

Joshua15 – Special Blessings to Special Judah

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: When we have our church dinners we feed the children first because they are often needier than we. But when the Lord rewarded the tribes of Israel by giving them portions of Canaan, he did not start with the neediest. He started with Judah. Today you will hear from God as to why he started with Judah and what he expected from Judah in response to this particular honor he put on them.

Our headings are:

Judah's Covenant Rewards – General Rewards

Judah's Covenant Rewards – A Specific Example

Judah's Covenant Rewards – Delayed

Our goals are: **That you see the special emphasis that God put on Judah as he gave them their covenant rewards, and how those rewards equipped Judah to continue God's work and wait for Messiah.**

Judah's Covenant Rewards –General Rewards

1 So this was the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families: The **border of Edom** at the Wilderness of Zin southward was the extreme southern boundary. 2 And their southern border began at the **shore of the Salt Sea**, from the bay that faces southward. 3 Then it went out to the southern side of the Ascent of Akkrabbim, passed along to Zin, ascended on the south side of Kadesh Barnea, passed along to Hezron, went up to Adar, and went around to Karkaa. 4 From there it passed toward **Azmon and went out to the Brook of Egypt**; and the border ended at the sea. This shall be your southern border. 5 The east border was the Salt Sea as far as **the mouth of the Jordan**. And the border on the northern quarter began at the bay of the sea at the mouth of the Jordan. 6 The border went up to Beth Hoglah and passed north of Beth Arabah; and the border went up to the **stone of Bohan** the son of Reuben. 7 Then the border went up toward Debir from the Valley of Achor, and it turned northward toward Gilgal, which is before the Ascent of Adummim, which is on the south side of the valley. The border continued toward the waters of En Shemesh and ended at En Rogel. 8 And the border went up by the Valley of the Son of Hinnom to the southern slope of the **Jebusite city (which is Jerusalem)**. The border went up to the top of the mountain that lies before the Valley of Hinnom westward, which is at the end of the Valley of Rephaim northward. 9 Then the border went around from the top of the hill to the fountain of the water of Nephtoah, and extended to the cities of Mount Ephron. And the border went around to Baalah (which is Kirjath Jearim). 10 Then the border turned westward from Baalah to Mount Seir, passed along to the side of Mount Jearim on the north (which is Chesalon), went down to Beth Shemesh, and passed on to Timnah. 11 And the border went out to the side of Ekron northward. Then the border went around to Shicron, passed along to Mount Baalah, and extended to Jabneel; and the border ended at the sea. 12 The west border was the coastline of **the Great Sea** 西方的疆界就是大海和海岸. This is the boundary of the children of Judah all around according to their families.

1. The 1st reward God gave to Judah was land. Judah was the first to get land after Israel crossed over the Jordan. They were assigned land in the South. You can prove this by plotting the famous places mentioned in our text.

V1 -The border of Edom was the eastern boundary.

V2-The shores of the Salt Sea – the Dead Sea – was in the South.

V4-Azmon flowed out to the Brook of Egypt – which was in the south east.

V5-The mouth of the Jordan was in the South.

V8-Jerusalem was where the Jebusites lived.

V12- The Great Sea - the Mediterranean Sea – was in the west.

And if you looked at the minor boundary details, you will see more certainly where Judah's boundaries were. Eg., in verse 6 you see a boundary being marked by a monument of some sort...maybe a tombstone. Details of Judah's boundaries removed doubts in the 9 ½ tribes As to what God was giving to Judah.

As if that were not enough, to remove any remaining doubt, **Judah's land was assigned by lot.** God would make the decision.

When God speaks, you listen. Where he leads, you follow. Where he sends, you go. You might not understand all the details, but you must trust your heavenly Father. But don't wait for signs! Read his Word. Let his Word guide what you believe and practice.

And remember that **gifts from God are to enjoy, but also to use for his glory.** God's glory is the primary purpose of life.

2. The 2nd reward was love. God loved Judah and through Judah the whole world would be blessed.

Psalm 78:68 But chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion which He loved.

Judah (and part of Benjamin) remained faithful and did not follow Jeroboam and the other tribes into idolatry.

Because God loved Judah he honored him by sending Messiah through him. The Messiah who would come to die for the world and pass on the promises God' made to Abraham.

Genesis 49:10 The scepter 杖 shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, **Until Shiloh comes;** And to Him shall be the obedience of the people.

Having been brought into God's kingdom through Christ, you must take this blessing to the world.

3. The 3rd reward location. Judah's location in the South and by the sea **provided for faster and more convenient spread of the Gospel to the world.** Rome had built roads that facilitated the spread of the Gospel. So the spread of the Gospel into Africa was easier. This **spread of the Gospel was confirmed** by the Lord Jesus just before he went back into heaven. If Judah were in the north, this would have been difficult to do.

Acts 1:8 "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in **Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.**"

Without stretching this too much, it seems like you must make use of God's providences on things like the printing press, like social media, like the internet, like cell phones...all to advance God's kingdom.

Judah's Covenant Rewards – A Specific Example

13 Now to Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a share among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, namely, Kirjath Arba, which is Hebron (Arba was the father of Anak).

1. Caleb was a faithful foreign convert who showed his trust in God and his promises, and urged

Israel to fight the Canaanites and not to be overwhelmed 压倒 by the size of their muscle. He looked at the greatness of his God, rather than the greatness of his enemies. He never said the giants weren't big and dangerous – he simply stood on the promises of God. He argued from faith, not fear. He could have desired with the other 10 spies to go back to Egypt and enjoy the temporary pleasures there. But he could not take the easy way for him. So God promised him that he would enter and occupy the land where he had walked 45 years before. It was a handsome reward. This Caleb was adopted into the tribe of Judah.

Deuteronomy 1:35 'Surely not one of these men of this evil generation shall see that good land of which I swore to give to your fathers, 36 'except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him and his children **I am giving the land on which he walked, because he wholly followed the LORD.**'

What a remarkable blessing. His parents named him Caleb – dog-a wild, ferocious animal...not the cute puppy of today, but he had faith in the true God and labored for his Savior. His name didn't keep him back, nor did his nationality. So he was honored by God in heaven and given much land on the earth.

Like Caleb, you can't excuse evangelistic laziness because of limited ability or circumstances.

Don't say: "I wasn't raised as a Christian, so I don't know what to do." If you don't know enough doctrine to teach your family and friends to keep them safe from hell, then use good books or listen to good sermons.

Further, if you honor God, he will honor you in greater ways. No employer can truly promise like this.

14 Caleb **drove out the three sons of Anak** from there: Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi, the children of Anak. 15 Then he went up from there to the inhabitants of Debir (formerly the name of Debir was Kirjath Sepher).

2. Consistent with the Christian life, God gave Caleb the strength to drive out the giants, established

Hebron, and use the land for the glory of God. Though old, he never stopped fighting. He was fighting on the promises of God.

Psalm 76:12 He shall cut off the spirit of princes; *He is awesome to the kings of the earth.*

Do you sometimes think you can't win when you fight...whatever your fight may be? Do you get tired of having the same fights and not winning? Struggling to discipline your children? Let Caleb's God strengthen you.

16 And Caleb said, "He who attacks Kirjath Sepher and takes it, to him I will give Achsah my daughter as wife." 17 So Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it; and he gave him Achsah his daughter as wife.

3. Consistent with the Christian life, Caleb asked his brothers for help. Caleb did not fight on his own.

Earlier he asked other warriors from Judah to help him.

Judges 1:10 Then Judah went against the Canaanites who dwelt in Hebron. (Now the name of Hebron was formerly Kirjath Arba.) And they killed Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai.

Later he asked for help to conquer Kirjah Sepher and offered his daughter's hand in marriage. **But Caleb did this for the good of his family and the nation.** He did not need these lands but he sought the greater good of Judah and Israel. Caleb was not selfish. Remember how he gave up Hebron – a special city - for the worship of God. And surely Othniel was only a “brother” from Judah, not a blood brother. Othniel offered Caleb the city as a dowry. But Achsah could not be forced to marry anyone. She would have submitted to a father. Further, most women would have been happy to marry a military hero – as Michal was to marry David when he killed Goliath.

The lesson is that Christians must never fight in detached armies. To do this is to threaten the general cause of the war. It is a blessing of having communion with the saints. Ask for help when you need it. Help when you can.

18 Now it was so, when she came to him, that she persuaded him to ask her father for a field. So she dismounted from her donkey 押撒一下驴, and Caleb said to her, "What do you wish?" 19 She answered, "**Give me a blessing**; since you have given me land in the South, give me also springs of water." So he gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

4. Wisely, Caleb's daughter urged her husband to ask Caleb for some more land and water for her fields. Caleb kindly gave it to her. But it is how she characterized the land that is remarkable. She doesn't see it has “more hard work.” Labor was for her family, Judah, Israel, and the coming Messiah as a blessing! She counted it a blessing!

Do you ever feel like your children are more of a burden 负担? Do you think your spouse or family and friends as burdens? Learn that dealing with your challenges is ultimately for your blessing! Labor is not a curse.

Further, do not think that spiritual investments you make into children is every worthless!

20 This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families: 21 The cities at the limits of the tribe of the children of Judah, toward the border of Edom in the South, were Kabzeel, Eder, Jagur, 22 Kinah, Dimonah, Adadah, 23 Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan, 24 Ziph, Telem, Bealoth, 25 Hazor, Hadattah, Keriath, Hezron (which is Hazor), 26 Amam, Shema, Moladah, 27 Hazar Gaddah, Heshmon, Beth Pelet, 28 Hazar Shual, Beersheba, Bizjathjah, 29 Baalah, Ijim, Ezem, 30 Eitlad, Chesil, Hormah, 31 Ziklag, Madmannah, Sansannah, 32 Lebaoth, Shilhim, Ain, and Rimmon: all the cities are twenty-nine, with their villages. 33 In the lowland: Eshtaol, Zorah, Ashnah, 34 Zanoah, En Gannim, Tappuah, Enam, 35 Jarmuth, Adullam, Socoh, Azekah, 36 Sharaim, Adithaim, Gederah, and Gederothaim: fourteen cities with their villages; 37 Zenan, Hadashah, Migdal Gad, 38 Dilean, Mizpah, Joktheel, 39 Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon, 40 Cabbon, Lahmas, Kithlish, 41 Gederath, Beth Dagon, Naamah, and Makkedah: sixteen cities with their villages; 42 Libnah, Ether, Ashan, 43 Jiphtah, Ashnah, Nezeb, 44 Keilah, Achzib, and Mareshah: nine cities with their villages; 45 Ekron, with its towns and villages; 46 from Ekron to the sea, all that lay near Ashdod, with their villages; 47 Ashdod with its towns and villages, Gaza with its towns and villages—as far as the Brook of Egypt and the Great Sea with its coastline. 48 And in the mountain country: Shamir, Jattir, Sochoh, 49 Dannah, Kirjath Sannah (which is Debir), 50 Anab, Eshtemoah, Anim, 51 Goshen, Holon, and Giloh: eleven cities with their villages; 52 Arab, Dumah, Eshean, 53 Janum, Beth Tappuah, Apekah, 54 Humtah, Kirjath Arba (which is Hebron), and Zior: nine cities with their villages; 55 Maon, Carmel, Ziph, Juttah, 56 Jezreel, Jokdeam, Zanoah, 57 Kain, Gibeah, and Timnah: ten cities with their villages; 58 Halhul, Beth Zur, Gedor, 59 Maarath, Beth Anoth, and Eltekon: six cities with their villages; 60 Kirjath Baal (which is Kirjath Jearim) and Rabbah: two cities with their villages. 61 In the wilderness: Beth Arabah, Middin, Secacah, 62 Nibshan, the City of Salt, and En Gedi: six cities with their villages.

Judah's Covenant Rewards: Delayed

63 As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem to this day.

1. Everything was set for Judah. The boundaries were defined. The people were settled with enough land and resources to live there. They had the support of the other tribes. The priests were

established among them in good land. They worshipped God. Everything they needed to continue the battle to conquer the whole land was in their hands...BUT they did not completely accomplish that task. The land of the Jebusites was not captured. Yes, Joshua killed the King of Jerusalem, and later the people of Israel captured it when Joshua died, but they did not keep it.

2. Why? Why did they not accomplish that task? It seems that life became too comfortable太舒适 for Judah. They started to enjoy life and didn't care to pass on what God had instructed them to do to their children.

Judges 2:10 When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel.

This is good reason to work hard to make sure that your children are godlier than you. Don't let them take their eyes off of the Lord and put them on worldly things that can capture them and take them prisoner. Instead, regularly teach them to remember who they are in Jesus Christ and what duties the Lord has appointed for them. John Calvin described Israel's negligence this way: "*A moderate delay [to conquer the whole land] might have been free from blame; but a long period of effeminate ease, in a manner, rejected the blessing which God was ready to bestow.*"

But isn't this the same error the church in the West is making today? The church is active, alright, but it is active in the wrong things. We only see a watered-down Gospel淡化的福音. It is almost like the church has gotten tired of hearing that Jesus died on the cross for their sins and they want to relegate that to obscurity. They want to seem more relevant to the culture, even as they are sentencing the culture to death.

3. It took David, some 400 years later to complete the task. Look at the record:

2Samuel 5:6 And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spoke to David, saying, "You shall not come in here; but the blind and the lame will repel you," thinking, "David cannot come in here." **7 Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion (that is, the City of David).**

Do you realize how strong David's trust was in the Lord to do this? After all, who remembers a task your fore parents wanted to accomplish from 400 years ago that you think you must finish for them? Most people won't care or forget what their fore parents wanted from 2 generations ago. Most children forget what you tell them to do by the time they walk past a box of cookies! But David did not forget! He knew his ancestors failed to do what God told them to do, so he wanted to make up for their failures. Isn't this what you want from your children?

Conclusion:

Judah received a most glorious reward in Canaan. Even the convert who joined Judah, Caleb, received a most glorious reward. But you notice how the nation and the individual had to continue to fight. When they did stopped fighting, they lost...they lost even what they had once captured.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Judah was a wonderful picture of your call. You are called, based on your eternal election and equipping in Jesus Christ, to fight to advance the kingdom of God. He enriches you with all your needs. This means you will have to fight. Sometimes this fight will be with your children (I want to dress this way)...with your spouse (I want to live this way)...with your co-workers (All ways are acceptable)...with your friends (If you want to hang out with us, do what we do)...or with your enemies (Join our religion or die). Don't ever stop fighting the Devil, sin, death, and hell. To stop fighting means the lost won't be captured for Christ. To stop fighting means that you will move backwards in your life. This cosmic fight 宇宙性的战斗 is too important to be timid. Ask God to strengthen your faith so you will continue to do battle as you see the Heavenly Stone filling the whole earth.

Finally, to my non-Christian friends: Look at the remarkable way God worked in history to make sure Jesus would come to save sinners. Nothing could stop him – not even the sins of Judah. Will you accept the Messiah that God sent, or will you reject him? If you reject him, his judgment on you will be severe. He will cover his clothes with your blood. But if you accept him, you will find him to be a most gracious Redeemer, Friend, and King.