

**Judah**

• *Royal dominion-Jesus*

Judah was an important tribe among the tribes of Israel since the kings of Israel would come from it. Royal dominion would be with Judah until Jesus should come – as Genesis 49:10 promised. Jesus Himself was from the tribe of Judah.

• *Borders defined*

Joshua 15:1–4 describes how Judah's southern border runs from the Dead Sea to the western coast. ¶<sup>1</sup> Then its eastern border, ¶<sup>2</sup> its northern border ¶<sup>3</sup> and its western ¶<sup>4</sup> border are each defined by a description of the route of each boundary.

¶<sup>1</sup> 15:1–4  
 ¶<sup>2</sup> 15:5a  
 ¶<sup>3</sup> 15:5b–11  
 ¶<sup>4</sup> 15:12

• *Jerusalem*

The border of Judah at this stage of history ran just south of Jerusalem. ¶<sup>1</sup> Later it would become David's capital city. Yet the capital city was not completely identified with Judea; it was slightly outside Judea and in early days was in the territory of Benjamin. David – a Judean – was always near to the non-Judean territory because Jerusalem was so close to the northern tribes. This was helpful to David, but after the kingdom split into two, the same fact became a danger for Jerusalem. Its enemies could easily get near to it without coming into Judean territory.

¶<sup>1</sup> 15:8

• *David's capital-city*

God's preparation was already going ahead for the capital-city of King David and the place where Jesus would die on the cross. It was not yet possessed by Israel. The Jebusites were living there. But soon David would make it his capital, and would rule from there. The Son of David would die there, would be raised from the dead there, and in Jerusalem Jesus would pour out the Holy Spirit on the church.

• *Hinnom*

We notice also the mention of the Valley of Hinnom; ¶<sup>1</sup> it is the place that later became an ever-burning garbage dump. One of the words of 'hell' is Gehenna – Ge-hinnom, 'Valley of Hinnom'. It was used as a picture of the fires of God's anger against sin.

¶<sup>1</sup> 15:7

**1. God's love of variety**

**1. The allocation of the tribes spoke of God's love of variety.** There is a great deal of variety in the different inheritances given to each tribe. Judah itself was greatly varied. It was largely in the central high country. To the east it went down to the Dead Sea; to the West it extended to the Mediterranean sea. Most of it included the highlands in between. Other tribes had quite different territory. Some were landlocked. One lay along the coast.

• *No tribe had the destiny as the other*

God loves variety. Look at His world and you will see that God never makes any two things the same. No two trees are identical. No two animals are identical. No two people are identical. Even 'identical twins' are not really identical!

Judah was destined to be the royal tribe. The situation into which God puts us is never the same as the situation in which He puts anyone else. The land of Israel was allocated among twelve tribes. No tribe had the same destiny as the others.

**2. A sense of calling**

**2. The differences in the allocation of land invites the Israelites to a sense of calling.** If each tribe had different land with different characteristics, it was an invitation to each tribe to ask the question: what are we specially called to do for God? The situation in which God puts us is often part of our calling.

**3. Contentment**

**3. The differences in the allocation of land invites the Israelites to contentment.** If there were differences in the tribes, then it would mean that each tribe had to be content with what it was being called to do. There would be no point in a non-Judean wanting to be a king in Jerusalem. There would be no point in a non-Levite wanting to be a priest.

**4. God's wisdom**

**4. The situation spoke of God's wisdom.** God knows how to fit our situation and our character together. Having Jerusalem just over the border, ready to be of use to the Judeans and to the whole nation, was all part of the wise shaping of Israel's calling.

**5. A challenge to further endeavours**

**5. The allocation of the tribal lands spoke of God's challenge to further endeavours for Him.** Caleb's territory is within Judah and so is mentioned at this point <sup>☒1</sup> and we discover that he fulfilled the ambition that he had expressed earlier. <sup>☒2</sup> At the age of eighty-five years he drove out the remaining pagan inhabitants occupying his inheritance. <sup>☒3</sup>

<sup>☒1</sup> 15:13  
<sup>☒2</sup> see 14:12  
<sup>☒3</sup> 15: 14–1 5

• *Caleb's ambition fulfilled*

Although his being given this land was a reward for his own faithfulness, it was also possible to regard it as only the starting-point of further endeavours for God and His people. He was himself elderly and perhaps too old for further fighting. So, well aware of the stimulus of a reward, he offered marriage with his daughter as a prize for any one of his people who capturing Kiriath-sepher. <sup>☒1</sup> Othniel won the lady! <sup>☒2</sup> The whole atmosphere is full of the theme of reward. She asks for something extra!

<sup>☒1</sup> 15:16  
<sup>☒2</sup> 15:17

• *More reward*

• *More land still*

What is true for Caleb is actually true for all of the allocations of land. Not all the tribes occupied all the territory There was still land to be possessed. Judah's territory included land occupied by Philistines, and warfare with the Philistines continued until the days of David.

• *Give me water!*

Joshua's daughter, now Othniel's bride-to-be, is obviously a highly-motivated lady herself. She is happy with the land that she and her husband have been given – except that she wants some land with water-springs in it. She gets her wish! <sup>☒1</sup> Joshua 15:20 rounds off the description in 15:1–19. There are parables for us in this story. Water gives life. It enables animals and humans to survive. It brings lushness and fruitfulness where it is found in abundance. Joshua's daughter knew what she was after when she asked for the water that gives life. At a higher level, we too may ask: 'Sir, give me this water...', <sup>☒2</sup> and Jesus will answer. One greater than Caleb is here.

<sup>☒1</sup> 15:18– 19

<sup>☒2</sup> John 4:15



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