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## Joshua 15

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

## Joshua 15.

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### Topics.

- The south boundary of the inheritance allotted to Judah.
- The east boundary of the inheritance allotted to Judah.
- Hebron was allotted to Caleb for an inheritance.
- Caleb gives his daughter Achsah to Othniel to wife.
- Achsah asked Caleb her father for a field and springs of water.
- The inheritance of the tribe of Judah.
- The Jebusites dwell with the people of Judah at Jerusalem to this day.

**FOR INFORMATION:** concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

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**INTRODUCTION:** the first five books of Moses anticipated the fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham concerning the Promised Land. Moses is now dead. Joshua crosses the River Jordan (about 1400 B.C.) and after a string of military victories apportioned the land according to the twelve tribes. These battles shine a brilliant spotlight upon the truth that God fights for His people when they are faithful and courageous and put their full trust in Him. (Josh. 1:6-9). At the close of the book Joshua says that he and all his house will serve the LORD and invites the people to choose whether they will serve the gods of their fathers or the gods in whose land they dwell or the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob. The people choose to serve their God. (Josh. 24:15). Although anonymous the book appears to contain eyewitness testimony, some of which may have been written by Joshua himself.

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**NOTE:** in this study I have not attempted to give detail of land areas, borders and boundaries or the locations of towns and villages etc., since I am not a master of geography or the regions of the Middle East. Added to this it is difficult and enormously time consuming to trace the exact boundaries of some sites and cities, because a number of ancient names mentioned are unknown today

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### JOSHUA 15:1-4

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#### The South Boundary of the Inheritance Allotted to Judah.

- **Joshua 15:1-4:** The allotment for the tribe of the people of Judah according to their clans reached southward to the boundary of Edom, to the wilderness of Zin at the farthest south.  
<sup>2</sup>And their south boundary ran from the end of the Salt Sea, from the bay that faces southward. <sup>3</sup>It goes out southward of the ascent of Akkrabbim, passes along to Zin, and goes up south of Kadesh-barnea, along by Hezron, up to Addar, turns about to Karka, <sup>4</sup>passes along to Azmon, goes out by the Brook of Egypt, and comes to its end at the sea. This shall be your south boundary.

**Judah:** (Juda) comes from the Hebrew word (*Y<sup>e</sup>huwdah*) and means celebrated and praised. It carries the idea of revering and worshiping (with extended hands). Judah is the name of the Hebrew tribe descended from the man Judah. The name Judah also embraces and refers to the two and a half tribes at Jerusalem. This is because King David was a member of the tribe of Judah and it was David who founded the dynasty.

**The United Hebrew Kingdom:** Saul a Benjamite was Israel's first king (1 Sam. 8 to 2 Sam. 1). His reign was not a success, and when he died (about 1000 B.C.), a period of civil war broke out among the Hebrew tribes. Out of this chaos emerged David (2 Sam. 1 to 1 Kings 2), a member of the tribe of Judah, who founded the dynasty. David and his son Solomon (1 Kings 2:11) succeeded in unifying the Hebrew tribes and imposing their rule on the whole nation. During their reigns the Hebrews established a great Empire. When Solomon died, all of this came to an end; the greater part of the nation succeeded from the Judean rule to form the Northern Kingdom of Israel (the ten and a half tribes). The Davidic dynasty continued to rule at Jerusalem over a small remnant of the nation (the two and a half tribes). This remnant is called the kingdom of Judah which continued to rule in Jerusalem until the destruction of the capital city by the Babylonians (587 B.C.).

**The background of the divided Kingdom:** it must not be thought that the mere ineptitude of Rehoboam, Solomon's son (1 Kings 12) caused the split of the Hebrew kingdom. Ever since their settlement in Canaan after the exodus from Egypt, the Israelite tribes had manifested a fierce independence of each other and a great reluctance to give up tribal sovereignty to a national head. On several occasions during the period of the judges (Judg. 8:1-3) (Judg. 12:1-6; 20) strife and even open war broke out among the tribes. It would appear that the troubles in the period between the death of Saul and David's move of the capital to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 2-4) amounted to a divided kingdom, with Judah (the southern centre of power) adhering to David, but Israel (the Joseph tribes in central Palestine, and the northern tier of tribes) keeping aloof from David, seeking to establish Saul's son Ishbosheth as their king. Evidently, they felt that accepting David's claims meant giving up too much local autonomy to the central government. After David's capture of Jerusalem and the submission of all the tribes to him, David managed to keep the nation together by firm rule combined with a wise handling of explosive personalities. However, Solomon imposed on the nation a firm rule, assessing heavy taxes and forced labour. When Solomon died there already existed an Israelite government in exile, headed by Jeroboam, son of Nebat (1 Kings 1:26-40). He returned to Palestine to confront Solomon's son Rehoboam with an ultimatum---"make the heavy yoke lighter or we will not serve you" (1 Kings 12:1-11). Rehoboam, stubborn and inept, tried to assert force instead of making concessions, and Jeroboam split the Kingdom by organizing a secession government in Israel, which ultimately (under Omri) was centred in the city of Samaria

**The history of the Kingdom of Judah:** the biblical books of Kings and Chronicles record the history of Israel and Judah with Israel predominating. Throughout these books Judah and Israel's history are so intertwined with each other it difficult to isolate the exact history of Judah. It is clear that Judah was one of the largest of the tribes of Israel and occupied the most honourable place having charge of the arrangements and the chief support of the Israelites in overseeing their constitution, council and government and the following verses show that it was from the tribe of Judah the Messiah the Christ came:

- The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. <sup>11</sup>Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine, he has washed his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes. (Gen. 49:10-11).

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## **JOSHUA 15:5-12**

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### **The East Boundary of the Inheritance Allotted to Judah.**

- **Joshua 15:5-12:** And the east boundary is the Salt Sea, to the mouth of the Jordan. And the boundary on the north side runs from the bay of the sea at the mouth of the Jordan. <sup>6</sup>And the boundary goes up to Beth-hoglah and passes along north of Beth-arabah. And the boundary goes up to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben. <sup>7</sup>And the boundary goes

up to Debir from the Valley of Achor, and so northward, turning toward Gilgal, which is opposite the ascent of Adummim, which is on the south side of the valley. And the boundary passes along to the waters of En-shemesh and ends at En-rogel. <sup>8</sup>Then the boundary goes up by the Valley of the Son of Hinnom at the southern shoulder of the Jebusite (that is, Jerusalem). And the boundary goes up to the top of the mountain that lies over against the Valley of Hinnom, on the west, at the northern end of the Valley of Rephaim. <sup>9</sup>Then the boundary extends from the top of the mountain to the spring of the waters of Nephtoah, and from there to the cities of Mount Ephron. Then the boundary bends around to Baalah (that is, Kiriath-jearim). <sup>10</sup>And the boundary circles west of Baalah to Mount Seir, passes along to the northern shoulder of Mount Jearim (that is, Chesalon), and goes down to Beth-shemesh and passes along by Timnah. <sup>11</sup>The boundary goes out to the shoulder of the hill north of Ekron, then the boundary bends around to Shikkeron and passes along to Mount Baalah and goes out to Jabneel. Then the boundary comes to an end at the sea. <sup>12</sup>And the west boundary was the Great Sea with its coastline. This is the boundary around the people of Judah according to their clans.

These are all the east boundary of the inheritance allotted to Judah.

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## JOSHUA 15:13-15

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### Hebron was Allotted to Caleb for an Inheritance.

- **Joshua 15:13-15:** According to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, he gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh a portion among the people of Judah, Kiriath-arba, that is, Hebron (Arba was the father of Anak). <sup>14</sup>And Caleb drove out from there the three sons of Anak, Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmi, the descendants of Anak. <sup>15</sup>And he went up from there against the inhabitants of Debir. Now the name of Debir formerly was Kiriath-sepher.

Some facts concerning Caleb:

- He was the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite. (Josh. 14:6).
- He was forty years old when Moses sent him from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land. (Josh. 14:7).
- He wholly followed the LORD. (Josh. 14:8-9, 14).
- He was still as strong as he was in the day that Moses sent him to spy out the land and his strength was as his strength was then, for war even when he was eighty-five years old. (Josh. 14:10-11).
- He was given Hebron and the hill country for an inheritance. (Joshua 14:12-13).
- He drove out from Hebron the three sons of Anak, Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmi from their great fortified cities when he was eighty-five years old. (Josh. 14:12) (Josh. 15:14).

Caleb wholly followed the LORD in that he believed God and strongly told the people of Israel they should enter the Promised Land and drive out the inhabitants of Canaan, but the spies with him spoke fear and instilled doubt into the heart of the people so they refused to obey God and remained in the wilderness forty years. Only Joshua and Caleb crossed the River Jordan and entered the land of Canaan from this rebellious wilderness generation who rebelled against the command of the LORD by refusing to enter into the land of Canaan. (Deut. 1:26)

**The wilderness generation:** the unbelieving and doubting spies who came back with Caleb to give a report of the land of Canaan instilled fear in the people and cause their hearts to doubt by saying:

- The people are greater and taller than we. The cities are great and fortified up to heaven. And besides, we have seen the sons of the Anakim there. (Deut. 1:28).

- A people great and tall, the sons of the Anakim, whom you know, and of whom you have heard it said, 'Who can stand before the sons of Anak?' (Deut. 9:2).

And now forty-five years later Caleb at eighty-five says to Joshua:

- Give me this hill country (of Hebron) of which the LORD spoke on that day, for you heard on that day how the Anakim were there, with great fortified cities. It may be that the LORD will be with me, and I shall drive them out just as the LORD said. (Josh. 14:12).

The words, "As the LORD said," refer back to God's promise to Israel after the exodus and at the River Jordan.

God's promise after the exodus:

- I will not drive them (the inhabitants of Canaan) out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the wild beasts multiply against you. <sup>30</sup>Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased and possess the land. (Exod. 23:29-30).

God's promise at the River Jordan

- Hear, O Israel: you are to cross over the Jordan today, to go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourselves, cities great and fortified up to heaven, <sup>2a</sup>a people great and tall, the sons of the Anakim, whom you know, and of whom you have heard it said, 'Who can stand before the sons of Anak?' <sup>3</sup>Know therefore today that he who goes over before you as a consuming fire is the LORD your God. He will destroy them and subdue them before you. So, you shall drive them out and make them perish quickly, as the LORD has promised you. (Deut. 9:1-3).

Now at eighty-five Calebs faith is still as strong as when God first spoke. He trusts that God will drive out from their strong fortified cities the tall and great people of Anakim and give the land of Hebron and its hill country to him for his inheritance.

**Hebron:** the name of Hebron was formerly Kiriath-arba. (Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim.). (Josh. 14:15). It was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt. (Num. 13:22).

**The Anakim:** Anakim were the people of Anak, the father of Anak was Arba he was the greatest man among the Anakim (Josh. 21:11) (Josh. 14:12-15). The descendants of Anak were Ahiman, Sheshai and Talmi. (Num. 13:22) (Josh. 15:14). They were a great and tall people with strong fortified cities (Deut. 1:28) (Deut. 9:2) (Josh. 14:12) that lived at Hebron during Joshua's conquest of Canaan. Their land included Kiriath-arba (the original name of Hebron) and the Valley of Rephaim which connected to the valley of Hinnon. The people of Joshua took the land of Rephaim and gave Hebron to Caleb, but some of the Anakim remained in Gaza, Gath and Ashdod (Josh. 11:21-22) (Josh. 15:8, 13-16) (Josh. 18:16) (Josh. 17:15). In the book of Deuteronomy, it is written:

- Like the Anakim they are also counted as Rephaim, but the Moabites call them Emim. (Deut. 2:11).
- It is also counted as a land of Rephaim. Rephaim formerly lived there—but the Ammonites call them Zamzummim (Deut. 2:20).

These verses show that the Anakim are also called, Rephaim, Zamzummim and Emim.

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## JOSHUA 15:16-17

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### Caleb Gives his Daughter Achsah to Othniel to Wife.

- **Joshua 15:16-17:** And Caleb said, "Whoever strikes Kiriath-sepher and captures it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter as wife." <sup>17</sup>And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, captured it. And he gave him Achsah his daughter as wife.

Caleb made the proclamation throughout his army, "whoever captures Kiriath-sepher he will give Achsah his daughter for their wife." This proclamation of course should be understood to have been said with some conditions such as, providing he was a man who could marry her according to God's law; and that she was willing to marry the man. Though parents had a great power over their children, they could not force them to marry any person against their own wills (especially if such a man was a brute beast). Any father who forced his daughter upon such a man against her will would before God be and unfit father indeed. Nevertheless, none of this mattered since Caleb's proclamation was spoken (consciously or unconsciously) by the divine Spirit of God. This is evidenced by the following facts:

- Othniel was married into the family of the chief prince of the tribe of Judah which was a very great honour.
- Othniel's valour and courage was made manifest.

Both of these events prepared the way for Othniel future government of the people. In the book of Judges, it is written:

- When the people of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the people of Israel, who saved them, Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. (Judges 3:9).

These facts show that God in his eternal foreknowledge clearly knew that Othniel was a man of honour and courage and would not only be a good husband for Achsah, but that he would also rise up to deliver and save His people. It also shines a light upon the reality that Caleb was being inspired by the Spirit of God when he proclaimed, "Whoever captures Kiriath-sepher I will give Achsah my daughter as wife,"

**An unlawful marriage:** it seems, at first sight, that Othniel was Caleb's own brother, a younger brother, and so uncle to his daughter, and such marriages were forbidden (Lev. 18:14), but this maybe harmonised with Scripture in the following way. It was not Othniel who was Caleb's brother, but Kenaz. It is also made clear that Caleb was not properly Othniel's brother because Caleb is constantly called the son of Jephunneh (Josh. 15:13) and Othniel, the son of Kenaz (Josh. 15:17), here and in (1 Chron 4:13). It is not Othniel that is called the brother of Caleb, but Kenaz, who was the father of Othniel; so that Caleb was Othniel's uncle, and Achsah and Othniel were first cousins, between whom marriage was allowed. Added to this the word brother was commonly used for any kinsman.

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## JOSHUA 15:18-19

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### **Achsah asked Caleb Her Father for a Field and Springs of Water.**

- **Joshua 15:18-19:** When she (Achsah) came to him (Caleb her father), she urged him to ask her father for a field. And she got off her donkey, and Caleb said to her, "What do you want?" <sup>19</sup>She said to him, "Give me a blessing. Since you have given me the land of the Negeb, give me also springs of water." And he gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

Caleb had given Achsah a field, but it was dry and parched, so she asks her father to give her some land with springs of water and he gives her the upper springs and the lower springs.

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## JOSHUA 15:20-62

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### **The inheritance of the Tribe of Judah.**

- **Joshua 15:20-62:** This is the inheritance of the tribe of the people of Judah according to their clans. <sup>21</sup>The cities belonging to the tribe of the people of Judah in the extreme south, toward the boundary of Edom, were Kabzeel, Eder, Jagur, <sup>22</sup>Kinah, Dimonah, Adadah,

<sup>23</sup>Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan, <sup>24</sup>Ziph, Telem, Bealoth, <sup>25</sup>Hazor-hadattah, Keriath-hezron (that is, Hazor), <sup>26</sup>Amam, Shema, Moladah, <sup>27</sup>Hazar-gaddah, Heshmon, Beth-pelet, <sup>28</sup>Hazar-shual, Beersheba, Biziothiah, <sup>29</sup>Baalath, Im, Ezem, <sup>30</sup>Eltolad, Chesil, Hormah, <sup>31</sup>Ziklag, Madmannah, Sansannah, <sup>32</sup>Lebaoth, Shilhim, Ain, and Rimmon: in all, twenty-nine cities with their villages. <sup>33</sup>And in the lowland, Eshtaol, Zorah, Ashnah, <sup>34</sup>Zanoah, En-gannim, Tappuah, Enam, <sup>35</sup>Jarmuth, Adullam, Socoh, Azekah, <sup>36</sup>Shaaraim, Adithaim, Gederah, Gederothaim: fourteen cities with their villages. <sup>37</sup>Zenan, Hadashah, Migdal-gad, <sup>38</sup>Dilean, Mizpeh, Joktheel, <sup>39</sup>Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon, <sup>40</sup>Cabbon, Lahmam, Chitlish, <sup>41</sup>Gederoth, Beth-dagon, Naamah, and Makkedah: sixteen cities with their villages. <sup>42</sup>Libnah, Ether, Ashan, <sup>43</sup>Iphtah, Ashnah, Nezib, <sup>44</sup>Keilah, Achzib, and Mareshah: nine cities with their villages. <sup>45</sup>Ekron, with its towns and its villages; <sup>46</sup>from Ekron to the sea, all that were by the side of Ashdod, with their villages. <sup>47</sup>Ashdod, its towns and its villages; Gaza, its towns and its villages; to the Brook of Egypt, and the Great Sea with its coastline. <sup>48</sup>And in the hill country, Shamir, Jattir, Socoh, <sup>49</sup>Dannah, Kiriath-sannah (that is, Debir), <sup>50</sup>Anab, Eshtemoh, Anim, <sup>51</sup>Goshen, Holon, and Giloh: eleven cities with their villages. <sup>52</sup>Arab, Dumah, Eshan, <sup>53</sup>Janim, Beth-tappuah, Aphekah, <sup>54</sup>Humtah, Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron), and Zior: nine cities with their villages. <sup>55</sup>Maon, Carmel, Ziph, Juttah, <sup>56</sup>Jezreel, Jokdeam, Zanoah, <sup>57</sup>Kain, Gibeah, and Timnah: ten cities with their villages. <sup>58</sup>Halhul, Beth-zur, Gedor, <sup>59</sup>Maarath, Beth-anoth, and Eltekon: six cities with their villages. <sup>60</sup>Kiriath-baal (that is, Kiriath-jearim), and Rabbah: two cities with their villages. <sup>61</sup>In the wilderness, Beth-arabah, Middin, Secacah, <sup>62</sup>Nibshan, the City of Salt, and Engedi: six cities with their villages.

- In the extreme south, twenty-nine cities with their villages.
- In the lowland, thirty-nine cities with their villages.
- In the hill country, forty-four cities with their villages.

The inheritance of the tribe of Judah was a total of 112 cities with their villages.

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## JOSHUA 15:63

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### **Jebusites Dwell with the People of Judah at Jerusalem to this Day.**

- **Joshua 15:63:** But the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the people of Judah could not drive out, so the Jebusites dwell with the people of Judah at Jerusalem to this day.

Israel was called to drive out all the people in the land of Canaan or they would become thorns in their flesh. In the plains of Moab by the Jordan River at Jericho, the LORD told Moses to tell the people of Israel:

- When you pass over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, <sup>52</sup>then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you and destroy all their figured stones and destroy all their metal images and demolish all their high places. (Num. 33:51-52).
- If you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then those of them whom you let remain shall be as barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall trouble you in the land where you dwell. (Num. 33:55).

**Could not drive them out:** the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem were in part taken by Joshua before this, yet the upper and stronger part of it, called Zion, was still kept by the Jebusites, even until David's time. It seems the Jebusites descended from Zion to the lower town called Jerusalem and took it; so that the Israelites were forced to win it a second time and even a third time.

**The scenario seems to be this:** though Joshua slew Adoni-zedek, king of Jerusalem and the king of Hebron and took their land (Joshua 10:22-27) and though the men of Judah retook it after Joshua's death, it having been got into the hands of the Jebusites again (Judges 1:8), either the

fort of Zion was never taken by either of them, or if taken, the Jebusites got possession of it again, and held it until the times of David (2 Sam. 5:6). The failure of the tribes of too utterly clear the inheritance of land assigned to them constantly come back to cause trouble for them. A list of the tribes' failures is given in Judges Chapter one (Judges 1:27-36).

**To this day:** means when this book was written, either in Joshua's life, which continued many years after the taking of Jerusalem, or after his death, by some other man of God, but whenever it was written it must have been done before David's time, because he utterly drove out the Jebusites and took their fort.

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*

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