same is Jerusalem: and the border went up to the top of the mountain that lieth before the valley of Hinnom westward, which is at the end of the valley of the giants northward:

9 And the border was drawn from the top of the hill unto the fountain of the water of Nephtoah, and went out to the cities of mount Ephron; and the border was drawn to Baalah, which is Kirjath-jearim:

10 And the border compassed from Baalah westward unto mount Seir, and passed along unto the side of mount Jearim, which is Chesalon, on the north side, and went down to Beth-shemesh, and passed on to Timnah:

11 And the border went out unto the side of Ekron northward; and the border was drawn to Shicron, and passed along to mount Baalah, and went out unto Jabneel; and the goings out of the border were at the sea.

12 And the west border was to the Great Sea, and the coast thereof. This is the coast of the children of Judah round about according to their families.

1. *Where was Edom?* 15:1

Edom was the territory inhabited by the descendants of Esau. It lay south of the Dead Sea. This land was the southern border of the tribe of Judah. The wilderness of Zin was a part of the Sinaitic Peninsula. In this area Israel had wandered for forty years in the days of Moses. When Israel left Kadesh-barnea, their major camp site in the wilderness of Zin, they asked the king of Edom for permission to travel through his territory. He refused their request, and the Israelites were forced to go all the way back to the head of the Gulf of Aqaba at Eziongeber in order to go around the land of Edom (Numbers 20:14-21).

2. *Where was the wilderness of Zin?* 15:1b

The wilderness of Zin was the section of the Sinaitic Peninsula where the children of Israel had wandered for forty years. They had arrived here soon after leaving Mount Sinai, and it was from Kadesh-barnea that Moses had sent twelve spies to search out the land. They returned to this point prior to the death of Aaron and then turned back into the wilderness during the final year of their wanderings. This wilderness also formed a part of the border of Edom, the nation of Esau's descendants, who lived in an area south of the Dead Sea.

3. *Where was the Salt Sea?* 15:2

The Salt Sea was the Dead Sea. The Salt Sea is the lowest spot on the face of the earth. It was the southern

extremity of the Jordan River. The waters of the Jordan flow into the sea, but there is no outlet from the sea. As a result, the water stagnates and is filled with all kinds of minerals derived from the evaporation of the waters. Plant life and marine life is killed by the saltiness of the sea. For this reason, it is known as both the Salt Sea and the Dead Sea. This body of water formed the east border of Judah, and a line drawn in a westerly direction from the south end of the Dead Sea formed Judah's southern boundary line.

4. *What points were on the southern border of Judah?* 15:2

The southern border of Judah was along a line drawn from the south end of the Dead Sea. This border followed a southwesterly course until it came to Kadesh-barnea. From this point, it turned back in a northwesterly direction and finally went to the shore of the River of Egypt. The boundary then stretched along the River of Egypt to the shore of the Mediterranean Sea.

5. *Where was the River of Egypt?* 15:4

Some commentators believe that the River of Egypt was the Nile River, but there is never any historical evidence of the children of Israel possessing all of the land between Canaan and the Nile River. Most maps will show a small river running in a northwesterly direction which empties into the Mediterranean Sea, a few miles south of Gaza. It was a stream which flowed rapidly in winter which was the rainy season, and it is now called Wady el-Arish.

6. *What was the east border of Judah?* 15:5

Judah's east border was the Dead Sea. The Scripture says that it was the "Salt Sea, even unto the end of Jordan." This was a reference to the fact that the eastern border ran from the junction with the south border at the southern end of the Dead Sea to the north end of the Dead Sea.

It was here at the north end of the Dead Sea that the Jordan emptied into the sea. This is the meaning of the phrase, "unto the end of Jordan." Of course, the Salt Sea is the Dead Sea.

7. *What was the north border of Judah? 15:5b-11*

Judah's north border was along a line which ran from the north end of the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean Sea. The border passed along by the south side of the city of Jerusalem and continued on westward. It ran along the north side of the famous Philistine city of Ekron before reaching the shore of the Mediterranean. Kirjath-jearim was another well-known site on the northern border, for here travelers coming to Jerusalem from the west caught their first view of Jerusalem. It was customary for them to stop at this point on the border between Judah and Benjamin, refresh themselves, take in the magnificent view, and then continue gratefully on their way.

8. *What was the west border of Judah? 15:12*

Judah's west border was the Mediterranean Sea. The Scripture reference calls it "the Great Sea." It was larger than the Dead Sea or the Sea of Galilee, and thus deserving of this title. The land of Judah thus included the rich maritime plain from a point near Joppa all the way to the point where the River of Egypt emptied into the Mediterranean Sea. The fertile hill country from Jerusalem to Kadesh-barnea was also a part of this great tribe's territory and included such prominent centers as Bethlehem, Hebron, and Beer-sheba.

Caleb's Inheritance 15:13-19

13 And unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a part among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the Lord to Joshua, even the city of Arba the father of Anak, which city is Hebron.

14 And Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak.

15 And he went up thence to the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before was Kirjath-sepher.

16 And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife.

17 And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife.

18 And it came to pass, as she came unto him, that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted off her ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wouldest thou?

19 Who answered, Give me a blessing; for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs and the nether springs.

9. *What is the meaning of the name Kirjath-sepher?*
15:15

Kirjath-sepher is a name meaning "a book-city." As the Scripture makes clear, this was the old name of the city of Debir. The city was probably a location of book storage, and thus the name was given to the community. This city was the prize which Caleb offered to the courageous man who would conquer the town. Since Achsah was also to be the bride of this conqueror, it was an honor to be desired. Othniel, son of Kenaz, performed this feat and received the city as a prize for his valor.

10. *What was Othniel's relationship to Caleb?* 15:17

Othniel is described as the son of Kenaz. He is also known as Israel's first judge (Judges 3:9). Since Caleb is described as a Kenezite (14:6) some suppose that his ancestor was also Kenaz, but Caleb is definitely described as the son of Jephunneh. It would appear, therefore, that

Kenaz was Caleb's younger brother and that Othniel was the son of Caleb's brother. The Masoretes have decided against this and have concluded that Othniel was Caleb's younger brother. Still, it seems better to believe that Kenaz was Caleb's brother and that Othniel was Caleb's nephew. Such marriages were not uncommon in ancient times; for we notice that Abraham married his half sister, and Nahor, Abraham's brother, married his niece, the daughter of Haran (Genesis 11:29). The marriage of a man with his brother's daughter, however, was not forbidden in the Law.

11. For what field did Achsah ask? 15:19

The field for which Achsah asked was not the field which surrounded the town of Debir for this would naturally go with the town. Achsah asked for a specific field which could be cultivated and which was abundantly supplied with springs of water, both an upper and lower spring being mentioned. Caleb granted her request. Thus, Caleb, the faithful judge, who was chosen out of the tribe of Judah was comfortably settled with his family in the midst of the land which was given to Judah.

Cities of Judah 15:20-63

20 This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families.

21 And the uttermost cities of the tribe of the children of Judah toward the coast of Edom southward were Kabzeel, and Eder, and Jagur,

22 And Kinah, and Dimonah, and Adadah,

23 And Kedesh, and Hazor, and Ithnan,

24 Ziph, and Telem, and Bealoth,

25 And Hazor, Hadattah, and Kerioth, and Hezron, which is Hazor,

- 26 Amam, and Shema, and Moladah,
 27 And Hazar-gaddah, and Heshmon, and Beth-palet,
 28 And Hazar-shual, and Beer-sheba, and Bizjothjah,
 29 Baalah, and Iim, and Azem,
 30 And Eltolad, and Chesil, and Hormah,
 31 And Ziklag, and Madmannah, and Sansannah,
 32 And Lebaoth, and Shilhim, and Ain, and Rimmon:
 all the cities are twenty and nine, with their villages:
 32 And in the valley, Eshtaol, and Zoreah, and Ashnah,
 34 And Zanoah, and En-gannim, Tappuah, and Enam,
 35 Jarmuth, and Adullam, Socoh, and Azekah,
 36 And Sharaim, and Adithaim, and Gederah, and
 Gederothaim; fourteen cities with their villages:
 37 Zenan, and Hadashah, and Migdal-gad,
 38 And Dilean, and Mizpeh, and Joktheel,
 39 Lachish, and Bozkath, and Eglon,
 40 And Cabbon, and Lahmam, and Kithlish,
 41 And Gederoth, Beth-dagon, and Naamah, and Mak-
 kedah; sixteen cities with their villages:
 42 Libnah, and Ether, and Ashan,
 43 And Jiphtah, and Ashnah, and Nezib,
 44 And Keilah, and Achzib, and Mareshah; nine cities
 with their villages:
 45 Ekron, with her towns and her villages:
 46 From Ekron even unto the sea, all that lay near
 Ashdod, with their villages:
 47 Ashdod with her towns and her villages, Gaza with
 her towns and her villages, unto the river of Egypt, and
 the Great Sea, and the border thereof:
 48 And in the mountains, Shamir, and Jattir, and
 Socoh,
 49 And Dannah, and Kirjath-sannah, which is Debir,
 50 And Anab, and Eshtemoh, and Anim,
 51 And Goshen, and Holon, and Giloh; eleven cities
 with their villages:

- 52 Arab, and Dumah, and Eshean,
53 And Janum, and Beth-tappuah, and Aphekah,
54 And Humtah, and Kirjath-arba, which is Hebron,
and Zior; nine cities with their villages:
55 Maon, Carmel, and Ziph, and Juttah,
56 And Jezreel, and Joddeam and Zanoah,
57 Cain, Gibeah, and Timnah; ten cities with their
villages:
58 Halhul, Beth-zur, and Gedor,
59 And Maarath, and Beth-anoth, and Eltekon; six
cities with their villages:
60 Kirjath-baal, which is Kirjath-jearim, and Rabbah;
two cities with their villages:
61 In the wilderness, Beth-arabah, Middin, and Se-
cacah,
62 And Nibshan, and the city of Salt, and En-gedi;
six cities with their villages.
63 As for the Jebusites the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
the children of Judah could not drive them out: but the
Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem
unto this day.

12. *How are the towns of Judah listed? 15:21-63*

The towns contained in the land of Judah were listed in four different districts. The land was naturally divided according to the richness of the soil with the southland or Negeb listed first. Following these towns were the towns in the lowland, or Shephelah, on the Mediterranean sea-coast. The third listing was of the cities in the hill country or mountain area. Last of all, a list of the cities in the barren land of Judah was given. Much of the land between Hebron and the Dead Sea was barren as was the land east of Jerusalem.

13. How many towns were in the Negeb? 15:21-32

The total is given in verse 32. Here it is said that there were twenty-nine cities in all. It is also said that there were some villages with these cities. By counting the total number of proper names, we arrive at the number thirty-seven. There were evidently twenty-nine important cities and some rather unimportant villages. All of these were grouped according to their general location. The first group was one of nine places (vv. 21-23). The second group (vv. 24-25) was a list of six places. The third group (vv. 26-28) was one of nine towns. The last group (vv. 29-32) was one of thirteen towns in the western portion of the Negeb.

14. How many towns were in the Shephelah? 15:33-47

Some fifty towns were in the hilly region or slopes on the western side of the territory of Judah. Fourteen of these towns were in the northern part of this area, while sixteen towns were listed in the actual plain in its full extent from north to south. The third group of towns, all in the southern half of the hilly region, comprised a total of nine towns. The fourth group, with eleven points mentioned, was a section later given to the tribe of Dan.

15. How many towns were in the mountains? 15:48-60

The towns in the mountains were divided into six different groups. The mountains in Judah rise sharply from the southern area and reach some three thousand feet above sea level in the area around Hebron. This mountainous region then runs north to a broad valley just north of Jerusalem. The range is one of limestone mountains with some jagged peaks, but the sides are often covered with vegetation. The whole area is crisscrossed by many fertile valleys. Likely these towns were located in these valleys, but the whole area was thickly dotted by the towns.

16. *How many towns were in the wilderness? 15:61-62*

Only six cities and their villages were in the land sometimes called the "Desert of Judah." This area ran along the Dead Sea from the northern border of Judah to Wady Fikreh on the south. For the most part, this area was uninhabited, but these six cities were located there. En-ge-di is the best known of the six. A perennial spring supplies an ample abundance of water and even today the area is a welcome oasis in an otherwise extremely barren territory.

17. *What was the status of Jerusalem? 15:63*

Adoni-zedek, the king of the Jebusites, had been killed by Joshua. His city had been pillaged and sacked, but the Israelites had not inhabited it. As a result, the Jebusites had come back to live there. The children of Judah left them alone, and they dwelt for a long time in the midst of Israel. Technically, the city was in the territory given to the people of the tribe of Benjamin; but David captured it and established his capital there (II Samuel 5:6-10).

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 15

1. What country was on the southern border of Judah?
2. What wilderness was along this same southern border?
3. By what name was the Dead Sea called in this passage?
4. What was the best-known point along this south border?
5. What sea formed the east border of Judah?
6. What famous city was on the north border of Judah?
7. What was the west border of Judah?
8. What did Caleb offer to the man who captured Kirjath-sepher?
9. Who took the town?
10. Did the people of Judah occupy Jerusalem?