

Canaanite and Philistine towns

The Canaanite towns that were in the allocated land of Judah get a special mention. The list is divided into four, according to four different sections of the land. There is the Negeb ('south-land'), the Shephelah ('foothills' – land half-way in height between the hills and the plains), the hill country and the desert of Judah. The Philistine cities make a separate category.

• **The Negeb**

1. First are mentioned the thirty-six places of 15:20–32. Verse 32 talks about twenty-nine towns plus their villages. This may mean the list consists of twenty-nine towns and seven less notable villages. They were in the Negeb, **the plains of the south**. 'Hazor' in 15:23 is Hezron. The Hazor of 11:13 is different.

• **Western foothills**

2. Then there were the forty places in **the western foothills**.^{☞1} There are fifteen in Joshua 15:33–36 (counted as fourteen; perhaps one was a village attached to a large town). There are sixteen in Joshua 15:37–41. And there are nine in Joshua 15:42–44.

• **Philistine towns**

3. Then there were the **towns belonging to the Philistines**.^{☞1}

• **Hill country**

4. In the **hilly territory between Jerusalem and Hebron** ^{☞1} there are thirty-eight places mentioned. The list puts them to us in small groups: eleven cities in verses 48–51, nine in verses 52–54, ten in verses 55–57, six in verses 58–59, two in verse 60. Each group was a distinct district.

• **Desert of Judah**

5. Lastly there is mention of two cities in **the desert of Judah**.^{☞1}

• **Jerusalem not yet taken**

Jerusalem had not been taken.^{☞1} The Jebusites were still there. (The Book of Joshua was put together before David had captured Jerusalem.)

Three lessons about the Kingdom of God

These verses may not seem to offer much scope for the preacher. Yet if we know our Bibles and the history of some of these places there are things to be learned.

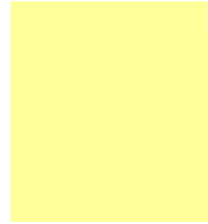
1. Works by motivation

1. **The kingdom of God works by motivation.** These town lists were not immediately occupied by the Israelites. Some of them were not occupied for decades or even centuries. Yet these lists were given out as a motivation and incentive to the people of Israel. The believer has to act on the promises of God. There is a difference between 'having a promise'^{☞1} and 'obtaining a promise'.^{☞2} You 'have' a promise as soon as you know about it. You 'obtain' a promise when you have it fully realised in your life. God invites us to lay hold of what He is giving us. 'Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called', said Paul to Timothy.^{☞3} 'Instruct them ... to take hold of that which is life indeed'.^{☞4}

There is a 'promise of life',^{☞5} an 'expectation of eternal life'.^{☞6} This allocation of territory was one further step in the receiving of Israel's reward. Yet it **still** was not fully obtained. The list is there to motivate the people of Israel.

2. Makes use of the World

2. **The kingdom of God often makes use of the world.** Paul once said 'All things belong to you'.^{☞1} We 'use the world'.^{☞2} Some of these Canaanite towns were flourishing places of commerce and travel. When the Israelites arrived they did not destroy every city.



☞1 15:33–44

☞1 15:45–47

☞1 15:48–60



☞1 16:61–62

☞1 15:63



☞1 see 2
Corinthians 7:1
☞2 see Hebrews
11:33

☞3 1 Timothy
6:12
☞4 1 Timothy
6:19

☞5 2 Timothy 1:1
☞6 Titus 1:2; 3:7

☞1 1 Corinthians
3:2 1
☞2 1 Corinthians
7:3 1

• *But not in a Worldly Spirit*

They would annihilate the paganism but then take over the town structures and make use of them. There is a sense in which the modern Christian does something similar. We do not do things with a worldly spirit but we do make use of worldly facilities. We publish books! So does the world. But what is inside the book is not the same as what is inside worldly books. The Israelites did not take over the paganism of Canaanite religion; but they did take over many Canaanite towns! Solomon got Hiram of Tyre to provide him with plenty of resources to build the temple – but it was Solomon who made use of the material not Hiram! We allow the world to help us but we do not allow the worldly spirit to infect us. We are in the world but not of the world. We throw out the world's paganism but we live in its towns!

3. Sometimes dangerous but never boring

3. The kingdom of God is sometimes dangerous but it is never boring. What exciting things were to happen in these places in days to come! Ziph ¹ is the place where David and Jonathan pledged loyalty to each other. ² It is also the place where David was betrayed by the Ziphites. ³ It was a place fortified by Rehoboam so as to protect Judah from its northern enemies. ⁴

• *Ziph*

Then think of Ziklag. ¹ At one point a Philistine king gave it to David. ² David lived there for sixteen months. At one point Amalekites destroyed it and David had to go after them with four hundred men to rescue the wives and children. ³

• *Ziklag*

Then think of Adullam. ¹ It is the place where the famous 'cave of Adullam' was to be found, where David made his headquarters at the time he was keeping out of the way of Saul, who was seeking to kill him. ²

• *Adullam*

Lacish ¹ was one of the great cities of the ancient world. It was more than a thousand years old even in Joshua's day. For a long time after it was destroyed by Joshua's armies it lay uninhabited. Then in the days of Solomon there were people living there again. Rehoboam in the tenth century BC turned it again into a fortified town. ² In the eighth century BC Amaziah of Judah tried to escape there to avoid assassination. ³ The Assyrian king Senacherib made it his capital at the end of the eighth century and met Hezekiah there. ⁴

• *Lacish*

The events that would take place in these towns were full of incident. The territory of Judah would see its share of excitement in years to come. And Jesus would come to die upon a cross and be raised from the dead – in the territory of Judah!

• *Jesus*

- ¹ 15:24
- ² 1 Samuel 23:14–18
- ³ 1 Samuel 23:19–24
- ⁴ 2 Chronicles 11:8
- ¹ 15:31
- ² 1 Samuel 27:6
- ³ 1 Samuel 30:1–20
- ¹ 15:35
- ² 1 Samuel 22:1; 23:1
- ¹ 15:39
- ² 2 Chronicles 11:9
- ³ 2 Kings 14:9
- ⁴ 2 Kings 18:14



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