

## Joshua 14:1-15

### Distribution of the Land West of the Jordan; Moses' Promise to Caleb

This chapter is an introduction or preface to the list of territories that follow in chapters 15 and 16 through chapter 20.

**Joshua 14:1** - "And these are the countries which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, distributed for inheritance to them."

KJV has "countries" - The Jewish translation has "cities" - NET has "territories" - any of these could be right, because this phrase is actually missing from the text. It is implied because the sentence simply begins with "ben Yisrael" - "the children of Israel..."

Eleazar is mentioned before Joshua, because the division by lot was presided over by the high priest as the representative of the government of the Lord in Israel ( **Numbers 34:17**).

The procedure was related in **Numbers 27:21** - "And he (Joshua) shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the LORD: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation."

The two types of Christ the good shepherd are represented here. Joshua as Jesus victorious, and Eleazar as Christ our High Priest interceding for us. Thus, there could be no partiality in the distribution of the inheritance, and would engender no jealousy.

**Joshua 14:2** - "By lot was their inheritance, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes, and for the half tribe."

"By lot"- Again, this emphasizes the guidance of God in the process, as discussed in Chapter 13. Pagans also used the "lot" to determine the will of the gods. It was a standing custom of the Athenians to divide the land of conquered enemies to colonists by lot (Diod. xv. 23, 29) and (Herod. v. 77; vi. 100). Also with the Romans (Cic. Ep. ad Div. xi. 20).

- **Proverbs 16:33** - "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD."

- **Proverbs 18:18** - "The lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty."

Calvin - "...men are never so ready to submit cheerfully to the decisions of another man, even though they may be the result of Divine Inspiration, as they are to a decision arrived at by a lot over which the Lord presides, and thus entirely raised above human caprice."

In the New Testament, Ephesians offers a parallel to this description of our *spiritual* inheritance.

Read all of Ephesians 1, with a focus on **Ephesians 1:11** - "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:"

...and **verses 13-14** - "ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

**Joshua 14:3-5** - "For Moses had given the inheritance of two tribes and a half tribe on the other side Jordan: but unto the Levites he gave none inheritance among them. For the children of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim: therefore they gave no part unto the Levites in the land, save cities to dwell in, with their suburbs for their cattle and for their substance. As the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did, and they divided the land."

This was discussed in Chapter 13. The Levites received no inheritance, to allow Joseph's tribes - Manasseh and Ephraim - a place in the land.

Why did Joseph's sons, born through Asenath the daughter of Potipherah the priest of On, get to be individual new tribes of Israel?

Because Jacob promised Joseph that they would be considered as one of Jacob's own sons:

- **Genesis 48:5** - "And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine."

This is further explained in **1 Chronicles 5:1-2** - "These were the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel. Though he was the firstborn, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph son of Israel, because Reuben defiled his father's bed. So he is not reckoned according to birthright. And though Judah prevailed over his brothers and a ruler came from him, the birthright belonged to Joseph."

The Levites are mentioned again to emphasize their unique role. The very tribe of Moses would gain no territory from this division, except for cities that would include cities of refuge as sanctuaries.

## Levites

Spiritually, Levites represent the aspect of the church that looks for no gain in this world, our life belonging exclusively to God, our focus always on God and His people, meeting needs in humility, without regard to reward or thanks, and exhibiting zeal without fearing

the faces of men. Even our soiled and worn out undergarments - i.e. things normally hidden or objects of shame - are transformed through confession and become wicks to ignite and enlighten worshippers in the Temple courts. Our entire reason for being is to watch and pray and serve in God's Temple, ensuring the liturgy carried out there displays the reality of grace and the Holy Spirit's presence for everyone who participates. We take the Temple with us wherever we go. In return Levites enjoy the benefits of the unconsumed sacrifices and offerings they help others bring, as well as a portion of the tithes. Spiritually, we enjoy the nourishment from our understanding of the meaning of the sacrifices fulfilled in Christ.

This all means that at this point, the 12 tribes were reckoned in two different ways by the High Priest. In **Exodus 28** we are told that the high priest should bear the names of the children of Israel written (six each) on two onyx stones affixed to his shoulders according to their birth "for a memorial" (i.e., Joseph being counted as well as Levi, but not Ephraim and Manasseh). On his breastplate he must have them according to the twelve tribes (i.e., Ephraim and Manasseh being specified, but Joseph and Levi left out). Both ways of reckoning were necessary in order that the complete Israel might be represented by the high priest. And in each way, the number twelve was preserved and emphasized.

The division of the inheritance corresponded to the prophecies of Jacob, 250 years before about Ephraim and Manasseh and as described in **Genesis 48**, and of Moses' blessing of the tribes in **Deuteronomy 33**.

For instance, the tribe of Judah inherited a country abounding in vineyards and pastures; to Zebulun and Issachar, seaports; in that of Asher was plenty of olive oil, wheat, and metals; that of Benjamin, near the future location of the Temple, was in a way "between the shoulders" of God Himself; The land of Simeon extended from the west to the south of the tribe of Judah.

### **Caleb: "Give me this mountain"**

The name Caleb has two meanings. The word Caleb signifies "a dog."

An alternate Hebrew meaning offered for Caleb is "faithful, zealous, ruthless, bold, brave". This is on the basis of its being actually a compound word, a phenomenon quite common in ancient Hebrew. Col (כל, Kaf + Lamed) = "all" or "whole"; Lev (לב, Lamed + Bet) means "heart". Therefore, Caleb (or Caley as pronounced in Hebrew) would actually mean "whole hearted" or "singleminded."

To the Jews of Jesus' day, Gentiles were considered dogs.

Caleb is described both as of the tribe of Judah but also as the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite. The Kenezites were an Edomite tribe descended from Kenaz, a grandson of Esau (Genesis 36). Their land was among the territories God promised to Abram in

## **Genesis 15:19.**

(The Kenezites could also be related to the Kenites - the Midianite clan of Moses' father-in-law Jethro)

It is not explained how Caleb's clan became associated with the tribe of Judah. Probably some of the Kenazites accompanied Jacob to Egypt during the famine.

Caleb therefore, like Rahab, represents Gentiles grafted into Israel. Esau/Edom/Adam represents the flesh at war with the Spirit, typified by Jacob.

- **Romans 9:13** - "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

Repentance and faith transform the "dog" Caleb - our old man - into the wholehearted and singleminded believer Caleb - faithful, ruthless against God's enemies, brave and bold. Someone who "wholly followed the Lord thy God."

Caleb and Joshua were the only two spies who returned from viewing the Promised Land who gave a "good report." They were also the only two survivors from the generation of the wilderness who rebelled.

**Joshua 14:7** - "Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart."

Caleb was 78 years old when they crossed the Jordan. He was 85 at this point when they began to divide the country.

"it was in mine heart." - Rashi explains that this means Caleb kept his opinion to himself on the trip back from Canaan, but held it in his heart. "He said to them one version with his mouth, while he had another version in his heart."

## **Moses' Promise**

Caleb had a special promise from Moses that seems to have superseded the determination by casting lots. "The land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance" (**Joshua 14:9**).

- **Numbers 14:24** - "But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it."

- **Deuteronomy 1:36** - "Not one of the men of this evil generation shall see the good land I swore to give your fathers, except Caleb son of Jephunneh. He will see it, and I will give him and his descendants the land on which he has set foot, because he followed the LORD wholeheartedly."

Now Caleb has come, *before* the casting of lots to determine Israel's inheritance, to put forth his own unique claim.

**Joshua 14:12-13** - "Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said. And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance."

## Hebron

Hebron was where Sarah had died, and where Abraham mourned for her (**Genesis 23:2**). It is also where Isaac died and was buried (**Genesis 35:27-29**). It is also described as "the cave in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre in Canaan, which Abraham bought along with the field as a burial place from Ephron the Hittite" (**Genesis 49:30**). Thus the tomb of the patriarchs at the Cave of Machpelah in Hebron is one of Judaism's most sacred places. Jewish tradition says Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, and Jacob and Leah are all buried there.

Hebron also had a previous name - *Kirjatharba*, or "city of Arbah."

Arbah was "the greatest man among the Anakim" or the giants. Arbah was probably the ancient founder of the city.

So Hebron was a key location in the land promised to Abraham, containing the resting place of Israel's patriarchs and matriarchs, but claimed by a strong walled city founded by the greatest of the giants.

In effect, Caleb's conquest of Hebron and his victory over the giants was a microcosm of the entire campaign of Israel in the Promised Land, with special reference to the report of the spies, warning there were "giants in the land."

And it was the fulfillment of the words of Caleb and Joshua - **Numbers 14:9** - "Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defense is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not."

## Caleb and Joshua

Caleb received his inheritance first, and Joshua last of all Israel. Thus two sides of Christ are depicted in Caleb and Joshua. Caleb was foremost in a service of danger and boldness, with a focus on his physical strength and vigor, and received his inheritance before others. Joshua was last to seek the things rightfully his, and reflected the humility of Jesus: "For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me" (Romans 15:3).

A later type of Christ - David - also confronted a giant, Goliath, and defeated him, and took away the reproach from Israel caused by Goliath's defiance.

This "reproach" was voiced by the Israelite soldiers - 1 Samuel 17:26 - "Who can stand before the children of Anak?"

## Zeal and Humility

Only this view can explain the scripture's approval of the zeal of Caleb in claiming his inheritance, and also Joshua's humility in delaying his own. Both are combined and required within us, just as the casting of lots and the fair and equal distribution are combined in discovering our spiritual inheritance, just as the requirement to show up to confront evil while depending completely on God's strength are all somehow combined in the expression of faith.

In all these things "we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (**Romans 8:37**).

## Character of the Giants

The Anakim of Hebron are described earlier in the journey of the spies:

- **Numbers 13:22** - "And they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron; where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi, the children of Anak, were. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)"

*Ahiman* = brother (*ach*) of gift (*min*), or brother from "out of the midst" - the same word in **Genesis 2:7** - "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of (*min*) the ground"

*Sheshai* - Historians of Egypt know of a Sheshi who was a Canaanite king whose rule extended over parts of Egypt for some time between 1750 BC and 1650 BC during the Second Intermediate Period. This could be one of his descendants.

*Shesh* can mean white or the number six. *Shushan* for instance means a white lily with six petals. *Yashesh* means old or white-haired. Strong's relates it to *Shashai* = "noble"

*Talmi* = "abounding in furrows" or ridges or terraces. From an unused root meaning "to accumulate."

The names of these giants give us some hint at what our inner opposition to God looks like. Coming like Adam the old man from the midst of the earth, their ancient roots indicated by white hair but depicting themselves like the beautiful lily, six being the number of man striving to be seven (perfection) but never achieving it, and the six days of work without the seventh day of rest, (Jewish tradition holds that demons were created on the sixth day); whose goal is to "accumulate" for gain, and who inflict stripes like furrows on the back of Jesus at his crucifixion.

- **Psalms 129:2-3** - "Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth: yet they have not

prevailed against me. The plowers plowed upon my back: they made long their furrows."

Interestingly, although Caleb did the actual fighting, this victory is also accredited to Joshua:

- **Joshua 11:21** - "And at that time came Joshua, and cut off the Anakims from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel: Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities."

One way of interpreting this is that Caleb and Joshua both are a type of Christ here.

Anywhere the Bible talks about conquering it's probably referring to this scene - Joshua/Jesus' securing for us our spiritual inheritance, and Caleb defeating the Anakim.

The conquest of Kirjatharb and the giants shows the transformation of our inner landscape from the "City of Arbah the greatest of the Anakim" into Hebron, which in Hebrew means "association, company, band, a shared society, a "house held in common." From a root that means join together, have fellowship with."

The church is called our of Babylon, the Bride is called out of the Great Whore, Hebron is called out of the land of the giants to be the body of Christ and members in particular.

But the root of Hebron can also mean magician, charmer or magic spell, one who "has fellowship" with the Evil One. The potential to revert to our old identity is always a present temptation. Either through a return to the self-seeking ways of the Anakim or by worshiping (rather than simply honoring) the traditions of the patriarchs buried beneath us in the Cave of Machpelah.

- **Matthew 3:9** - "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."