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# Joshua 15

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## Joshua 15:1–62

## Judah's Allotment

### Outline of Chapter 15:

- vv. 1–12 **The borders of Judah**
- vv. 13–19 **Achsah, Caleb's daughter, and Othniel**
- vv. 20–32 **Judah's cities in the Negev**
- vv. 33–47 **Judah's cities in the Shephelah (which are further subdivided)**
- vv. 48–60 **Judah's cities in the Hill country (which are further subdivided)**
- vv. 61–63 **Wilderness cities and what was not conquered yet**

### Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

- v. 16 **Exactly How is Othniel ben Kenaz Related to Caleb?**

**I**ntroduction: The NIV Study Bible sums this chapter up most succinctly: *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.*<sup>1</sup> This chapter gives us, in great detail, the exact boundaries of the land which the tribe of Judah inherited, as well as the cities which came with it. At the end of the chapter, there will be a clue as to when this book was completed, but geography is our major concern here. We will run into problems. There are places mentioned here which may or may not be cities and there are places which seem to be misplaced, although we do not have supporting manuscript evidence. All in all, this would be a chapter that critics of the Bible would point to as being filled with contradictions. Our problem here is not with the autograph, which is an accurate copy of the original, but of our own manuscripts, which are out of order and violated. Having a portion of the Bible which is clearly geographically problematic, although an unhappy reality, does not mean that we do not have the living, inspired Word of God. It simply means that our manuscripts are not as accurate as we would like them to be. Many of these problems will be dealt with as they occur. Some variations in spelling and differences between the Greek and the Hebrew will not be covered as the general interest in these next few chapters of Joshua are limited at best. Many of the variant readings can be found in Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*; the Revised English Bible also covers a great many variant readings, primarily in relation to the Greek. However, in the Greek and Hebrew, there are whole cities missing, and these will be mentioned as we come to them.

Even today, the books of Moses are given great reverence by the Jewish people. Furthermore, these books contain untold numbers of references to *and God said*, something found in Joshua, but not as often. Therefore, from a human standpoint, it would be reasonable to expect their accuracy to be better with the first five books of the Bible, than it would be with the book of Joshua. Furthermore, insofar as many people find this portion of God's Word as uninteresting as the genealogies, it only stands to reason that a scribe would feel likewise, and therefore not give the book of Joshua his full and undivided concentration. Also, throughout time, the project of copying manuscripts was certainly the project of more than one person at various times. The better copyists would likely be given the more interesting material, which would not necessarily be a delineation of the property dealt out to the Israelites. A final reason that we will find great inaccuracies in this book is that it was simply not read as often as the books of Moses. Whereas if the books of Moses were read, say, once every seven months, then the book of Joshua might be read once every four or five years. If the books of Moses are read from once every five years, one might not open the book of Joshua (or, at least, the second half) but once every twenty or thirty—in other words, its condition might degenerate considerably before anyone was aware of how bad it was. Finally, Moses, the great man of God, did not fully comprehend how important his writings were until possibly the last month or two of his life (notice that we do not find the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun until we get to the book of Deuteronomy), so it stands to reason that few if any would recognize the spiritual significance of some of the other books. Certainly,

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<sup>1</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 309.

even a casual reader cannot help but see over and over in the books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers a continual repetition of *thus says Jehovah*; but we don't find that near as often in the book of Joshua and rarely in these few chapters. So, from human viewpoint, if anything is going to be carefully guarded and faithfully copied, it will be the writings of Moses. What would be placed on the back burner would be the writings of Joshua, along with a great many other writings which were certainly extant at that time.

I approached this chapter and subsequent chapters differently than before. Whereas I looked up and often referred to every Scriptural reference found in the NIV Study Bible, NASB, and several other sources, I did not do that in these chapters with the hundreds of cities named. First of all, most people will not find this particularly interesting; and, secondly, most of the Scriptural references are listed by ZPEB already, which I consulted frequently for information concerning each city.

A problem that we will run into is that certain cities are first given over to Judah, and then we will later find these cities given to Simeon or to Dan. My thinking was that these latter were border cities for Dan and Judah, occupied by both groups. Edersheim suggests that after the lots had been cast and country divided up, there was some adjustments which had to be made based upon the size of the tribes.

A general question that we will have to deal with is why were the lots thrown at different times? We will have the lots thrown for Judah, the half-tribe of Manasseh and Ephraim first (apparently at Gilgal?—Joshua 14:6); and later seven lots will be thrown for the tribes which remain. My first thought was southern Palestine, was first conquered and then first divided and thought that could have even occurred prior to conquering northern Palestine. However, that theory won't wash as Manasseh and Ephraim will occupy north-central Palestine and between Manasseh, Ephraim and Judah will be wedged Benjamin and Dan. My second thought is that this was done by population. However, although Judah is the tribe with the greatest population, Dan is 2<sup>nd</sup>, Issachar is 3<sup>rd</sup>, Zebulun is 4<sup>th</sup>, Asher is 5<sup>th</sup>, and Manasseh is 6<sup>th</sup>. Ephraim is the second smallest (see Num. 26). However, if you take all of Ephraim and add it to half of Manasseh, then we do have the second largest tribe (and Ephraim and Manasseh together do make up the tribe of Joseph). Now, the problem is, even if the first couple lots were done by population, there is not that large of a gap in population between Judah and Joseph and the more populous of the other tribes.

Another question is that in reference to Judah, Ephraim and Manasseh, the Bible merely states that their lot was, and then their boundaries were described. When we get to the final seven tribes, their lots will apparently be cast in a different place (Shiloh); therefore, at a different time; and theirs will be numbered (i.e., [the second lot fell to Simeon](#); [the third lot came up for the sons of Zebulun](#), etc.). I bring these questions up as they occur to me without any guarantee that at some point in this book I will have the definitive answer to any one of them. Keeping these questions in the back of your mind, let us proceed:

Now would be a good place to make a list:

What do we know ?	What do we have Questions About?

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## The Borders of Judah

Literally:

Smother English rendering:

**And so the lot was for the tribe of sons of Judah to their families unto a boundary of Edom, a wilderness of Zin, [the] Negev from an end of south;** Joshua 15:1

**And so the first lot was for the tribe of the sons of Judah and their families from the border of Edom, the wilderness of Zin and down to the Negev in the south;**

We are not told exactly how each tribe was chosen and how the land for the tribe was chosen, but there was apparently some sort of chance involved. It is not given to us precisely so that we could duplicate it, otherwise, we would be making all of our choices by throwing lots, which is not God's plan for us today, now that we have the completed Word of God.

However, even though we do not know conclusively how the lots were cast, this does not mean that theologians haven't taken stabs at this. The NIV Study Bible believes that Urim and Thummim must have been used (which was designed for simple *yes* and *no* answers, as well as to indicate which tribe had been chosen by God for a certain task. Barnes suggests: *Perhaps two urns were employed, one containing a description of the several districts to be allotted, the other the names of the tribes; and the portion of each tribe would then be determined by a simultaneous drawing from the two urns. Or a drawing might be made by some appointed person, or by a delegate of each tribe from one urn containing the description of the ten inheritances. The lot only determined in a general way the position in the country of the particular tribe concerned, whether north or south, &c.; the dimensions of each territory being left to be adjusted subsequently, according to the numbers and wants of the tribe to be provided for. Since the predilections and habits of two tribes and a half were consulted in the apportionment to them of the trans-Jordanic territory...there is no objection to the supposition that something of the same kind may have taken place, subject to the Divine approval, in the distribution of the lands to the nine and a half other tribes; and the lot would thus be appealed to as finally deciding the matter and foreclosing jealousies and disputes. It is apparent that the casting of the ten lots did not take place simultaneously. The tribe of Judah had precedence, whether by express appointment or because its lot "came up" first, does not appear. It was, as it seems, only after this tribe had settled upon its domains, that further lots were drawn for Ephraim and the half tribe of Manasseh. After this a pause, perhaps of some duration, appears to have occurred; the camp was moved from Gilgal to Shiloh; and the further casting of lots for the other seven tribes was proceeded with at the instigation of Joshua (see xviii. 10).<sup>2</sup>*

Edersheim: *The division of the land among the nine and a half tribes was, in strict accordance with Divine direction..., made by Eleazar, Joshua, and one representative from each of the ten tribes. It was decided by the "lot," which probably, however, only determined the situation of each inheritance, whether north or south, inland or by the sea-shore, not its extent and precise boundaries. These would depend upon the size of each tribe. In point of fact, the original arrangements had in some cases to be afterwards modified, not as to tribal localisation, which was unalterably fixed by Divine lot, but as to extent of territory. Thus Judah had to give up part of its possession to Simeon (Josh. 19:9), while Dan, whose portion proved too small, obtained certain cities both from Judah and from Ephraim. As regards the lot, we may probably accept the Rabbinical tradition, that two urns were set out, one containing the names of the ten (or rather nine and a half) tribes, the other the designation of the various districts into which the country had been arranged, and that from each a lot was successively drawn, to designate first the tribe, and then the locality of its inheritance.<sup>3</sup>*

What we must recognize, above all else, is that, even though there is an indication of some divination in Scripture (Urim and Thummim, the twelve stones on the breastplate, the throwing of lots), there is nowhere in Scripture

<sup>2</sup> Barnes' Notes, Volume 2, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; pp. 385–386.

<sup>3</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; ©1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; pp. 329–330.

enough information to really attempt to duplicate these divinations. In fact, we find much to discourage the use of divination (e.g., Deut. 18:10–14) and simultaneously notice a complete lack of the actual mechanics of pre-canon divination.<sup>4</sup>

However this was done, Barnes is correct in indicating that this took place at two different times. Also, of great importance, is that land was apportioned as per the size of the tribe. God had given these commands: “Among these the land will be divided for an inheritance according to the number of names. To the larger, you will increase their inheritance and to the smaller, you will diminish their inheritance; each will be given their inheritance according to those who were numbered of them. But the land will be divided by lot. They will receive their inheritance according to the names of the tribes of their fathers, according to the selection by lot, their inheritance will be divided between the larger and the smaller.” (Num. 26:53–56). “When you cross over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, then you will drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and you will destroy all their figured stones, and you will destroy all their molten images and demolish all their high places; and you will take possession of the land and you will live in it, for I have given the land to you to possess it. And you will inherit the land by lot according to your families; to the larger you will give more inheritance, and to the smaller you will give less inheritance. Whenever the lot falls to anyone, that shall be his. You will inherit according to the tribes of your fathers.” (Num. 33:51b–54). And even many years later, the psalmist wrote: For Jehovah Most High is to be fears—a great King over all the earth. He subdues peoples under us, and nations under our feet. He chooses our inheritance for us, the glory of Jacob whom He loves (Psalm 47:2–4). Thirdly, there was some sort of divinely-guided chance, the throwing of lots, which was associated with the whole thing, as is clearly presented in this first verse, without giving us any specific mechanics.

The first thing that we ought to look at is the word translated *lot*. It is the masculine singular *gôrâl* (גֹרֵל) [pronounced *goh-RAWL*], and this is the same word which we find in Num. 26:55–56 33:54. The KJV is quite consistent here, rendering this *lot* (or, *lots*). BDB spends nearly a page on this word, allowing for such translations as *lot*, *allotment*, *portion*, *recompense*, *retribution* (see Isa. 17:14 Jer. 13:25). Gesenius calls this the metaphysical use, of which we have a similar saying. When we are about ready to do something that we do not know the outcome to, or whether we should do it or not, we occasionally say, “Let’s just roll the dice and see what happens.” Strong’s #1486 BDB #174.

Judah, although not the firstborn, was to become the pre-eminent of the tribes, as his father Jacob predicted. “Judah, your brother will praise you; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies. Your father’s sons will bow down to you. Judah is a lion’s whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He crouches, he lies down as a lion, and as a lion, who dares to rouse him up? The scepter will not depart from Judah nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet until Shiloh comes; and to him the obedience of the peoples.” (Gen. 49:8–10). Based upon Jacob’s prediction and upon the behavior of the sons of Jacob and the graciousness of Joseph in the final chapters of Genesis, it would seem that the pre-eminent of the tribes would be Judah and Joseph. Their portion of land is by far the largest of the twelve tribes. In fact, the land area they will possess is roughly half of all Israel.

Now, the land of Edom was somewhat in the shape of an upside down V which began at the southernmost tip of the Dead Sea. Somewhat between Judah and Edom was the wilderness of Zin. Following *Zin* we have the masculine substantive *nege<sup>b</sup>v* (נֶגֶב) [pronounced *ne-GHE<sup>b</sup>V*], which is a very well defined portion of Israel and, generally, best translated *south-country*. It is often rendered *Negev* or *Negeb*; and it can mean *south*, *southward*. The word originally meant *south* (Gen. 13:14) and became the general designation for this portion of the promised land (Gen. 12:9 13:1, 3 20:1). Strong’s #5045 BDB #616. This is followed by the *mîn* preposition and the masculine singular construct of *qâtseh* (קֵצֶה) [pronounced *kaw-TSEH*], which means *end*, *extremity*. With the *mîn* preposition, it means *at the end of*, *after*. Strong’s #7097 BDB #892. This is followed by the feminine singular noun *têtmân* (תֵּתְמָן) [pronounced *tay-MAHN*], which means *south*, *southward*. Strong’s #8486 (and #8487 as a proper noun) BDB #412. Essentially our southern boundary is Edom and the Negev.

<sup>4</sup> Suggested by Robert Gordon, *I & II Samuel A Commentary*; Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI; ©1986; p. 100.

**And so he was to them a boundary of [the] south from an end of a sea of salt from the bay [or, tongue] the one facing [the] Negev;**

Joshua  
15:2

**And it was their southern boundary from the Salt Sea, from the bay which faces the Negev;**

We have *nege*<sup>bv</sup> two more times in this verse; it is a tough call, but I would think that the *Nege*<sup>bv</sup> of the previous verse is their southern boundary which ran from the Salt Sea across over to the Mediterranean. We also have the preposition *min* (*from, off of*), the definite article the masculine substantive *lâshôwn* (לָשׁוֹן) [pronounced *law-SHOHN*], which means *tongue*. It has several meanings; here, as in Isa. 11:15, it means *bay*. I am thinking that the connection is not only of shape, but of sound. This word is also used for *lapping* in Judges 7:5, so what we would have is an auditory similarity as well. The sound of lapping water is what one would hear in a bay. Strong's #3956 BDB #546. This area today is a salt marsh.<sup>5</sup> The southern boundary of Judah is the southern boundary of the land of Israel (Num. 34:3–4).

**And he goes out unto [the] Negev to an ascent of Akrabbim and he passes along Zin and he goes up from [the] Negev to Kadesh-barnea and he passes along Hezron and he goes up to Addar and he turns around at the Karka;**

Joshua  
15:3

**The border goes out to the Negev along the ascent of Akrabbim (or, Scorpion Pass), passing along the Zin, going out from the Negev to Kadesh-barnea, passing along Hezron, going up to Addar and turning around at Karka;**

Apparently we are just describing the southern trek across the Negev. Akrabbim is a mountain or a mountain pass along the south side of the Dead Sea, a landmark used primarily by way of providing a geographical boundary (Num. 34:4 Joshua 15:3 Judges 1:36). The NIV renders this as *Scorpion Pass*, certainly a more colorful moniker, and not out of line with the original Hebrew. It will also be mentioned in I Macc. 5:3. At Kadesh-barnea, we are moving south-southwest and we are close to the River of Egypt.

We know nothing about Hezron other than it is in the south (Num. 34:4 Joshua 15:3). In fact, in Num. 34:4, it is Hazaraddar and here it is Hezron Addar. It was either combined to refer to a general area in Numbers, or we have the exact same areas which should have been separated by a comma (in the Hebrew, there is very little difference between the words Hezron and Hazer. Without the vowels, the difference is pretty much just a thin, straight line at the end (the nun; pronounced *noon*). Addar is also just mentioned in these two passages. Karka is mentioned only here. I hesitate to call any of these towns or cities as they will not be included in the list of cities which belong to Judah.

**And he passes along Azmon and he goes out [to] a brook of Egypt and he is [to] an end of the boundary, a sea; this is to you [plural] a boundary of [the] south.**

Joshua  
15:4

**And the border passes along the Azmon territory out to the Brook of Egypt all the way to the west—this is your southern boundary.**

Let me bring in a couple of other translations here:

*The Emphasized Bible*

...and passeth over to Azmon and goeth forth at the ravine of Egypt, and so the extensions of the boundary are to the sea [or, west].

NASB

And it continued to Azmon and proceeded to the brook [or, Wadi] of Egypt; and the border ended at the sea. This shall be your south border.

*Young's Lit. Translation*

...and gone out at the brook of Egypt, and the outgoings of the border have been at the sea; this is to you the south border.

Azmon is also only found elsewhere in Num. 34:4 and refers probably more to an area rather than to a city. This southern boundary given for Judah is the southern boundary given for all of Israel. It is almost word for word as

<sup>5</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 110.

God spoke to Moses: “Your southern side will be from the wilderness of Zin along the side of Edom; and your southern border will be from the end of the Salt Sea at the east. Then your border will turn from the south to the ascent of Akrabbim, and continue to Zin, and it will extend to the south of Kadesh-barnea; and it will go to Hazaraddar and is to Azmon. And the border will run from Azmon to the book of Egypt, and its termination will be at the sea.” (Num. 34:3–5). The Brook of Egypt runs on out to the Salt Sea. The boundary given to Judah on the south extended quite a distance. The sea spoken of in this verse is the Mediterranean. The masculine singular noun used here is *yâm* (יָם) [pronounced *yawm*], and it is a sea or a lake. This word has also denoted the direction of the Mediterranean from the Palestine area, so it meant *seaward*, and came to mean *west, westward*, in reference to direction. Strong’s #3220 BDB #410. NIV Study Bible: *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.*<sup>6</sup>

Finally, concerning this verse, I should mention that Israel now controlled the Land of Promise, but it was nowhere near the size which God had originally promised Abraham. “To your descendants will have given this land. From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates.” (Gen. 15:18). The land now occupied by Israel might be a tenth of what God had promised Abram over a half a millennium previous.

**And a boundary eastward, a sea of the Salt as far as a mouth of the Jordan and a boundary to a side of [the] north from a bay of the sea from a mouth of a Jordan;**

Joshua  
15:5

**The boundary on the east: the Salt Sea up to the mouth of the Jordan River.**

*Boundary* (or, *border*) is followed by the adverb *kêdem* (קֵדֶם) [pronounced *KAY-dem*], which means *eastward, toward the east*. *The Englishman’s Concordance of the Old Testament* has it as *kedem* (קֵדֶם) [pronounced *KEH-dem*]. In the passage before us, it is actually *kêdemâh* (קֵדֶמָה) [pronounced *KAY-deh-maw*]. Strong’s #6924 BDB #870. Already, the lion’s share of the land is going to the tribe of Judah.

**And the boundary goes up to Beth-hoglah and he passes along from north to Beth-arabah and the boundary goes up to a stone of Bohan a son of Reuben.**

Joshua  
15:6

**And the boundary extended up to Beth-hoglah and then passed along the north to Beth-arabah to a stone marker placed by Bohan, a Reubenite.**

Beth-hoglah was a city on the northern border of Judah which belonged to Benjamin (Joshua 15:6 18:19, 21). It means *house of partridge*. Beth-araba means *house of the crossing* whereas Beth-arabah means *house of the desert*. We find the *h* here and in Joshua 15:61. What we would like to have is *the house of crossing* or even simply *the crossing*, as that would indicate that this is perhaps where the Israelites crossed the Jordan (they did cross at a very wide girth, given their numbers). This could also indicate that this was a city where people commonly crossed over the Jordan. Such a name would make more sense here than *house of the desert* and the best we can hope for is that the addition of the *h* was an early corruption in the manuscript.<sup>7</sup> This is not the same as the city mentioned in John 1:28, in connection to John the Baptist and his ministry.<sup>8</sup> Most of the manuscript evidence has that as the city of Bethany [actually pronounced *bayth-a-NEE-a*] (which is not the same as the city where Martha, Mary and Lazarus lived).

Here, we are on the north side of a mountain ridge along which is found Beth-hoglah and Beth-arabah. This chain of hills which runs from Kasr Hajla toward the south on up to just north of the Salt Sea is called Katar Hhadije, which means *a row of camels harnessed together*.

<sup>6</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 309.

<sup>7</sup> My educated guess is that there were times when there was but one manuscript in existence which was passed on and copied. Note what I didn’t say—that there were times when there was only one manuscript in existence.

<sup>8</sup> In case you wonder why I say that, this is a whole other different subject dealing with the variant readings of the passage in the New Testament.

The stone of Bohan is apparently some sort of a commemorative stone laid down by Bohan of the tribe of Reuben. There is no implication that the tribe of Reuben lived in this area. Very likely, it referred to some great deed of valor in Israel's war against the indigenous peoples there. This stone was erected in the slope of a hill (Joshua 18:17), whose exact location is unknown. In these next few chapters we have a serious geography lesson, the likes of which few modern-day students could duplicate in their own area. This means that as Israel invaded the Land of Promise, there were some whose responsibility it was to note where towns and various landmarks were. NIV Study Bible: *Judah's [northern] 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.*<sup>9</sup>

**And the boundary went up to Debir from a Valley of Achor and northward turning [or, facing] toward the Gilgal which [is] opposite to an ascent of Adummim which [is] from south of the valley and the boundary passed along unto waters of En-shemesh and his ends were toward En-rogel.**

Joshua  
15:7

**Furthermore, the boundary went up to Debir from the Valley of Achor going northward turning toward Gilgal, which is opposite the pass of Adummim [or, the terrace of red-brown hills], which is at the southern portion of the valley; the boundary continues along the waters of En-shemesh and terminates near En-rogel.**

This was a bit of a problem in the Hebrew, so let me give you a couple of other translations:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	...and the boundary goeth up toward Debir out of the vale of Achor, then northward turning unto Gilgal, which is over against the ascent of Adummim, which is on the south side of the ravine,—then the boundary passeth over unto the waters of Enshemesh, and so the extensions thereof are unto En-rogel;
NASB	And 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.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	...and the border hath gone up towards Debir from the valley of Achor, and northward looking unto Gilgal, which is over-against the ascent of Adummim, which is on the south of the brook, and the border hath passed over unto the waters of EnShemesh, and its out-goings have been unto En-Rogel;

*Debir* could mean *word, treasure, writing*. It's location is rather confusing. We have a *Debir* which is clearly found in the hill country of southern Judah (Joshua 10:38–12:13) and here we appear to be further north near the Jordan. Therefore, this would likely be a different *Debir* (they are both spelled D<sup>e</sup>birâh).

Next we have the masculine singular construct of עִמְקָא (אֵמֶק) [pronounced *EH-mek* or *GEH-mek*], and it means *valley, vale, lowland, deepening, depth*. Strong's #6010 BDB #770. You will recall this area because this is where Achor and his family were stoned after he took that which was dedicated to God (Joshua 7). This occurred at the beginning of the troop movement of Israel, further indicating that we are in central Palestine.

Gilgal has been of the central campsite for all of Israel, but this is not that *Gilgal*. In Joshua 18:17, we have of the parallel passage where of the boundary of Benjamin is laid out and everything is almost identical except we have of the name *Geliloth* rather than *Gilgal*. Both words mean *circle* and possibly refer to a *circle of stones*. Of the primary difference is that *Geliloth* is of the feminine plural of *Gilgal*.<sup>10</sup> This place, which is mentioned again in Judges 3:19, is probably a small round valley called of the *field of Adommim* by Pococke<sup>11</sup>; and called a red field by others because of the color of the ground.

<sup>9</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 309.

<sup>10</sup> *Of the Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 1, p. 726.

<sup>11</sup> *Pococke, Reise ins Morgenland*, ii. p. 46.

Adummim is guessed to be a pass six miles southwest of Jericho, a border between Benjamin and Judah. Rotherham gives of the alternate translation for *Adummim*: *of the terrace of the red-brown hills*.<sup>12</sup> Barnes suggests that this is a pass on of the road between Jerusalem and Jericho. Jerome says that of the name signifies *red* as in blood shed there by robbers. It is this road which is of the scene for of the parable of the Good Samaritan.<sup>13</sup>

The waters of En-shemesh is found only here and in Joshua 18:17; it is thought to be a spring which is three miles east of Jerusalem. It must extend further up than that, since it is a border between Judah and Benjamin. Rotherham informs us that it means *fountain of the sun*, which would place it in an eastward direction. Barnes identifies this as “the Fountain of the Apostles,” which is *about two miles from Jerusalem, and the only well on the road to Jericho*.<sup>14</sup> En-rogel means “the fountain of fullness” and we will look at it more carefully in II Sam. 17:17.

**And the boundary went up a valley of a son of Hinnom to a side of the Jebusite from [the] south she [who is] Jerusalem and a boundary goes up to a top of the mountain which [is] over-against a valley of Hinnom<sup>15</sup> west which [is] from an end of a valley of Rephaim north.**

Joshua  
15:8

**Then the boundary continued up the Valley of the son of Hinnom along side the Jebusites from the south (the Jebusites occupy Jerusalem); and the boundary goes to the top of the mountain which is opposite the valley of Hinnom on the west which is from the end of the plain of the Raphaim toward the north.**

Although this valley of the son of Hinnom will be mentioned several times in Scripture, we do not know where it is, other than being on the border between Judah and Benjamin (Joshua 15:8 18:16). However, Barnes seems to know. *This valley begins on the west of Jerusalem at the road to Joppa, and turning south-eastward round the foot of Mount Zion joins the deeper valley of Kedron on the south of the city. It was in this ravine, more particularly at Tophet in the more wild and precipitous part of it towards the east, that the later kings of Judah offered the sacrifices of children to Moloch*.<sup>16</sup> Best guess is that this is a proper name of possibly the original Jebusite owner. Even this is unclear. We will cover it later in more detail either in II Chronicles or II Kings.

The word used to reference the Jebusite is the feminine construct of *kâthêph* (קַתְּפָה) [pronounced *kaw-THAFE*], which means *side, shoulder, shoulder-blade*. The connection is, obviously, that the shoulder is at the side of us. Strong's #3802 BDB #509. I don't follow by the wording exactly how Jerusalem is tied in here, except as a boundary. However, some of the translations read:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	...Then ascendeth the boundary by the valley of the son of Hinnom to the side of the Jebusite on the south, the same is Jerusalem,—and the boundary goeth up unto the top of the mountain which faceth the valley of Hinnom, to the west, which is at the end of the Vale of Giants northwards;
NASB	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 Rephaim toward the north.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	...and the border hath gone up the valley of the son of Hinnom unto the side of the Jebusite on the south (it is Jerusalem), and the border hath gone up unto the top of the hill-country which is on the front of the valley of Hinnom westward which is in the extremity of the valley of the Rephaim northward;

By glancing at the other translations, the parenthetical suggestion of Young seems the most apropos. The Jebusites did occupy Jerusalem and apparently Jerusalem was to the south of this valley. There was either a

<sup>12</sup> This comes from Fuerst's Hebrew Lexicon translated by Samuel Davidson; 1871.

<sup>13</sup> *Barnes' Notes, Volume 2*, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 387.

<sup>14</sup> *Barnes' Notes, Volume 2*, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 387.

<sup>15</sup> The Syriac codex and 3 early printed editions have *the valley of the son of Hinnom*.

<sup>16</sup> *Barnes' Notes, Volume 2*, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; pp. 387–388.



mountain or some hills that the valley fed into. This plain lay southwest of Jerusalem and terminates at a rocky ridge which overlooks the valley of Hinnom. The Rephaim primarily lived in trans-Jordan area; however, apparently they had some outposts by Jerusalem? They were very large people. I have no clue how this plain received its name other than the fact that the Israelites saw the Land of Promise as being a land of giants. This place is mentioned several times in II Samuel as a battlefield which lies west of Jerusalem, with a ridge of rock separating it and the valley of Ben-hinnom. It is described by Keil and Delitzsch as being an *hour long by a half an hour long* and is a very fertile area, carefully cultivated to this day.

The addition of the explanatory *Jerusalem* is probably a gloss; that is, someone later added this to the text, very possibly Samuel or David.

**And the boundary extended from the top of the mountain to a spring of waters of Nephtoah and he went out to cities of a mountain of Ephron and the boundary extended [to] Baalah—she [is] Kiriath-jearim.**

Joshua  
15:9

**And the boundary went from the top of the mountain to the spring of the waters of Nephtoah and then extended out to the cities of Mount Ephron; and the boundary extended to Baalah, which is Kiriath-jearim.**

The waters of Nephtoah are found only here and in Joshua 18:15. Barnes guesses them to be about 2½ miles northwest of Jerusalem. Ephron, you may recall, was the Hittite who sold a plot of land in Hebron to Abraham which was used as a burial place for his family. This mountain is north of there. We do not know what the connection is and we will never here Ephron's name mentioned again. Baalah is mentioned here, in the next two verses, v. 29 and in I Chron. 13:6. Also known as Kiriath-jearim, this was one of the cities which allied themselves with Israel (Joshua 9) and is found 9 miles west of Jerusalem.

**And the boundary circled from Baalah west to a mountain of Seir and passed along to a shoulder of Mount Jearim from north (she [is] Chesalon; and he passes along to Beth-shemesh and he passes along by Timnah.**

Joshua  
15:10

**And the boundary circle from Baalah to the west toward Mount Seir and along the shoulder of Mount Jearim from the north (which is Chesalon) and the border then goes along to Beth-shemesh and to Timnah.**

*Seir* means *rough, shaggy* and this is obviously not the Mount Seir found down in Edom, but is perhaps a mountain reminiscent of that one and called so only in this verse. The name *is applicable to any rugged or well-wooded hill. Here it probably denotes the range which runs south-westward from Kirjath-jearim to the Wady Surar.*<sup>17</sup> It is described by Keil and Delitzsch as *a lofty ridge composed of rugged peaks, with a wild and desolate appearance, upon which Saris and Mishir are situated.*<sup>18</sup> This is the only place where we hear of Mount Jearim (and Chesalon, which is identified by both ZPEB and Barnes as the modern-day Kesla, ten miles west of Jerusalem).

Beth-shemesh means *house of the sun*. It was probably the name of any place where a shrine was erected to the sun-God. We will find one as a city of Naphtali (Joshua 19:38) in upper Galilee; one in lower Galilee in Issachar's territory (Joshua 19:22). Since these two tribes border one another, this could be the same area. The most prominent Beth-shemesh (*house of the sun*) is the one we have here in Judah, also called Ir-shemesh (*city of the sun*) in Joshua 19:14.

Timnah (or, Timnath) means *a portion*. Is also found in Joshua 19:43 where it is assigned to the tribe of Dan (recall, we are only looking at the border of Judah, not its cities). We will see this city again in Judges 14. This is not equivalent to the Timnah found in Joshua 15:57 24:30 and Gen. 38:12–14). In Canaan, there seems to be several cities with the names Timnah (or, Timnath), Gilgal, Ramah, Kirjath, etc.

<sup>17</sup> Barnes' Notes, *Psalms Volume 3*, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 388.

<sup>18</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 112; they reference Robinson's *Biblical Residences*, p. 154.

**And the boundary went out to a shoulder of Ekron north and the boundary bends around to Shikkeron and he passes along to Mount Baalah and he goes out to Jabneel and a boundary is an extremity a sea.**

Joshua  
15:11

**And the boundary continues to the side [or, slope] of Ekron in the north and it curves around to Shikkeron and passes along Mount Baalah and continues along to Jabneel and the boundary ends at the sea.**

We studied Ekron back in Joshua 13:3. Shikkeron is found only here. *Jabneel* means *God causes to build*. There are two Jabneel's. One we will find later in the southern portion of Naphtali (which is quite a bit north from here). This Jabneel is fairly close to the coast on the border between Judah and Ephraim. It appears as though the Philistines occupied this territory until the time of Uzziah in I Chron. 26:6, where we are told that he broke down the wall of *Jabneh*. This would have given Israel access to the sea through the mouth of the Yarknon River. This makes me think, why not set that river as the northern border of Judah? I can't answer that, but it would make perfect sense. Much of the history of this city is extra-Biblical with a few tie-in's to Biblical history. Jabneel is mentioned several times in the books of the Maccabees (I Macc. 4:15 II Macc. 12:8) as a haven during the wars of the Maccabees. Philip very likely visited this city when he was teaching from Azotus to Caesarea (Acts 8:40). It was also here where the famous Synod of Jamnia was held, circa 100 A.D. to determine the canon of the sacred Jewish writings. ZPEB has a great deal more to say on this.<sup>19</sup>

**And a boundary west the Sea Great and a boundary; this [is its] boundary—sons of Judah round about—to their families.**

Joshua  
15:12

**And their western boundary is the Great Sea and its territory; this [Vv. 1–12] is the boundary around of the sons of Judah for their families.**

After the first wâw conjunction, after the Great Sea, and after the demonstrative adjective, we have the masculine singular noun which we find a lot in the chapter:  $g^{eb}vûl$  (גבול) [pronounced  $g^{eb}$ -VOOL], which means *border, boundary, territory*. Strong's #1366 BDB #147.

Vv. 1–12 give the general boundary of Judah. Now we will cover an incident which is not from this exact time period of distributing the land.

### Return to Outline

## Achsah, Caleb's Daughter, and Othniel

**And to Caleb, ben Jephunneh, he gave a portion in a midst of sons of Judah regarding a commandment of Y<sup>e</sup>howah to Joshua [concerning] Kiriath-arba father of Anak; that is, Hebron.**

Joshua  
15:13

**And he gave to Caleb ben Jephunneh a portion in the midst of the sons of Judah as per the commandment of Jehovah to Joshua concerning Kiriath-arba (or, Hebron). (Arba was the father of Anak).**

This is almost identical to Judges 1:10ff; so the exegesis can be almost duplicated here.

In the previous chapter, Caleb asked for a particular plot of land. Caleb was of the tribe of Judah, but his ties to the tribe are nebulous. My educated guess is that Joshua was the son of a mistress outside the tribe of Israel or that he was adopted by someone in the tribe of Israel. Under Moses, he took on a leadership position. Since this chapter deals primarily with the land given to the tribe of Judah, the land granted to Caleb is also dealt with again here. Less detail is given to the request by Caleb (like, no details) and what Caleb did is mentioned. It is open to interpretation whether Caleb was given the land and then came in and destroyed these three sons (probably tribes); or whether he was given the land because he had already gone in and destroyed these three tribal chiefs. I would think the latter is the case.

<sup>19</sup> See *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; Merrill C. Tenney, ed.; Zondervan Publishing House, ©1976, Vol. 3; pp. 382–383.

Keil and Delitzsch assert that neither the author of the book of Judges copied this nor did Joshua copy this from the book of Judges, but that they both took this from a common source. I don't quite follow exactly how this conclusion was reached. Keil and Delitzsch claim that most of the conquests found in the book of Joshua were taken from that common source. Joshua was the writer of this book, but he is not mentioned as a witness to what transpired between Caleb and his daughter.

There is also the matter of the time period that this occurred. I am of the opinion that the conquering of this particular piece of property occurred twice: first under Joshua and the army of Israel; and later by Caleb and the Judæan army. The division of the land took place immediately after the conquering of the northern portion of the land, of which this is a part. Edersheim suggests that the incident recorded here did not occur until after the death of Joshua.

This is almost identical to Judges 1:10ff; so the exegesis can be almost duplicated here.

**And so Caleb dispossessed from there three sons of Anak—Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmi, descendants of Anak.**

Joshua  
15:14

**And so Caleb dispossessed from that area three sons of anak—Sheshai, Ahiman and Talmi, all descendants of Anak.**

In this verse we have the *wâw* consecutive (*and then*) and the Hiphil imperfect of *yârash* (יָרַשׁ) [pronounced *yaw-RAHSH*] means *to possess, to take possession of, to occupy [all] geographical area—by driving out the previous occupants, to inherit, to dispossess*. Strong's #3423 BDB #439. With the *wâw* consecutive and the imperfect, the first conclusion one would draw is that Caleb is now about to dispossess these sons of Anak from the property. The imperfect tense usually indicates that we are dealing with action in progress or unfinished action. However, the Hiphil stem means that he is being *caused to inherit, caused to possess*. Caleb has already done the preliminary work of wiping out the inhabitants of that area; however, he is in the process of being caused to possess the property. He has been given the property in the previous chapter and that is mentioned here as well, as that is in part the subject of this chapter. What will follow will be a description of how he began to possess the land, which was a process not complete at the time of the casting of the lots for the properties.

**And he went up from there against inhabitants of Debir (and a name of Debir [was] formerly Kiriath-sepher).**

Joshua  
15:15

**And he had gone up from there against the inhabitants of Debir (Debir was formerly called Kiriath-sepher).**

*Went up* is the Qal imperfect and we have the preposition *el* (אֶל) [pronounced *el*] used in the sense of *against* (it usually denotes direction and means *in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding*). Strong's #413 BDB #39. We also have the less common use of the word *pânîym* (פָּנִים) [pronounced *paw-NEEM*], which is generally rendered *faces*; however, this can also refer to time and simply mean *before* or *formerly*. Strong's #6440 BDB #815. We will cover Debir again in Judges 1:11, which is the third repeat of this story.

**And so Caleb said, “Whoever strikes down Kiriath-sepher and has taken her and I will give to him Achsah my daughter to wife.”**

Joshua  
15:16

**Then Caleb said, “Whoever strikes down Kiriath-sepher and takes this city, to him I will give Achsah, my daughter, as his wife.”**

We will actually hear a fair amount from Achsah, whose name means *anklet*. Caleb, one of the bravest and fiercest warriors, was wrapped around the finger of his daughter. In this passage, she will tell her husband what to ask for. He apparently doesn't get it right. She will tell her husband to ask for a plot of land—a field. He does, but the field has no access to water, so she goes herself to her father and requests a water source. She is given the natural spring above and below the field they were given. We will find this story repeated almost word-for-word in Judges 1:11–15. Achsah will be one of the few women mentioned in the genealogical tables of I Chronicles (I Chron. 2:49).

We actually have two instances in the Bible where victory in battle is sufficient payment for a sought-after bride. Here, Othniel's victory will secure him Achsah, the daughter of Caleb, as his bride; and in I Sam. 18:25, David will have to provide a dowry of 100 Philistine foreskins for the Michal, the daughter of Saul.

**And so Othniel ben Kenaz, brother of Caleb, took her [i.e., Debir] and so he gave to him Achsah his daughter to wife.**

Joshua  
15:17

**And so Othniel ben Kenaz, a brother of Caleb, took Debir. Therefore, Caleb gave him Achsah, his daughter, as a wife.**

The verb here is the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, with a 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix, Qal imperfect of lâkad (לָקַח) [pronounced *law-KAHD*], which means *to capture, to seize, to take*. Strong's #3920 BDB #539. In looking at this, I wonder if this is not a play on words. Othniel both took the city of Debir as well as Achsah.

You will recall that we could not completely sort out Caleb's line. We have the same problem with Othniel. At first, I thought that it was just me, but Keil and Delitzsch seem to have the same problem. They point out that it is either *"the sons of Kenaz (and) brother of Caleb,"* or *"the son of Kenaz the brother of Caleb."* *The second rendering is quite admissible (compare 2 Sam. 13:3, 32, with I Chron. 2:13), but the former is the more usual,; and for this the Masorites have decided, since they have separated achi Caleb from ben-Kenaz by a tiphchach. And this is the correct one, as "the sons of Kenaz" is equivalent to "the Kenizzite (ch. 14:6).<sup>20</sup>* So Keil and Delitzsch take the position that Othniel is Caleb's younger brother and that marriage to his niece is not forbidden by the Law. I think that we will have to take this in points, although even that may not help us:

### Exactly How is Othniel ben Kenaz Related to Caleb?

1. Caleb is referred to as the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite (Num. 32:12 Joshua 14:6, 14).
2. Jephunneh:
  - a. Jephunneh is mentioned quite a number of times in Scripture strictly as the father of Caleb (Num. 13:6 14:6, 30, 38 26:65 32:12\* 34:19 Deut. 1:36 Joshua 14:6\*, 13, 14\* 15:13 21:12 I Chron. 4:15 6:56). The \*-ed passages are where Jephunneh is called a Kenizzite.
  - b. Jephunneh is not ever mentioned apart from being Caleb's father. We never read *and then Jephunneh begot...* It is always Caleb ben Jephunneh and sometimes Caleb ben Jephunneh the Kenizzite.
  - c. Given a person's first and last name, e.g., Joshua ben Nun or Caleb ben Jephunneh, certainly is the proper way to refer to them and separates them from the other Caleb's and the other Joshua's. However, in Scripture, during that time period, we have no other Joshua's and Caleb's to be concerned about.
  - d. One of the primary reasons for mentioning Jephunneh is in honor of him. A son is not raised in a vacuum and often it is the good and consistent training of a father which guides a son to greatness.
3. Next, we should deal with Kenaz. The first Kenaz we will deal with is the original Kenaz:
  - a. Kenaz was originally the son of Eliphaz who was the grandson of Esau (Gen. 36:11 I Chron. 1:36).
  - b. He was one of the *chieftains* of Edom (Gen. 36:15, 42 I Chron. 1:53).
  - c. This word, when used in the singular, is often rendered Kenizzite (Num. 32:12 Joshua 14:6, 14). Only rarely do we have this apart from the mention of Jephunneh (Gen. 15:19).
4. The second Kenaz is the grandson of Caleb, mentioned in I Chron. 4:15. As I proposed before, this is certainly in honor of Caleb's heritage.
5. The third Kenaz will be the difficult one.
  - a. We read in Judges 1:13: **And Othniel ben Kenaz, brother of Caleb the younger from him, captured it, and he gave to him Achsah his daughter to wife.** (See also Judges 3:9). In this verse, *brother* is the Hebrew word *âch* (אָח) [pronounced *awhk*] means simply *brother*, as in Gen. 4:2 27:6. However, there are times that it refers to a close relative, as in Gen. 14:14, 16 (Lot was Abram's nephew, not his brother) Lev. 10:4; and this word can refer to one's *fellow-countrymen* (Lev. 19:17 25:14, 46). Strong's #251 BDB #26. This is further defined by the definite article and the masculine singular

<sup>20</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 114.

## Exactly How is Othniel ben Kenaz Related to Caleb?

adjective qâṭôn (קָטוֹן) [pronounced *kaw-TOHN*], which means *small, insignificant*; a word particularly used for *youth, younger*. Strong's #6995 & #6996 BDB #882. Either Othniel is the brother of Caleb, which is the least-likely scenario, for three reasons: (1) grammatically, this should refer to the nearest proper noun, which is Kenaz. (2) If Othniel is Caleb's younger brother, then he is way younger. Caleb was around forty years old when called upon by Moses to go spy out the land. Due to the failure of Israel to take the land at that time, everyone from age 20 on up was executed by God out in the desert. Therefore, Othniel would be 19 at the oldest at that time. Therefore, it is more likely that Kenaz is Caleb's younger brother (and possibly younger relative). That would, now, make Kenaz 19 or younger when Israel first stood on the brink of the land and he would now be around age 45. That would make his son, Othniel, quite young as well—perhaps around 20 (we have seen that the Israelites did not marry until later in life). (3) However, it is possible that *ben Kenaz* is simply a way of calling Othniel a *Kenazite*, making Kenaz his ancestor.<sup>1</sup> Othniel is called Othniel ben Kenaz and Caleb, Caleb ben Jephunneh. Finally, (4) Kenaz is said to be the father of Othniel and Seraiah in I Chron. 4:13. Since Caleb is mentioned in v. 15, leaving his name out here as the third son of Kenaz would seem incongruous. And, even though fathers would have sets of children by various wives and these sets would not be grouped with a set from a different wife, we do not have Caleb listed as this Kenaz's son anywhere.

- b. Very likely, he received the name Kenaz so that no one lost sight of his family ties, which were not originally to Israel.
- c. Kenaz is the father to Othniel (Joshua 15:17 Judges 3:9, 11) and Caleb's younger relative (probably younger brother).
- d. This would give us Jephunneh as the father of Caleb and Kenaz, although this relationship between Jephunneh and this Kenaz is never mentioned (Jephunneh is mentioned only in conjunction with Caleb). Caleb has a daughter, Achsah, and Kenaz has a son, Othniel; therefore, Othniel and Achsah are cousins. We have no clue as to their ages; however, Othniel became a judge and was one of the first judges to die (Judges 3:9–11).

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**And so it was in her coming in and so she incited him to ask directly from her father a field. And so she descended from upon the ass and so Caleb said to her, "What to you?"**

Joshua  
15:18

**And so it came to pass when she came to him that she urged him to ask for a field from her father. So she got down from off her donkey and Caleb said to her, "What can I do for you?"**

The general idea is not hard to grasp, but the grammar here has one or two nuances which are moderately difficult. Therefore, let's look at some other translations:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	And it came to pass when she came that she moved him to ask of her father a field, and when she alighted from off the ass Caleb said unto here— What aileth thee? [or, "What wouldest thou?" Literally, "What to thee?"]
NASB	And it came about that when she came <i>to him</i> 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?"
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And it cometh to pass, in her coming in, that she persuadeth him to ask from her father a field, and she lighteth from off the ass, and Caleb said to her, "What—to thee?"

We begin with a wâw consecutive and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*] simply means *to be*. Without a specific subject and object, it is rendered by the KJV and

Rotherham as *It came to pass*, by the NASB as *it came about*, by Young as *It cometh to pass*. Several translators rendered the wâw consecutive and hâyâh and the bêyth to follow as *when* (*The Amplified Bible*, NRSV, REB and NJB). Although I have scoured both BDB and Gesenius on this point and have found nothing on point (that is, directly pertaining to this being followed by bêyth and an infinitive), it would seem that *when* is a good rendering. The NIV is one of the more free form, rendering this *One day when...* Strong's #1961 BDB #224. This is followed by the bêyth preposition and a bêyth preposition followed by an infinitive often forms a periphrasis for the gerund<sup>21</sup> and is commonly expressed by the conjunctions *while, when, after that*. What several translators did was just leave out the first couple Hebrew words. The infinitive is of the verb *to come* and it has a 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine suffix affixed to it. Literally, what we have is: *And so it was in her coming*.

Then we have the wâw consecutive again and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, with a 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine suffix, Hiphil imperfect of çûth (טוּחַ) [pronounced *sooth*], which means, in the Hiphil, *to stimulate, to instigate, to incite*. When followed by a gerund, it is used to incite someone to do something, and that is how it is used here. Strong's #5496 BDB #694. In the Hebrew, it reads *she induced him*; in some Greek manuscripts, it is *he induced her*.

We then have mîn and `êth (תָּעַת) [pronounced *ayth*] and together they mean *from proximity with, from with, from close proximity to*. A good up-to-date rendering might be *directly from*. This can also refer to being in one's possession or in one's keeping. This can also mean *to proceed from someone*. Strong's #854 BDB #85. This is followed by *her father a field*.

We next have the wâw consecutive and the Qal imperfect of tsânach (נָצַח) [pronounced *tsaw-NAHKH*], which means *to descend, to go down* (to the ground). Strong's #6795 BDB #856. This is followed by the compound preposition mê'al (עַל־מִן) [pronounced *may-GAHL*], from the preposition min (מִן) [pronounced *min*] denotes separation (*away from, out from, out of from*) [Strong's #4480 BDB #577]; and the preposition is the preposition 'al (עַל) [pronounced *gahl*] which means, primarily, *upon, against, above*. Strong's #5920, 5921 BDB #752. Together, they mean *from upon, from over, from by*.

Caleb used the interrogative mâh (מַה) [pronounced *maw*], which means *what, how*. Strong's #4100 BDB #552. This is followed by the lamed preposition suffixed with a 2<sup>nd</sup> person feminine singular (Owen has an error here—he lists this as a 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix). So it is clear that she has engineered all this and she is the one getting off the donkey; however, when they go before her father, Caleb speaks to her directly. Achsah, who apparently is not even a little shy, spoke up.

Now, if this should read *he induced her*,<sup>22</sup> then that puts an entirely new twist on this passage. He should go directly to Joshua and request from him what he desires. However, he has his wife do it and he goes along. Joshua, knowing the proper protocol, still addresses her—"What can I do for you [feminine singular suffix]?" She still goes ahead and makes the formal request so that it comes from her rather than her husband, as he approached her. However, we do not know which way this really goes, so we don't know how to look upon Othniel or Achsah. Barnes: *The "field" in question was doubtless in the neighbourhood of Debir, and was specially valuable because of its copious springs.*<sup>23</sup>

**And so she said, "Give to me a blessing because in a land of Negev you placed me and you gave to me basins of water." And so he [or, Caleb] gave to her basins of uppers and basins of lowers.**

Joshua  
15:19

**And then she said, "Give me a present because you have placed me in the Negev (a land which is like a desert)." Therefore, Caleb gave her the upper and lower springs.**

<sup>21</sup> Okay, a periphrasis is *a round about way of speaking or saying something*. A gerund is a verb which often functions as a noun (in English, our gerunds often end in *ing*).

<sup>22</sup> This is how it is found in the REB, the NJB and some Greek manuscripts.

<sup>23</sup> Barnes' Notes, Volume 2, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 389.

What Achsah asks for is the feminine singular of b<sup>e</sup>râkâh (בְּרַכָּהּ) [pronounced b<sup>e</sup>raw-KAW], which means *blessing, prosperity*. For those who have been under Colonel Thieme's ministry, the name of his church is Berachah. Strong's #1293 BDB #139.

The Negev meant two things to the Israelites—it was a reference to a specific area in the south—the desert where they stayed while under discipline. However, it also has a more general meaning, which can either refer to *south* in general or to a dry and desert-like area. What Achsah is speaking of is the lack of water in the portion of the land that she occupies, and she uses the word Negev for emphasis. What she asks for is the feminine plural construct of gûllâh (גּוּלָּהּ) [pronounced gool-LAW], which means *basin, bowl*. It can refer to the basin which would refer to a pool or a well or other water source; however, it can also refer to the bowl of a lamp (the portion which holds oil). Strong's #1543 BDB #165. The words thrown together like this, *basins of water*, is only found here and in the parallel passage in Judges 1, prompting some expositors to treat this as a descriptive proper noun (*Gulloth-maim*). *The tract in question was no doubt a mountain slope which had spring both on its higher and lower ground; possibly the modern Kurmul.*<sup>24</sup>

What appears to be the case is here we have this leader of men, a strong, powerful and brave man—Othniel—and his wife is calling the shots, telling him what to do and he is doing it. She travels with him to make certain that it gets done and then jumps in to deal with the circumstances. Joshua gives to her *basins of* and then we have the feminine plural adjective of a word found only here and in the parallel passage in Judges 1:15. Its meaning is given as *upper*. Strong's #5942 BDB #751. We also have the feminine plural adjective tach<sup>e</sup>tîy (תַּחְתִּי) [pronounced tahkh-TEE], which means *lower, lowest*, and it is how we determined the meaning for the previous adjective. According to the NIV Study Bible, these springs still water the local farms in Hebron.<sup>25</sup>

The subject in the last sentence is *Caleb*, according to the Septuagint, Syriac and Vulgate codices and according to four early printed editions of the Hebrew Bible. And, speaking of the Negev...

### Return to Outline

## Judah's Cities in the Negev

**This [is] an inheritance of a tribe of sons of Judah to their families:** Joshua 15:20 **This is the inheritance of the tribe of the sons of Judah and their families:**

What will follow is a listing of a billion cities which belong to the inhabitants of Judah. These cities will be grouped by geographical location. Judah can be broken down into four geographical areas: the Negev, or the south (vv. 21–32); the Shephelah (the valley or the plain—vv. 33–47); the hill country, or mountainous area (vv. 48–60); and the wilderness area (vv. 61–62). The Negev, where we begin, is a dry, arid area which has always been thinly populated. *The Negev formed a kind of intermediate link between the fertile land and the desert. It was a line of stepped-land, with certain patches here and there that admitted of cultivation, but in which tracts of heath prevailed, for the most part covered with grass and bushes, where only grazing could be carried on with any success.*<sup>26</sup>

**And the cities from ends of to a tribe of sons of Judah to a boundary of Edom in the south: were Kabzeel, and Eder, and Jagur,** Joshua 15:21 **And the cities which belonged to Judah in the far southeast were Kabzeel, Eder, Jagur,**

The idea here is simple: we're going to name off a batch of cities which belong to Judah. Part of the grammar is confusing as the second word is 3<sup>rd</sup> person, masculine plural, Qal imperfect of the verb *to be*; but then *cities* is a feminine plural. We have a masculine plural *sons* in both verses, but it follows tribe and would be less likely to

<sup>24</sup> *Barnes' Notes, Volume 2*, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 389.

<sup>25</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 310.

<sup>26</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 115.

be the subject of the verb as it is in the middle of some constructs. Also, when the verb is used to indicate possession, it is often followed by *to them*. However, in reading Rotherham's and Young's translation it becomes clear that the verb is for all of the cities which follow.

*The Emphasized Bible* And the uppermost cities of the tribe of the sons of Judah, towards the boundary of Edom in the south, were,—Kabzeel and Eder, and Jagur,...

*Young's Lit. Translation* And the cities at the extremity of the tribe of the sons of Judah are unto the border of Edom in the south, Kabzeel, and Eder, and Jagur,...

*Kabzeel* means *may God gather* and it is a city in the southeastern portion of Judah, down near Edom. Benaiah ben Jehoiada, a famous lion killer, came from Kabzeel (II Sam. 23:20 I Chron. 11:22). The Negev in general was the general habitat of lions. The tribe of Judah re-inhabited this city after the exile (Neh. 11:25).<sup>27</sup>

Jagur is found only here, as is Eder. Eder means *flock* as a place name and *helper* as a personal name. Eder is also a proper name for a watchtower between Bethlehem and Hebron (Gen. 35:21 Micah 4:8) and the proper name for two different people.<sup>28</sup>

Most of the cities in this section were occupied by Simeon. We will make frequent references to Joshua 19:1–9, which is a list of the cities given over to Simeon.

**and Kinah, and Dimonah, and Adadah, and Kedesh-hazor,** Joshua **Kinah, Dimonah, Adahah [possibly Aroer],**  
15:22–23a **Kedesh-Hazor,**

The cities of Kinah and Ithnan are found only here. ZPEB suggests that it could be a settlement of the Kenites (I Sam. 27:10). The word on the street is that *Dimona* means *dung-pit* and is the same as the city Dibon which Judah inhabits once returned from her exile (Neh. 11:25).<sup>29</sup> Adadah is found only here. ZPEB says that it is either equivalent to the city Aroer or located between Arad and Aroer. Other than the *h* at the end of Adadah, these would look very similar in the Hebrew. There are two *Aroer's* in Scripture: one in the east along the Arnon River, and the other in southern Judah (see 1 Sam. 30:27). Furthermore, in the Greek of this passage, we have the name *Arouel*.

We examined Kadesh back in Num. 13:20 and Hazor briefly in Joshua 11:1, but these are different and I believe, because of the lack of the *wâw* conjunction, should be hyphenated. In v. 3 of this chapter, these are mentioned as being different places—i.e., Kadesh-barnea and Hezron (the difference in spelling of Kadesh in v. 3 and Kedesh here is merely a vowel point). Then the question is whether the *Hazor* in this verse is the same as *Hezron* in v. 3. What confuses the situation even more is the *Hazor* is not found in the Septuagint at all. I realized that I raised more questions than I solved here, which will occur frequently in this chapter.

**and Ithnan-ziph, and Telem, and Bealoth,** Joshua **Ithnan-ziph, Telem, Bealoth,**  
15:23b-24

There are two cities named Ziph. There are also people of the tribe of Judah named Ziph (I Chron. 2:42 4:16). This is not the same town Ziph as the one found in the hill country of Judah (Joshua 15:55 I Sam. 23:14–15). We deduce that from where this is placed. Because this lacks the *wâw* conjunction, it is possible that this city is really Ithnan-ziph. To add to this confusion, *Ziph* is not found in the Septuagint—in other words, in the Septuagint, we don't have the separated names or the hyphenated names in this and the previous verse.

<sup>27</sup> This is from *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; Merrill C. Tenney, ed.; Zondervan Publishing House, ©1976, Vol. 3; p. 775.

<sup>28</sup> From *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; Merrill C. Tenney, ed.; Zondervan Publishing House, ©1976, Vol. 2; p. 201.

<sup>29</sup> From *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; Merrill C. Tenney, ed.; Zondervan Publishing House, ©1976, Vol. 2; p. 126.



Telem is only found here and in I Sam. 15:4, as the place from which Saul launched his attack on Agag, the king of the Amalekites. ZPEB suggests that Bealoth is also called Baal (I Chron. 4:33), as well as Baalath-beer, Ramah of the Negev (Joshua 19:8) and/or Ramoth of the Negev (I Sam. 30:27).<sup>30</sup>

**and Hazor-hadattah, and Kerioth-hezron [or, and towns of Hezron] (that is, Hazor);** Joshua 15:25 **Hazor-hadattah, Kerioth-hezron (or, Hazor);**

Hazor-hadattah means *New Hazor* and could refer to settlements outside of Hazor. Kerioth-hezron means *towns of Hezron* and is possibly not a proper noun but a reference to the previous cities and some other outlying areas—that is, Ithnan, Ziph, Telem, Bealoth, and New Hazor are all towns of Hazor. The sentence structure could also suggest this. Note that prior to *Hazor* we do not have the wâw conjunction and after *that is, Hazor*, we do not have a wâw conjunction. This would set these cities apart from the rest of the cities grammatically. Let me add what Barnes writes: *Kerioth, prefixed to a name, bespeaks military occupation, as Hazor points to pastoral pursuits. The place would therefore seem to be an ancient pastoral settlement which had been fortified by the Anakims, and called accordingly Kerioth; to which name the men of Judah, after they had captured it, added that of Hezron, in honour of one of their leading ancestors (cp Gen. xlv. 12; Ruth iv. 18).*<sup>31</sup> It is possible that the family of Judas the traitor had its origins in this city, as Iscariot could be broken down to Ish (*man*) Kariot or, *man of Kerioth*.

In the Septuagint, we do not find the final phrase *that is, Hazor*. Clearly counting the different number of cities found in this passage will be almost impossible. Any expositor worth his salt could pair this list down to the proper 29 (see v. 32), but with several cities under question, whether certain cities are considered merely villages on the outskirts of a city, and which were not here in the original is all educated guesswork. The best we could hope for is to get close to the correct number, and to be reasonably accurate in that appraisal, which is certainly not going to please the more anal-retentive among you.

**Amam, and Shema, and Moladah, and Hazar-gaddah, and Heshmon, and Beth-pelet,** Joshua 15:26–27 **Amam, Shema, Moladah, Hazar-gaddah, Heshmon, Beth-pelet,**

Amam is found only here, as is Hazar-gaddah and Heshmon (and the Septuagint does not have *Heshmon*). Shema is found several times as a proper name but only here as a city. ZPEB suggests that it is equivalent to Sheba (the Hebrew letters could look very similar; if a portion of the mem was missing, it would look like a bêyth). Beth-pelet is found here and in Neh. 11:26 as one of the cities re-inhabited by Judah after the exile (although it is missing from Nehemiah in the Septuagint).

We have a point of confusion here. In Joshua 19:2, Sheba (likely equivalent to Shema) and Moladah are said to be cities given over to Simeon. I don't quite understand the why of this, but it appears as though all of what would be given to Simeon was also given to Judah, but that Simeon took its inheritance out from Judah's. We read in Joshua 19:2: **Then the second lot fell to Simeon, to the tribe of the sons of Simeon and to their families, and their inheritance was in the midst of the inheritance of the sons of Judah.** Now, in that there may be an analogy to the church and Israel, but I am not ready to do that yet until we see how this plays out. The other possibility is that all the border cities were occupied by Judah and Simeon.

Note that we have begun a list of cities which belong to Judah and to Simeon, but Hazar-gaddah and Heshmon are not on that list. This could suggest that they are outlying areas and not really considered cites at that time.

<sup>30</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; Merrill C. Tenney, ed.; Zondervan Publishing House, ©1976, Vol. 1; p. 494.

<sup>31</sup> *Barnes' Notes, Volume 2*, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 390.

**and Hazar-shual, and Beersheba, and her daughters [possibly, and Biziothiah], Baalah, and Iyim, and Ezem,** Joshua 15:28–29 **Harar-shual, Beersheba, and their villages Baalah, Iyim, Ezem,**

Hazar-shual is also a *co-city* of Judah and Simeon (see Joshua 19:5 I Chron. 4:28) and occupied by Judah after the exile (Neh. 11:27). We covered Beersheba back in Gen. 21 or 26.

According to ZPEB, Biziothiah should not be a proper noun but the word *and their villages*. There is apparently a one letter difference here. The Septuagint reads *and her daughters* which is equivalent to *and her villages*. The parallel passage is Neh. 11:27 where these cities are being re-inhabited. It reads: **...and in Hazar-shual, in Beersheba and its towns**. This is also how it reads in the Massoretico-Critical Text, which is Ginsburg's Edition of the Hebrew Bible, which is almost identical to the Massoretic text, except that a certain amount of Biblical criticism has been applied to correct problems in the copied text. Given all that, it is highly unlikely that there ever was such a city as Biziothiah.

ZPEB reasonably suggests that Baalah is equivalent to Balah, making it another *joint* possession of Judah and Simeon (Joshua 19:3). For reasons which are completely unclear to me, ZPEB also suggests that perhaps it is also equivalent to Bealoth (Joshua 15:24).<sup>32</sup> There are other Baalah's in the Bible, both towns and proper names. Either refer to your concordance or to ZPEB for more references to them.

First ZPEB suggests that Iyim is probably the shortened form of Iye-Abarim of Num. 33:45, and then tell us that the two places are not equivalent. Both are located near Edom. Barnes traces Iyim to the present-day El-Aujeh, and explains why in his commentary.<sup>33</sup> Ezem appears to be a joint city of Judah and Simeon (see also Joshua 19:3 I Chron. 4:29). Iyim is left off the list of joint-owned Simeon cities, indicating that it is possibly a village (or, certainly, that they belong exclusively to Judah).

**and Eitolad, and Chesil, and Hormah, and Ziklag, and Madmannah, and Sansannah,** Joshua 15:30–31 **Eitolad, Chesil, Hormah, Ziklag, Madmannah, Sansannah,**

Eitolad was a town given to Judah, but occupied by Simeon (see also Joshua 9:4). It's name in a parallel passage is Tolad (I Chron. 4:29). According to folklore, it means *the place where children may be obtained*, which therefore identifies it as a city where the evil pagan ritual of child sacrifice was practiced. ZPEB suggests instead that this was a place where people went who were infertile.<sup>34</sup> Chesil is another town which was given over to Judah, but occupied by Simeon; ZPEB claims this because Chesil has the name Bethul in Joshua 19:1–9 and Bethuel in I Chron. 4:28–32). This deduction is based upon the parallelism in the three sections of the Bible. According to Barnes, *Chesil* signified the star group Orion (he suggests we compare Job 38:31 and Amos 5:8), and that the heathen carried on in the worship of the stars at this location.

Hormah, like these previous two, is first said to belong to Judah, but is then given to Simeon (the same will be true of Ziklag, Madmannah and Sansannah). We examined Hormah back in Joshua 12:14 and we will again in Judges 1:17.

We will cover Ziklag in I Sam. 27. Madmannah means *dunghill* (what a lovely name for a city) and probably is equivalent to Beth-marcaboth in Joshua 19:5. Madmannah is also mentioned in I Chron. 2:49, and it is likely that one of Caleb's sons went there and re-founded and populated this city. Being that it was given over to Simeon would indicate that both those from the tribe of Judah and those from the tribe of Simeon occupied it. Sansannah is probably Hazar-susah in Joshua 19:5 and Hazar-susim in I Chron. 4:31. The similarity of the names and the

<sup>32</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; Merrill Tenney, ed.; Zondervan Publishing House, ©1976, Vol. 1; p. 433.

<sup>33</sup> See *Barnes' Notes, Volume 2*, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 390. In fact, Barnes and ZPEB both did more follow through with these cities than I have done, trying to connect them with their present-day equivalents.

<sup>34</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; Merrill Tenney, ed.; Zondervan Publishing House, ©1976; Vol. 2, p. 296.

parallel passages is the reason we believe that. ZPEB suggests that Solomon kept his horses that he bought from Egypt in Hazar-Susah, which horses he would then sell to the Hittites and the Syrians.<sup>35</sup>

**and Lebaoth, and Shilhim, and Ain, and Rimmon; all of the cities twenty-nine and their villages.**

Joshua  
15:32

**Lebaoth, Shilhim, Ain, and Rimmon [or, En-rimmon]—all in all, twenty-nine cities with their villages.**

We have four more cities here which are first said to be given over to Judah and then occupied by Simeon. Lebaoth is also called Beth-lebaoth (*house of lionesses*) in Joshua 19:6 and, possibly because of a clerical error, is Beth-beri in I Chron. 4:31. *Ain* means *spring* and there is an Ain up by Lake Huleh in Num. 34:11, but this is a different one. This city was given over to Simeon (Joshua 19:7) and well as to the Levites in Joshua 21:16 and is thought to be identical to Ashan in I Chron. 6:59. According to Ginsburg, this should not read Ain and Rimmon but rather En-rimmon. This introduces several problems: we have a parallel passage in Joshua 19:7, where these cities are given over to Simeon: *...Ain, Rimmon and Ether and Ashan, four cities with their villages...* First problem is that here we do not have the intervening wâw conjunction, allowing us to call this En-rimmon in this passage; however, that throws off the number of cities (which could have been changed by a well-meaning scribe). The other problem is that if Ain and Ashan are identical, then we wouldn't find them together as we do in Joshua 19:7. It just might be better if we lined all these up next to one another:

And Lebaoth, and Shilhim, and Ain, and Rimmon...	Joshua 15:32a	Then the second lot fell to Simeon...Ain, Rimmon and Ether and Ashan, four cities with their villages.	Joshua 19:1a, 7
So to the sons of Aaron...Debir with its pasture lands, and Ain with its pasture lands and Juttah with its pasture lands; Beth-shemesh with is pasture lands...	Joshua 21:13a,15b–16a	And to the sons of Aaron, they gave...Debir with its pasture lands, Ashan with its pasture lands, and Beth-shemesh with its pasture lands.	I Chron. 6:57a, 58b–59

There are several possibilities: one being that we have two cities which were side-by-side and later merged see Neh. 11:29). However, what ZPEB suggests, as does Rotherham, is that, due to a scribal error, namely inserting the wâw conjunction in Joshua 15:32, that these got separated into two different cities and they should have remained as one. Because of this, a later scribe altered Joshua 19:7 from *three* to *four*. In Joshua 21:16, my guess is that this was copied from a very poor manuscript and when *Ashan* could not be read, they scribe looked nearby for the closest sounding city and used *Ain*. This sounds highly convoluted, and it is all based upon the assumption that Ain and Rimmon should be En-rimmon. In the RSV, it is one city and in the NRSV it is two. If we look upon them as two cities, our only problem is *Ain* in Joshua 21:16, which could be a scribal error. In Neh. 11:29, we find the name En-rimmon as one of the cities resettled by Israel after the dispersion. When comparing the Septuagint to this and in examining all the alternate readings, it is clear that this portion of Joshua is problematic and inaccurate in several places with respect to the autograph.

When it comes to translating, copying, and reading, the least interesting portions of God's Word tend to be the lists of cities and then the genealogical lists. Those who know the Bible and are given a choice as to what portions they want to work with, they will bypass these lists and go with the Law or with narrative. Those actually transcribing or translating passages like this are going to be bored or less than enthusiastic about their work. Therefore, it is areas like this where we would expect to see the greatest number of scribal errors. Another reason that we will have problems here is that once the land was possessed by the proper tribes, this latter portion of Joshua became less important and was examined less. Someone might pick up Genesis and read it 50 times compared to someone reading the second half of Joshua once. The result is that Genesis was more often copied and recopied to keep the copies readable. The few who read Joshua could see that the manuscripts were

<sup>35</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; Merrill C. Tenney, ed., Zondervan Publishing House, ©1976; Vol. 3, p. 50. They cite I Kings 4:26 9:19 10:29, which passages do not mention the name of the city in any of its forms.

becoming unreadable, but there was not a push for them to be re-copied because they just weren't read as often. On several occasions, I am certain that someone picked up the book of Joshua to examine and it fell into pieces in their hands, inspiring them to recopy it then and only then.

Shilhim is likely identical to Sharuhen (Joshua 19:6) and to Shaaraim in I Chron. 4:31. In some Semitic languages, according to ZPEB, the *l* and the *r* are sometimes interchanged.<sup>36</sup> We occasionally hear this in Japanese when speaking English and order French fries for lunch. *Rimmon* means either *thunderer* or *one who roars*. It is probably identical to En-rimmon (where some deportees resided after their exile—Neh. 11:29). Rimmon is found in Joshua 19:7 and I Chron. 4:32. It is one of the southernmost occupied cities of the land (Zech. 14:10). The proper noun is found elsewhere, but referring to a different city (Joshua 19:13) or to people or pagan deities.

First thing that comes to mind is that we are not dealing with 29 cities here, but with 36 at the most and 32 at the least (considering that Kedesh-hazor and Iyim-ziph could be hyphenated cities). If we eliminate those cities belonging to Simeon, we are at half that. What is the only possible explanation is that three of these are not considered to be cities but villages on the outskirts of the cities. For instance, even though we begin in v. 26, there were three cities on that list which were not found in Joshua 19:1–8. This verse is worded so it specifically names 29 cities *and their villages*, indicating unequivocally that any villages named in the previous verses are not counted in the total of 29 cities. Keil and Delitzsch cover this problem extensively, giving several other theories (the addition of cities to the text, the addition of cities to the margin which are later incorporated into the text, and the simple error in the numbering). For those who are concerned, please consult Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 118 footnote.

The next thing that we have to deal with is the tribe of Simeon. Simeon, at the first census, had 59,300 men. In the next census, it had dropped to 22,100. Well over 50% of the tribe of Simeon died in the desert and very few arose to take their places. You may recall that Phinehas ben Eleazar, son of Aaron, had to kill a man involved in illicit sex, possibly connected to the phallic cults, in Num. 25. This man was from the tribe of Simeon, a leader in the house of Simeon (Num. 25:14). When the leaders of a nation by their example lead their people into apostasy, this must somehow be checked. God gave Judah a huge area and then placed Simeon in the midst of Judah, occupying cities almost as the Levites occupied cities. They were given the land, but the cities originally were Judah's. [This was the inheritance of the tribe of the sons of Simeon for their families. The inheritance of the sons of Simeon was from the portion of the sons of Judah, for the share of the sons of Judah was too large for them. Therefore, the sons of Simeon received an inheritance in the midst of Judah's inheritance \(Joshua 19:8b–9\).](#) Judah is on all sides of Simeon to keep them in check. It is even debatable as to how much of the land Simeon actually conquered. Achish, the Philistine king in Gath, gave Ziklag ( a co-city of Judah's and Simeon's) to King David, indicating that Simeon never completely conquered their small area. Because of this proximity between Judah and Simeon, the two tribes will seem to meld together and act as one tribe. [And they gave these cities which are mentioned by name from the tribe of the sons of Judah and from the tribe of the sons of Simeon; and they were for the sons of Aaron \(Joshua 21:9–10a; also see Judges 1:3\).](#)

Simeon is not mentioned in the tribal lists of the book of Judges and it is never mentioned in the books of Samuel or Kings. They did not disappear entirely as David received to himself a greater number of supporters from the tribe of Simeon than he did from the tribe of Judah (I Chron. 12:24–25). In fact, when we get to the book of Chronicles, one of the things that we will have to deal with is where did Simeon go. It appears to be grouped with the tribes in the northern kingdom, although it is clearly originally situated in the south. However, that is for then.

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<sup>36</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; Merrill C. Tenney, ed.; Zondervan Publishing House, ©1976, Vol. 5; p. 401.

## **Judah's Cities in the Shephelah**

**In the Shephelah: Eshtaol, and Zorah, and Ashnah, and Zanoah, and En-gannim, Tappuah [or, En-gannin-Tappuah] and the Enam;**

Joshua  
15:33–34

**.In the Shephelah: Eshtaol, Zorah, Ashnah, Zanoah, En-gannim, Tappuah [or, En-gannin-Tappuah] and the Enam;**

What will help is to see the subdivision of the next portion of Scripture. From vv. 33–47, we will list the cities of the Shephelah. The lowland, or Shephelah, *is the name given to the land between the mountains of Judah and the Mediterranean Sea,—a broad plain of undulating appearance, intersected by heights and low rangers of hills, with fertile soil, in which corn fields alternate with meadows, gardens, and extensive olive groves. It is still tolerably well cultivated, and is covered with villages, which are situated for the most part upon the different hills. Towards the south, the shephelah was bounded by the Negeb...towards the east the hills multiply and shape themselves into a hilly landscape, which formed the intermediate link between the mountains and the plain.*<sup>37</sup> The Shephelah will be further broken down into four groups:

- 1) Northeast portion (vv. 33–36)
- 2) The cities of central Shephelah (vv. 37–41)
- 3) The cities of the southern portion of Shephelah (vv. 42–44)
- 4) The cities of Philistine sea coast (vv. 45–47)

We first have the feminine singular noun *sh<sup>e</sup>phêlâh* (שֶׁפְּלָא) [pronounced *sh<sup>e</sup>fay-LAW*], which means *lowland, valley*. Although many Bibles render this as *lowland*, the Scofield KJV transliterates that word here and pretty much throughout, as Scofield considered it to describe a particular area. The KJV gives it a cacophony of renderings (*low country, low plain, plain, vale, valley*). The NIV renders it as *the western foothills*. The *Shephelah* is often rendered *valley, plain* or *lowland*. *It is bounded on the north by the Valley of Ajalon, on the west by the Maritime Plain, on the east by the Central Plateau, and on the south by Beersheba. It is characterized by low, rounded chalk hills divided by several broad valleys.*<sup>38</sup> Strong's #8219 BDB #1050. Barnes defines the Shephelah as being *bounded on the south by the Negev, on the west by the Mediterranean, on the north by the plain of Sharon and on the east by the mountains. It is a well-defined district, of an undulating surface and highly fertile character, thickly dotted, even at the present time, with villages, which are for the most part situated on the different hills.*<sup>39</sup> The Shephelah will be further subdivided into this portion, the northeastern cities (in the Shephelah); then we will have the central portion of the Shephelah; the southern portion and the coastal portion.

Much of the land found between the highlands of central Judah and the coast was not under the control of Israel until the time of King David, who conquered much of the land which remained under the control of hostile forces for several centuries following the time period of the book of Joshua.

There is an Eshtaol in Judah and in Dan. For other than the explanation is that they are different cities or simply a bordering town shared by both tribes, see ZPEB Vol. 2, p. 364. It is very likely one city, a border town, and occupied by both tribes. We will examine both cities in more detail in Judges 18:2. Zorah is also a border town for Judah and Dan (found also in Joshua 19:41). It was the home of Samson and we will examine it further in Judges 18. Ashnah is found only here and in Joshua 15:43 (same name but different city). Nothing else about it is known. Zanoah also refers to two different towns in Judah. After the first dispersion, it will be re-populated (Neh. 11:30). Men from this city were, under Nehemiah, responsible for the Valley Gate (Neh. 3:13). Today, the city of Zana stands in its place.

En-gannin is named as a city of Judah and of Issachar (Joshua 19:21), a city given over to the Levites in Joshua 21:29. Here there must be two different cities. Judah surrounds Simeon and is bordered on the North by Dan and Benjamin. Then we have Ephraim, a bit further north, stretching almost entirely to the coast, and Manasseh stretching from the Jordan to the coast above Ephraim. Northeast of Manasseh is Issachar, so there is no way that this city somehow belongs to them both. We touched on Tappuah in Joshua 12:17 and Enam in Gen. 38:14. There is the possibility that, because we are lacking the *wâw* conjunction here that this could read En-gannin-Tappuah.

<sup>37</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 119.

<sup>38</sup> *The New Scofield Reference Bible*; Dr. C.I. Scofield; ©1967 New York-Oxford University Press; p. 217.

<sup>39</sup> *Barnes' Notes, Volume 2*, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 390.

**Jarmuth, and Addulam, Socoh and Azekah,** Joshua **Jarmuth, Addulam, Socoh, Azakah,**  
15:35

You may recall Jarmuth from Joshua 10. This was one of the five cities who banded against the Gibeonites, who had made a pact with Joshua. There is another Jarmuth in Joshua 21:29, but that is likely a spelling problem. It is a city of Issachar which was given over to the Levites. In a parallel list (I Chron. 6:73), it is called Ramoth and in Joshua 19:21, Remoth). Addulam will be covered in I Sam. 22:1 and Azekah in II Chron. 11:9.

With Socoh, we have hit the jackpot. In the Hebrew, we have basically 2½ different spellings (there are two different ways of writing a long o in the Hebrew). We find it written as Soco (I Chron. 4:18 II Chron. 11:7 28:18) and as Socoh (Joshua 15:35, 48 I Sam. 17:1 I Kings 4:10). The KJV and the Septuagint are even more inventive.<sup>40</sup> What is worse is that at first, there appears to be at least three different *Soco*'s and one we're not so sure about. The first Soco is found here, in the Shephelah in the Valley of Elah. Goliath and the Philistines will take Soco and use the area nearby as a base of operations as they prepare to demolish Israel. Rehoboam repossessed this city and fortified it after the revolt of the northern tribes (II Chron. 11:17) and the Philistines took this city back when Ahaz was in power (II Chron. 28:18). A second Soco is mentioned in Joshua 15:48 in the hill country of Judah. ZPEB indicates that there is a third Soco in I Kings 4:10, but that is not necessarily the case. That will be handled when it comes up. The *fourth* Soco is found in I Chron. 4:18, and it is uncertain whether that is a person or a place.

**and Shaaraim, and Adithaim, and the Gederah and Gederothaim [or, possibly, Gederah and her sheep pens], cities, fourteen, with their villages,** Joshua **Shaaraim, Adithaim, Gederah and Gederthaim [or, possibly, the Gederah and her sheep pens]—fourteen cities along with their villages.**  
15:36

Shaaraim means *two gates* and we find it again in I Sam. 17:52, which reads: *And the men of Israel and Judah arose and shouted and pursued the Philistines as far as the entrance to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the slain Philistines lay along the way to Shaaraim, even to Gath and Ekron.* Adithaim is mentioned only here. We find Gederah here and in I Chron. 12:4 where Jozabed is called a Gederahthite. Either Gederothaim occurs only here or, by changing the last letter from an *m* to an *h*, we would have *Gederah and her sheep pens*. Other than that, it would mean *two sheep pens*. Some suggest that *Gederothaim* is an ancient gloss, supported by the fact that this is missing from the Septuagint. However, this remains debatable.

If En-gannin-Tappuah is one city, then we have fourteen cities named here. The other possibility is that Gederothaim is not a city. In the Septuagint we have only fourteen cities, but there are several significant differences between the Massoretic text and the Septuagint in this chapter.

**Zenan, and Hadashah, and Migdal-gad, and Dilean, and the Mizpah, and Joktheel,** Joshua **The next grouping of cities are Zenan, Hadashah, Migdal-gad, Dilean, the Mizpah, Joktheel,**  
15:37–38

The cities in the next grouping are in the middle portion of the Shephelah. This is the broad plain found between the hilly region and the line of coastal cities still held by the Philistines. The city Zenan is found only here, although it is thought to be identical to Zaanan in Micah 1:11. Hadashah is spoken of in the Mishna Erub. v. vi. as the smallest city in Judah, a town of only fifty houses. , Migdal-gad, Dilean and Joktheel are found only here. There is another *Joktheel* located in Edom, previously named Sela and renamed by Azariah, a king of Judah, after he captured it (II Kings 14:7). Migdal-gad means *tower of Gad*; figure that one out.

<sup>40</sup> See *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; Merrill C. Tenney, ed.; Zondervan Publishing House, ©1976, Vol. 5; p. 465.

As you may recall, *Mizpah* (or, *Mizpeh*) means *watchtower*, and we have several locations in the Land of Promise which were given this name. This particular *Mizpah* is found only here.

**Lachish, and Bozkath, and Eglon, and Cabbon, and Lahmam, and Chitlish,** Joshua 15:39–40 **Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon, Cabbon, Lahmam, Chitish,**

We have covered Lachish briefly in Joshua 10:2 and will go into more detail in II Kings. Bozkath means *elevated* or *stony ground*. This is the home of Jedidah, Josiah's mom in II Kings 22:1. Cabon might mean *wrap around* and might be equivalent to Machbenah (I Chron. 2:49), as they appear to have the same root. Lahmam or Lachman is the preferred reading over Lachmas; I found the latter spelling in the NKJV, the REB, the NJB and the NASB. The city of Chitlish is found only here.

Eglon is not found in my copy of the Septuagint and, according to ZPEB, in several places where Eglon occurs in the Hebrew, we find Adullam instead. We covered this city briefly in Joshua 10:3 as one of the cities which attacked the Gibeonites, who had allied themselves with Israel. Eglon was clearly conquered by Israel as seen in Joshua 10:34–37 and 12:12.

**and Gederoth, Beth-dagon, and Naamah, and Makkedah; cities, sixteen and their villages.** Joshua 15:41 **Gederoth, Beth-dagon, Naamah, and Makkedah; sixteen cities as well as their villages.**

Obviously, not all of this portion of Joshua is correctly translated. However, this would indicate that Gederoth and Gederah (Joshua 15:36) are two different cities. While the kingdom was divided and the evil Ahaz was king of Judah, the Philistines captured several cities which we have mentioned, including Gederoth (II Chron. 28:18). *Gederoth* means *stone-walled sheep pens* (which is pretty much the ultimate in *sheep penation*).

Dagon is a god whose name first occurs circa 2500 B.C. and onward throughout Mesopotamia, particularly in Canaan at Ugarit, Phoenicia and in the five cities of the Philistines. We have at least four cities with the name *Beth-dagon*, which means *shrine to Dagon*. The fact that this god was well-known lends credence to the several different areas having the same name. Josephus mentions one of these locations in *Antiquities*, XII, viii, 1, as being near Jericho. I Maccabees 10:83–84 refers to a temple to the god Dagon in Azotus, which is Ashdod. We have an actual Biblical mention of a city by that name in Joshua 19:17 as a border city for Asher east of Mt. Carmel. Then we have this particular Beth-dagon, found only here. There is a mention of a Beth-dagon (although the vowels are unknown) by Rameses III as one of the conquered areas and Sennacherib in 701 B.C. also mentioned Beth-dagon (actually, *Bit-Dagannu*) as a conquered city.<sup>41</sup>

*Naamah* means *pleasant, delightful, sweet*; therefore it is the proper name of several women in the Old Testament. This is one of the very few instances where we might have a tie between Job and the rest of the Bible. Zophar, one of Job's so-called friends was called a Naamathite. Because of the meaning of the word, this is not necessarily the same city, however. We find this city nowhere else in Scripture. Makkedah was covered briefly in Joshua 10:16.

**Libnah, and Ether, and Ashan,** Joshua 15:42 **Libnah, Ether, Ashan,**

The next three verses are the southern portion of the Shephelah. Libnah was covered briefly in Joshua 10:29. We obviously have a problem with this verse. Two cities, Ether and Ashan, are both found in Joshua 15:42, however, their occurrence in the area known as the Shephelah is problematic. It is possible that they should be located in the Negev, as they are co-owned by the tribe of Simeon (Joshua 19:7). The other more well-known cities which are located in the vicinity of Ether and Asahan (e.g., Lachish, Libnah or Makkedah) are too far north

<sup>41</sup> This was taken from *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; Merrill C. Tenney, ed.; Zondervan Publishing House, ©1976, Vol. 1; p. 530, which carries some additional references.



to be apportioned to the tribe of Simeon. I should mention that the Septuagint more or less has these two cities in v. 42. Moving these two cities to v. 32, as suggested by ZPEB, also throws the numbering system way off in both passages. The cities of Ether and Ashan have possibly been misplaced here. Ether and Ashan both appear to belong on the list of the cities in the Negev, as they are co-cities of Simeon (Joshua 19:7). The REB suggests that this should be Athak here rather than Ether, citing I Sam. 30:30. I don't quite follow how that citation suggests that the name was a mistake, but I offer it here just in case someone knows more pressing evidence. I should point out, however, there is another possibility. We have a mindset that each tribe received this contiguous piece of land, with the exception of the Levites. At the beginning of this chapter, we saw a general outline of the property for Judah which was made more specific by naming the cities which were a part of Judah's land. We find the same thing at the beginning of Joshua 16 and the middle of Joshua 18. However, for Simeon, we are only told that their inheritance was in the midst of Judah. We are given various cities which were theirs but not a geographical description. Therefore, it is not absolutely necessary for these cities to be on a contiguous land site.

**and Iphtah, and Ashnah, and Nezib,** Joshua 15:43 **Iphtah, Ashnah, Nezib,**

Iphtah and Nezib are found only here. Recall that Ashnah was also found in v. 33. Since these are the only two places where this city was mentioned, it would not be unlikely that it was written down twice but belongs on only one list.

**and Keilah, and Achzib, and Mareshah, cities nine and their villages.** Joshua 15:44 **Keilah, Achzib, and Mareshah, nine cities, along with their villages.**

Obviously, with shifting Ether and Ashan to v. 32, this throws off the numbering of these cities. Keilah is a fortified city in the Shephelah. *David led a daring expedition to Keilah to deliver it from attacks by the Philistines who were robbing the threshing floors. Saul heard that he was there and sent troops to capture David and Holy Spirit men. David was forced to retreat again into the wilderness of Ziph, when it became apparent after consulting the ephod that the men of Keilah might turn him over to Saul (I Sam, 23:1–13).* Keilah is also mentioned by extra-Biblical sources. The Armana letters between Akh-en-Aton, a pharaoh of Egypt, from various princes of Jerusalem and Hebron, each complaining of the other's occupation of Keilah at different times (not much has changed). Keilah would be one of the cities re-inhabited after the exile in Neh. 3:17–18).<sup>42</sup>

Achzib, which means *lying, deception, disappointing*, is both a boundary city for Asher (see Joshua 19:29) and a city found in the Shephelah of Judah. It is very possible that this is equivalent to the city Chezib mentioned in Gen. 38:5 where several of Judah's sons were born; as well as equivalent to Cozeba, found in I Chron. 4:21. Micah refers to this city Achzib, yet with a play on words in Micah 1:14b: *...the houses of Achzib will become a deception to the kings of Israel.*<sup>43</sup> We will cover Mareshah in II Chron. 14.

**Ekron and her towns [or, daughters] and her villages from Ekron and a sea all which [was] by the side of Ashdod and her villages.** Joshua 15:45–46 **Ekron and her towns; and he villages from Ekron to the sea and all that is beside Ashdod and her villages.**

In these next three verses we have the coastal and near-coastal cities for the west portion of Judah.<sup>44</sup> Most of the cities to follow were given over to the tribe of Dan and this area continued to be dominated by the Philistines.

After *all which*, we have the feminine construct of yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd] is the Hebrew word for *hand*. Strong's #3027 BDB #388. With the preposition 'el (עַל) [pronounced el ], it means *by the side of, into the*

<sup>42</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 3, p. 781.

<sup>43</sup> This was all taken from *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 1, p. 38.

<sup>44</sup> If you have heard from any source that these verses are spurious, this is dealt with in detail in a lengthy footnote in Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 122.

*custody of.* As we have seen, the word for *towns* and *daughters* is the same word in the Hebrew. We covered Ekron and Ashdod (briefly) in Joshua 13:3a.

**Ashdod, her towns and her villages; Gaza, her towns and her villages unto a Torrent of Egypt and the sea the great and its coast.**

Joshua  
15:47

**Ashdod, along with her towns and villages; Gaza and her towns and villages to the Brook of Egypt and the Great Sea and its coast.**

Gaza was also covered in Joshua 13:3a. The Brook of Egypt marks the southwest boundary of the Land of Promise. The Hebrew word properly means a *torrent-wadi*, which is a steep-sided stream which flows only during the rainy season. ZPEB suggests that is the Wadi el-`Arish, *which flows north from deep in the Sinai peninsula to empty into the Mediterranean about half-way between the Suez canal and Gaza.*<sup>45</sup>

For some reason, we do not have the cities of Gath and Ashkelon mentioned. Keil and Delitzsch explain it is because they are included in the boundaries named, but this appears to be a pretty definitive listing throughout. Ashkelon was to be found between Ashdod and Gaza, along the sea-coast and Gath was to the east of Ekron and Ashdod.

### Return to Outline

## Judah's Cities in the Hill Country

**And in the hill country: Shamir, and Jattir, and Socoh, and Dannah, and Kiriath-sannah (she is Debir),**

Joshua  
15:48–49

**And in the hill country: Shamir, Jattir, Socoh, Dannah, and Kiriath-sannah (or, Debir).**

The hill country or the highlands extend *from the Negeb on the south to Jerusalem, and is bounded by the Shephelah on the west, and the "Wilderness" (vv. 61, 62) on the east. The mountains, which are of limestone, rise to a height of near 3000 feet. At present, the highlands of Judah present a somewhat dreary and monotonous aspect. The peaks are for the most part barren, though crowned almost everywhere with the ruins of ancient towns, and bearing on their sides marks of former cultivation. Many of the valleys, especially towards the south, are, however, still very productive. The towns here enumerated are given in six groups.*<sup>46</sup> Keil and Delitzsch describe these mountains: *The mountains of Judah, which rise precipitously from the Negeb, between the hilly district on the west...attain the height of 3000 feet above the level of the sea, in the neighbourhood of Hebron, and run northwards to the broad wady of Beit-hanina, above Jerusalem. They are a large rugged range of limestone mountains, with many barren and naked peaks, whilst the sides are for the most part covered with grass, shrubs, bushes, and trees, and the whole range is intersected by many very fruitful valleys. Josephus describes it as abounding in corn, fruit, and wine; and to the present day it contains many orchards, olive grounds, and vineyards, rising in terraces up the sides of the mountains, whilst the valleys and lower grounds yield plentiful harvests of wheat, millet, and other kinds of corn. In ancient times, therefore, the whole of this district was thickly covered with towns.*<sup>47</sup> The first group is in the southwest portion of the hill country (vv. 48–51).

*Shamir* is found several times in the Old Testament. It means *thorn, sharp point, diamond, adamant* and is found used that way in Jer. 17:1 Ezek. 3:9 Zech. 7:12. It is also the name of a person (I Chron. 24:24). We have another Shamir mentioned as being in the hill country of Ephraim. Unfortunately, the maps which I have, Benjamin separates Judah and Ephraim in the hill country. Furthermore, that Shamir is spelled differently in the Greek Septuagint. This Shamir occurs only here. Jattir is a city for the Levites in Judah (Joshua 21:14 I Chron. 6:57). We will hear of Jattir only one more time. After defeating the Amalekites, David will send the spoil from Ziklag to Bethel, Ramoth in the Negev and to those in Jattir as a present (I Sam. 30:27). We covered the different Socoh's in Joshua 15:35.

<sup>45</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 1, p. 658.

<sup>46</sup> *Barnes' Notes, Volume 2*, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 391.

<sup>47</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 122.

Dannah is mentioned only here. Debir is mentioned a great deal in the conquering of Israel and rarely after. We will examine it further in Judges 1. ZPEB calls the name Kiriath-sannah meaningless, however, we have a couple of words in the Hebrew which are similar—one means *thorn-bush* and the other means *sharp*. See Strong's #5572 or #5673 BDB #702.

**and Anab, and Eshtemoh, and Anim, and Goshen, and Holon, and Giloh, cities, eleven, and their villages.** Joshua 15:50–51 **Anab, Eshtemoh, Anim, Goshen, Holon, and Giloh; eleven cities and their villages.**

Anab is only mentioned twice in Scripture and we have studied the other passage already. **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** (Joshua 11:21). One of the phrases that we will run into a great deal in I Chronicles is so-and-so is the father of so-and-so, and the latter is also the name of a city. We find this again in I Chron. 4:17 where Ishbah is called the father of Eshtemoa, which most consider to be equivalent to Eshtemoh (in fact, ZPEB suggests the latter is corrupt). Eshtemoh was settled by the Levites (Joshua 21:14 I Chron. 6:57). Anim is found only here in the Bible and in the Amarna letters as Hawini.<sup>48</sup>

Recall that the Israelites lived in the land of Goshen prior to the exodus (Gen. 47:6, 11 Ex. 8:22 9:26). There was a general area called *Goshen* in the Land of Promise mentioned already in Joshua 10:40–41 11:16. This was probably the land around the city of Goshen. This will be the last mention of Goshen in the Bible. There are two Holon's; the first is this one, also assigned to the Levites (Joshua 21:15 I Chron. 6:58). In the latter passage, the text reads Hilan. The consonants are the same, which was the original text; the vowel points are different and the vowel points were added circa 500 A.D. The second Holon is in the plain of Moab somewhere close to Heshbon (Jer. 48:21). Giloh will be mentioned again in II Sam. 15:12 and 23:34 as the home town for Ahithophel, David's counselor.

**Arab, and Dumah, and Eshan, and Janim, and Beth-tappuah, and Aphekah,** Joshua 15:52–53 **Arab, Duman, Eshan, Janim, Beth-tappuah, Aphekah,**

Vv. 52–54 make up the second group of cities, all situated to the north of the aforementioned cities. Arab, Eshan, Janim and Aphekah are found only here. Beth-tappuah is found only here and Tappuah is found in I Chron. 2:43 in a list of cities. Beth-tappuah means *house of apples* and is today identified with the city Teffuh. *It still has a good number of inhabitants, and is conspicuous for its olive groves and vineyards, and bears on every side the traces of industry and thrift.*<sup>49</sup> This would not be the same city as Tappuah, which belonged to Manasseh (see Joshua 17:7–8). The city Dumah is found only here, but there is a person, an Arab, Dumah (Gen. 25:14 I Chron. 1:30 and another Dumah in Isa. 21:11) found elsewhere—there is not enough information in the passages to connect them.

**and Humtah, and Kiriath-arba (she is Hebron), and Zior; cities nine and their villages.** Joshua 15:54 **Humtah, Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron), and Zior; nine cities and their villages..**

Humtah is found only here. Hebron was covered back in Joshua 14:15. Zior might occur only here, but there are several who believe it to be identical to Zair, noting that equivalent names are found in some copies of the Septuagint and in the Massoretic text. This is not quite enough proof.

**Maon, Carmel, and Ziph, and Juttah, and Jezreel, and Jokdeam, and Zanoah,** Joshua 15:55–56 **Maon, Carmel, Ziph, Juttah, Jezreel, Jokdeam, Zanoah,**

<sup>48</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 1, p. 168.

<sup>49</sup> *Barnes' Notes, Volume 2*, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 391.

The third group of the highland district (vv. 55–57) is east of the previous towns named and two of the cities are adjacent to the wilderness. There is only one city Maon found here and in I Sam. 23:24–25. We are told here that David and his men, in order to hide out from Saul, who was in Ziph, went to the wilderness of Maon which is in the Arabah south of Jershimon. David was about to get surrounded by Saul and his men, who would come at him from around both sides of a mountain in this area until Saul is suddenly called away on a matter of national security (the Philistines had made a raid on the land). There will be quite the interesting story about David, Nabal, the Calebite, and Abigail in I Sam. 25 which takes place in Maon. There is a man and a people called Maon, but we will deal with them later. The name of this city today is Main.

Carmel means *plantation, garden-land*; it is a metonymy for *fruit, garden-growth*. It is about 7.5 miles south-southeast of Hebron and *lies in a pastoral region of broad hills and wide valleys*. This city will be mentioned several times in the future in Samuel and in the Chronicles. The present-day Carmel is *Kurmul*. The preposition preceding it is *lâmed*, which has a tremendous number of usages, one of them being *by or towards, to*. *Judas Iscariot was from this region*.<sup>50</sup>

This is a second Ziph (see v. 24a), also mentioned in I Sam. 24:14–15, as we have seen. Some Ziphites came to Saul and clued him in to where David was in I Sam. 26. This is another marvelous story where David has the opportunity to kill Saul, but he does not, as Saul is Jehovah's anointed (I Sam. 26:23). This same Ziph will be fortified by Rehoboam in the succession of the Northern Kingdom (II Chron. 11:5, 8).

Juttah is one of the Levitical cities of Judah (see Joshua 21:16) which is not found in its parallel passage I Chron. 6:59. There appear to be two Jezreel's; one in Judah and one in Issachar (Joshua 19:18). One of David's wives, Ahinoam, was from Jezreel, but we do not know which one (I Sam. 25:43 27:3 30:5 II Sam. 2:2 3:2). It is thought to be the Jezreel mentioned in this passage because of I Sam. 27:3: **And David lived with Achish at Gath, he and his men, each with his household, David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's widow**. It is reasonable to believe at that time that David got his wives from nearby. We will cover the other Jezreel in I Sam. 29.

Jokdeam is found here and in I Chron. 2:44 as Jorkeam. There are two Zanoah's one in the Shephelah (v. 34) and one here in the hill country, which is the one found in I Chron. 4:18.

**the Kain, Gibeah, and Timnah; cities ten and their villages.** Joshua 15:57 **Kain, Gibeah, and Timnah— ten cities along with their villages.**

Kain is found only here and some scholars have suggested that this read *Zanoah of the Kain*, thus reducing our number of cities to nine. When dealing with Gibeah, let me give you a quote found in ZPEB concerning the various spellings of this name. First, it is important to note that *Gibeah* means *hills* and since there is Hebrew involved, I will not use italics. To form an adequate understanding of the problems of identification connected with this name, the reader should carefully compare the Hebrew spellings of the following forms, all of which come from the same root and have approximately the same meaning; גבעה, גבעת, גבעון, גבע, respectively represented in English as "Geba," "Gibeah," "Gibeath," and "Gibeon." Because much of Palestine is hilly country, it is not surprising that a name meaning "hill" was widely used. Unfortunately, the MT exhibits considerable confusion in the use of these names, a confusion not clarified by the Septuagint, which neither follows the Massoretic text consistently, nor has any other regularly observed practice in its treatment of this name.<sup>51</sup> It is important to note that we do not distinguish these various Gibeah's by the spelling, one reason being is that sometimes it is in the construct state; and we do not even make distinctions when it comes to the masculine and feminine form of the word. *J Simons finds the usage in I Samuel so fluid as to create the impression that the masculine (Geba) and the feminine (Gibeah) forms were used interchangeably*.<sup>52</sup> I personally disagree with this, although there has

<sup>50</sup> Quotes are from *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; Merrill C. Tenney, ed.; Zondervan Publishing House, ©1976, Vol. 1; p. 756.

<sup>51</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 2, p. 712.

<sup>52</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 2, p. 712. The reference work cited in ZPEB is J. Simons; *The Geographical and Topographical Texts of the Old Testament*; 1959; pp. 669–670.

definitely been some confusion of the names throughout Scripture. Keil and Delitzsch emphatically state that the Gibeah found here is not Gabatha near Bethlehem nor is it the Gibeah mentioned by Robinson, also called the village of Jeba, because the locations will not jive with the context of this verse. The Gibeah in view here is found only here, and possibly in II Chron. 13:2 as the home of Micaiah, the mother of Abijah, who was a king of Judah. There are perhaps as many as five other *Gibeah*'s. In speaking of the geography inherent in the strategy of Saul in I Sam. 13, ZPEB makes the general suggestion: *Scholars have not been able to agree on any reconstruction of the exact course of events in this war. Perhaps the best approach for the nonspecialist in these matters is to avoid basing any arguments on the use of one name instead of another until he is certain of his ground, bearing in mind that leading geographical and archeological authorities disagree on several readings.*<sup>53</sup> We must understand that when these passages were originally recorded, they made clear geographical sense to the reader.

This particular *Gibeah*, given the cities with which it is associated, is probably found only here and just maybe in II Chron. 13:1–2.

Timnah was covered in Joshua 15:10.

**Halhul, Beth-zur, and Gedor, and Maarath, and Beth-anoth, and Eltekon—cities, six and their villages.**

Joshua  
15:58–59

**Halhul, Beth-zur, Gedor, Maarath, Beth-anoth, and Eltekon—six cities, along with their villages.**

Halhul, Beth-anoth and Eltekon are mentioned only here. Maarath may be the same as Maroth in Micah 1:12. We will cover Beth-zur in II Chron. 11:7.

*Gedor* means *wall*; and, considering all the walled-cities which the Israelites came across, this was likely a very common name. There are possibly five different city *Gedor*'s and one ancestor of Saul with that name. In I Chron. 4:18, we read: **And his Jewish wife, bore Jered, the father of Gedor; and Heber, the father of Soco; and Jekuthiel, the father of Zanoah.** We do not know if these were the actual names of the sons or whether these men were the founders of these cities. The latter seems to be the case. Since this is so common in the first few chapters of Chronicles, and since these names match the names of the cities, it would be safe to say that either these men founded these cities (possibly using the name of a son) or had a son who founded the city using his own name. The general consistency with which this occurs indicates to me that these are the founders of the cities and they named the cities themselves apart from any children they might have had. We find a similar mention of *Gedor* in I Chron. 4:4 as well, which would indicate to me two different cities in this chapter of Chronicles. Most of the exegete agree that the *Gedor* in I Chron. 4:39 is *Gerar* (or, *Gerara*) instead (this is what we find in the Septuagint).

**Tekoa, and Ephrathah (that is, Bethlehem), and Peor, and Etam, and Culom, and Tatam, and Sores, and Carem, and Gallim, and Baither, and Manach—eleven towns and their villages.**

Joshua  
15:59b

(from the  
Septuagint)

**Tekoa, Ephrathah (that is, Bethlehem), Peor, Etam, Culom, Tatam, Sores, Carem, Gallim, Baither, and Manach—eleven towns and their villages.**

This verse is not found in the Hebrew Massoretic text. Keil and Delitzsch explain: *This group lay to the north of the fourth [district of the hill country], and reached as far as Jerusalem. It comprised a district in which even now there are at least fifteen places and ruins, so that we have not an arbitrary interpolation made by the LXX, as Jerome assumed, but rather a gap in the Hebrew text, arising from the fact that an ancient copyist passed by mistake from [their villages] in v. 59 to the same word at the close of the missing section.*<sup>54</sup> For an entire verse to be missing from the Massoretic text further indicates that the manuscripts that they work from are far from perfect. Barnes suggests that a copyist from early on saw the word *villages* at the end of v. 59 and then dropped his eye to that word at the end of the missing passage. Obviously, this was the only Hebrew manuscript which remained from that time period. What is missing is very important, well-known, and well-populated cities all from

<sup>53</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 2, p. 712.

<sup>54</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 125.

the same area immediately south of Jerusalem. After what we have covered so far, I know you are thinking, *just what I wanted—more cities*. However, the cities named here appear to be located in the correct area and some of them are quite important to the history of Israel, and therefore need to be mentioned.

Tekoa, the home of Amos, is found about ten miles south of Jerusalem at an elevation of 2700 feet. From Tekoa, one can see the Mount of Olives, across the Dead Sea to Mount Nebo, from whence Moses looked back across the sea to see the Land of Promise. Tekoa was founded by Ashhur (I Chron. 2:24–4:5), who appears to be Caleb's brother (cp I Chron. 2:18). Tekoa also seems to be the name of a district or a general area, called the *wilderness of Tekoa* in II Chron. 20:20. ZPEB describes this area as *a rather wild, arid, and stony district, a dozen miles south of Jerusalem, deserted "save for donkeys and sure-footed men." Its soil is a kind of chalk marl, the "frontier of tillable land." Beyond is desert, the part toward the east characterized by Dr. George Adam Smith as "fifteen miles of chaos sinking to...the Dead Sea."*<sup>55</sup> ZPEB identified this as the area where both John the Baptist was equipped and where our Lord was tempted, although Tekoa does not occur in the New Testament.

Bethlehem-ephraim, the most famous city in this list, the native town of both David and the humanity of our Lord, will be covered in Ruth 4:11. Chron. 2:19, 50–4:4), but was known by the hyphenated name as far back as the time of Jacob (Gen. 35:19–48:7).

All the information ZPEB has on Peor (the one in this area), is that it is near Bethlehem and is identified with the modern Khirbet Faghur. Etam is a few miles south-southwest of Jerusalem, between Bethlehem and Tekoa. It is a place described by Josephus as a very pleasant place, *abounding in rivulets of water*.<sup>56</sup> Compare to Eccles. 2:5–6: *I made gardens and parks for myself, and I planted in them all kinds of fruit trees; I made ponds of water for myself from which to irrigate a forest of growing trees*. The Talmud tells us that Etam provided the water for the temple at Jerusalem. An ancient aqueduct over seven miles long has been discovered extending from Jerusalem to three large Hellenistic Roman reservoirs beyond Bethlehem, today called the pools of Solomon. *The lowest pool is fed by a stream called 'Ain 'Atan. The aqueduct was constructed before the Christian era and antedates the Roman period. Pontius Pilate probably used it as the last section of his great conduit that brought water into Jerusalem from a distance of either two or four hundred furlongs...This action aroused the fury of the populace because Pilate has used the sacred money (qorban) for public welfare. Apparently the Jews believed that money once dedicated to Yahweh could never be employed for a secular purpose. Today Bethlehem gets water from 'Ain 'Atan by pipe line.*<sup>57</sup> ZPEB identifies Carem with Beth-haccherem (Neh. 3:14 Jer. 6:1), which is five miles north of Tekoa.

We find Baither here in the Septuagint and ZPEB find Baithther in the Septuagint of I Chron. 6:59 (but not in my copy of the Septuagint). The NJB renders this not as Baither (which is a transliteration of the Greek), but as Bether. The name Bether also occurs in SOS 2:17, but it is debatable as to whether this refers to a particular city or whether this is a poetic reference, e.g. we find in SOS 8:14. *Bether is most famous as the site where Bar Kochba with the Jews made their last stand against Hadrian in A.D. 135 resulting in their being massacred.*<sup>58</sup>

Gallim is mentioned in I Sam. 25:44 and in Isa. 10:30, but nowhere else.

I cannot locate Tatam in ZPEB, the ISBE or in the New Bible Dictionary; nor can I locate an alternate spelling for it. Ditto Culom, Sores and Manach. What is likely in many of these cases is that there was a different name in the Hebrew, like Bethlehem. Keil and Delitzsch spell Culom as Kulon and identify it with the present-day Kulomeh, which is an hour and a half walk northwest of Jerusalem on the road leading to Ramleh. Sores (which is found as Thobes in some Greek manuscripts, which Keil and Delitzsch report as a copyist's error) is probably the modern city saris which is four hours east of Jerusalem on the ridge south of the Wady Aly. Manach (or, Manocho) is possibly identical with Manachat in I Chron. 8:6.

<sup>55</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 5, p. 612.

<sup>56</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities*; VIII. vii. 3.

<sup>57</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 2, p. 380.

<sup>58</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 1, p. 536.

**Kiriath-ba'al (she is Kiriath-jearim) and the Rabbah—cities two and their villages.** Joshua 15:60 **Kiriath-ba'al (also know as Kiriath-jearim) and Rabbah—two cities along with their villages.**

Rabbah (or, possibly, Ha-rabbah) is found only here, and we know nothing more about it. The more famous Rabbah is the one east of the Jordan was briefly covered in Joshua 13:25. We covered Kiriath-jearim in Joshua 9:17.

### Return to Outline

## Wilderness Cities and What Was Not Conquered Yet

**In the wilderness: Beth-arabah, Middin, and Secacah, and Nibshan, and a city of the Salt, and En-gedi—six cities and their villages.** Joshua 15:61–62 **And in the wilderness: Beth-arabah, Middin, Secacah, Nibshan, a the city of Salt, and En-gedi—six cities along with their villages.**

These last few cities are located in the wilderness area, an area where David wandered (I Sam. 23:24 Psalm 58:0) and the place where John the Baptizer operated (Matt. 3:1). It is possibly where our Lord was tempted by Satan (Matt. 4). The area goes from the northern limit of Jerusalem along the Dead Sea to the Negev. It is southeast of Jerusalem and bounded on the west side by the highlands which run between Bethlehem and Maon. *It abounds in limestone rocks, perforated by numerous caverns, and often of fantastic shapes. It is badly supplied with water, and hence is for the most part barren, though affording in many parts, now quite desolate, clear tokens of former cultivation. It contained only a thin population in the days of Joshua.*<sup>59</sup> Keil and Delitzsch: *This tract of land is for the most part a terrible desert, with a soil composed of chalk, marl, and limestone, and with bald mountains covered with flint and hornstone, and without the slightest trace of vegetation on the side bordering on the Dead Sea...Yet wherever there are springs, even this desert is covered with a luxuriant vegetation, as far as the influence of the water extends...and even in those parts which are now completely desolate, there are traces of the work of man of a very ancient date in all directions.*<sup>60</sup>

Beth-arabah was occupied by both Judah and Benjamin, as it was a border city (Joshua 15:6 18:18, 22). Middin Nibshan are found only here. Secacah means *covering* or *barricade*. ZPEB: *the remains feature the following: a large double-walled fortress with an enclosed cistern, nearby dam complexes for exploiting the scanty rainfall, and the remains of several stone towers. The pottery fragments all come from a single period, Iron II.*<sup>61</sup> It would follow that after Sodom and Gomorrah that this general area would be under discipline from the weather. I am thinking that it will look incredible when God restores Israel to the land. In this general area are four Iron II settlements in the Valley of Achor, and ZPEB identifies them with Middin, Secacah, Nishan, and the City of Salt.

En-gedi means *spring of the kid*. There was apparently a second name for En-gedi—Hazazon-tamar (II Chron. 20:2). This city is mentioned as early as Gen. 14:7, although the author in ZPEB said that these could not be the same places as it was too danged hot in Dead Sea Valley to have a large population at any time (in Gen. 14:7, the Amorites were said to have lived in Hazazon-tamar, citing a 1000 population around the time of the New Testament). However, the other cities, particularly the one called the city of the Salt, seem to indicate that this is the correct place, as does the general area suggested by Gen. 14. This is no doubt related to the valley of salt, so called in II Sam. 8:13. It must have been right there at the Dead Sea. Some people today identify this with the Qumran where the scribes who produced the Dead Sea Scrolls lived. We will examine this city further in I Sam. 24:1.

As we have seen, there is a tremendous difference that rainfall. Few would call the Land of Promise a land of milk and honey today. However, in the time of the exodus, the twelve spies all brought back word that the land was everything which God had promised them. Hazazon-tamar means *Hazazon of the palm trees* and the other

<sup>59</sup> Barnes' Notes, Volume 2, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 392.

<sup>60</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, pp. 125–126.

<sup>61</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 5, p. 325.

reference to this city places it near to Sodom and Gomorrah, which again, squares with the Genesis passage. Edom marched through Hazazon-tamar to attack Israel (Jehoshaphat was the king at that time—II Chron. 20:2). Finally, there is a verse in Song of Solomon which seems to indicate that the En-ge-di which we know today and the En-ge-di of yesteryear were quite a bit different. “My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms in the vineyards of Engedi.” (SOS 1:14). So, although there is no agreement on the exact site of this city, we do know roughly where it is. It is likely that this is the Tamar fortified by Solomon in I Kings 9:18, along with several other cities. Ezekiel also refers to a Tamar which appears to be located in the southwest portion of Israel (Ezek. 47:19 48:28).

**And the Jebusites inhabiting Jerusalem not able sons of Judah to drive them out and so dwell the Jebusites with sons of Judah in Jerusalem as far as the day the this.** Joshua 15:63

**And the sons of Judah were not able to drive out the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem, resulting in the fact that the Jebusites live with the sons of Judah in Jerusalem even to this day.**

Let's break out the translations here for a moment:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	But as for the Jebusites the inhabitants of Jerusalem the sons of Judah could not dispossess them,—so the Jebusites have dwelt with the sons of Judah in Jerusalem, until this day.
NASB	Now as for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the sons of Judah could not drive them out [or, dispossess them]; so the Jebusites live with the sons of Judah at Jerusalem until this day.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	As to the Jebusites, inhabitants of Jerusalem, the sons of Judah have not been able to dispossess them, and the Jebusite dwelleth with the sons of Judah in Jerusalem unto this day.

What was a bit of a problem was there are two verbs which are counted as one. We have the negative and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect of *yâkôl* (יָכַל) [pronounced *yaw-COAL*], which means *to be able, to have the ability, to have the power to*. Strong's #3201 BDB #407. Then we have the intervening subject—sons of Judah, followed by the lamed preposition and the Hiphil infinitive construct of *yârash* (יָרַשׁ) [pronounced *yaw-RAHSH*] means *to possess, to take possession of, to occupy [all] geographical area—by driving out the previous occupants], to inherit, to dispossess*. Strong's #3423 BDB #439.

Zodhiates: *Jerusalem was located along the borders of the land that was allotted to both the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin (cf. Joshua 18:28). Both tribes attempted to drive out the Jebusites who inhabited the city, but they were unsuccessful on two consecutive campaigns (Judges 1:8, 21). The city remained occupied by the Jebusites until David conquered them (2 Sam. 5:6–10).*<sup>62</sup> We will take up the city of Jerusalem in more detail sometime in the future. In this context, we will examine all of this further in Judges 1:8.

The phrase *to this day* is pretty well dissected by Keil and Delitzsch in the introduction to the book of Joshua on pp. 13–14. We covered this phrase as well in the introduction to this book, and discussed that it could be applied 10–20 years later, which is likely when Joshua wrote the bulk of the book which bears his name. Here, so that you don't become overly distraught if you personally dissect this verse and compare it with others: This verse has the Jebusites and the sons of Israel living together, so to speak, to this day. This does not say that the sons of Israel lived in or occupied Jerusalem—the Jebusites live in Jerusalem. This verse tells us that they lived together, which can simply mean in the same general geographical area. That the sons of Judah had not driven them out, does not mean that they even tried. They could have thought about the situation and decided not to. In a surprisingly slip up of logic, Keil and Delitzsch state that since the Jebusites were not driven out even to the time of the Judges, and this verse therefore was written during the time of the Judges. For those who over-think this, read this carefully: Joshua and company took enough of the land to allow each of the tribes to settle into their inheritance peacefully. Joshua had expected each tribe to immediately take the cities still occupied by Canaanites.

<sup>62</sup> *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; ©1994 AMG Publishers; p. 614.



After all, if the land was secured in seven years, certainly, Joshua would expect that 10–20 years later, all the remaining cities would have been conquered by the Israelites as well. Just because Judah in the time of the Judges and later deals with the Jebusites living in Jerusalem, it cannot be postulated that this verse was written after that time. (2) The fact that this city still remains to be conquered is a surprise to Joshua. What this phrase does do is set an upper limit upon when this book was written.

Take note that God gave Israel testing to begin with. He gave them the land and gave them the cities and vineyards—but they had to continue to lean upon Him in order to possess the remainder. What is coming up in the next book is just how quickly everything can go to hell in a hand basket.

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1. This is the view of *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 309.