

(Chariots of Iron)

Joshua 15:1 – 18:28

~ We were reintroduced to Caleb in our last report from our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God. Forty years of wandering in the wilderness, a time that killed off a whole generation of his brethren, didn't even slow Caleb down from serving the Lord. I'm sure it was a trying and difficult time; particularly when he saw those around him dropping like flies en masse. Interestingly, Caleb seems to be in better condition AFTER the wilderness experience than he was before. Remember, Joshua and Caleb were the only two men to enter the Promised Land out of an estimated two and a half million Jews that came out of Egypt in Exodus. That which killed all the others in the first generation had zero effect on this man or Joshua; their tombstones became Caleb's steppingstones. The first generation of the children of Israel grew old and died while Caleb grew young and lived.

We also read how others trembled at the giants in the land. While the others thought themselves to be as grasshoppers, Caleb was thinking of God. Even if you ARE a grasshopper – you can have God on your side as Caleb and Joshua did. Caleb experienced freedom from fear in the heart of Caleb. Martin Luther said, "... one with God is a majority." The giants in the land and the fear experienced by the others were of absolutely no consequence to Caleb; because Caleb knew God was bigger than any giant on earth. Caleb did what Paul spoke of when Paul said he reached forth for the things that were before. The hope for the future was the faith spoken of in Hebrews chapter eleven where it says by faith the walls of Jericho fell down.

The missionary Judson spent over twelve years in Burma without making a single convert. The board that supported him – like most boards that make that type of decision – didn't sense the situation one iota; they had no earthly idea what a tremendous missionary he really was – and, well, they

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wrote a very diplomatic letter suggesting he come on home because the future didn't really look bright for him. So, Judson's reply was, "... the future is as bright as the promises of God!" That type of faith is the only way that missionary could stay in his own wilderness of Burma all those years. Make no mistake – he suffered a great deal – and today we know it was time well spent. The revival finally broke out after decades of nurturing it. That's the way Caleb was living at the time we are studying and, my friends, if you think you are saved, you are going to have to learn the lesson that the Spirit of God is trying to teach you now. The love and prosperity Gospel isn't going to help you; and if you are honest with yourself, you'll realize that type of teaching is nothing but a burden to your life and your purse or checkbook - and those around you.

So, we arrive in the section of Scripture where the land is to be divided by territory, and allotted to the tribes by Joshua. These seemingly very boring and uninteresting chapters are actually critical for us to read and understand. If you have a good Bible with maps then you can see how the geography lays out. We're only going to comment on high points as we move along. This entire lengthy report will deal with the consignment of the lands to the tribes of the nation Israel. Pray for wisdom, judgment and discernment now before reading this section of Scripture....

XV

1 This then was the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah by their families; even to the border of Edom the wilderness of Zin southward was the uttermost part of the south coast.

2 And their south border was from the shore of the salt sea, from the bay that looketh southward:

3 And it went out to the south side to Maalehacrabbin, and passed along to Zin, and ascended up on the south side unto Kadeshbarnea, and passed along to Hezron, and went up to Adar, and fetched a compass to Karkaa:

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4 From thence it passed toward Azmon, and went out unto the river of Egypt; and the goings out of that coast were at the sea: this shall be your south coast.

5 And the east border was the salt sea, even unto the end of Jordan. And their border in the north quarter was from the bay of the sea at the uttermost part of Jordan:

6 And the border went up to Bethhogla, and passed along by the north of Betharabah; and the border went up to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben:

7 And the border went up toward Debir from the valley of Achor, and so northward, looking toward Gilgal, that is before the going up to Adummim, which is on the south side of the river: and the border passed toward the waters of Enshemesh, and the goings out thereof were at Enrogel:

8 And the border went up by the valley of the son of Hinnom unto the south side of the Jebusite; the same is Jerusalem: and the border went up to the top of the mountain that lieth before the valley of Hinnom westward, which is at the end of the valley of the giants northward:

9 And the border was drawn from the top of the hill unto the fountain of the water of Nephtoah, and went out to the cities of mount Ephron; and the border was drawn to Baalah, which is Kirjathjearim:

10 And the border compassed from Baalah westward unto mount Seir, and passed along unto the side of mount Jearim, which is Chesalon, on the north side, and went down to Bethshemesh, and passed on to Timnah:

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11 And the border went out unto the side of Ekron northward: and the border was drawn to Shicron, and passed along to mount Baalah, and went out unto Jabneel; and the goings out of the border were at the sea.

12 And the west border was to the great sea, and the coast thereof. This is the coast of the children of Judah round about according to their families.

13 And unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a part among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, even the city of Arba the father of Anak, which city is Hebron.

14 And Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmaj, the children of Anak.

15 And he went up thence to the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before was Kirjathsepher.

16 And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjathsepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife.

17 And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife.

18 And it came to pass, as she came unto him, that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted off her ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wouldest thou?

19 Who answered, Give me a blessing; for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs.

20 This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families.

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21 And the uttermost cities of the tribe of the children of Judah toward the coast of Edom southward were Kabzeel, and Eder, and Jagur,

22 And Kinah, and Dimonah, and Adadah,

23 And Kedesh, and Hazor, and Ithnan,

24 Ziph, and Telem, and Bealoth,

25 And Hazor, Hadattah, and Keriath, and Hezron, which is Hazor,

26 Amam, and Shema, and Moladah,

27 And Hazargaddah, and Heshmon, and Bethpalet,

28 And Hazarshual, and Beersheba, and Bizjothjah,

29 Baalah, and Iim, and Azem,

30 And Eltolad, and Chesil, and Hormah,

31 And Ziklag, and Madmannah, and Sansannah,

32 And Lebaoth, and Shilhim, and Ain, and Rimmon: all the cities are twenty and nine, with their villages:

33 And in the valley, Eshtaol, and Zoreah, and Ashnah,

34 And Zanoah, and Engannim, Tappuah, and Enam,

35 Jarmuth, and Adullam, Socoh, and Azekah,

36 And Sharaim, and Adithaim, and Gederah, and Gederothaim; fourteen cities with their villages:

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37 Zenan, and Hadashah, and Migdalgad,

38 And Dilean, and Mizpeh, and Joktheel,

39 Lachish, and Bozkath, and Eglon,

40 And Cabbon, and Lahmam, and Kithlish,

41 And Gederoth, Bethdagon, and Naamah, and Makkedah; sixteen cities with their villages:

42 Libnah, and Ether, and Ashan,

43 And Jiphtah, and Ashnah, and Nezib,

44 And Keilah, and Achzib, and Mareshah; nine cities with their villages:

45 Ekron, with her towns and her villages:

46 From Ekron even unto the sea, all that lay near Ashdod, with their villages:

47 Ashdod with her towns and her villages, Gaza with her towns and her villages, unto the river of Egypt, and the great sea, and the border thereof:

48 And in the mountains, Shamir, and Jattir, and Socoh,

49 And Dannah, and Kirjathsannah, which is Debir,

50 And Anab, and Eshtemoh, and Anim,

51 And Goshen, and Holon, and Giloh; eleven cities with their villages:

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52 Arab, and Dumah, and Eshean,

53 And Janum, and Bethtappuah, and Aphekah,

54 And Humtah, and Kirjatharba, which is Hebron, and Zior; nine cities with their villages:

55 Maon, Carmel, and Ziph, and Juttah,

56 And Jezreel, and Jokdeam, and Zanoah,

57 Cain, Gibeah, and Timnah; ten cities with their villages:

58 Halhul, Bethzur, and Gedor,

59 And Maarath, and Bethanoth, and Eltekon; six cities with their villages:

60 Kirjathbaal, which is Kirjathjearim, and Rabbah; two cities with their villages:

61 In the wilderness, Betharabah, Middin, and Secacah,

62 And Nibshan, and the city of Salt, and Engedi; six cities with their villages.

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 unto this day.

XVI

~ We learned in Genesis that Manasseh and Ephraim were the sons of Joseph. We also know that the tribe of Levi was not to be assigned any

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territory. Each of the two sons of Joseph was counted as separate tribes; so, twelve tribes received land in the inheritance. Half of the tribe of Manasseh had land on the east bank of the Jordan River; and the half that stayed behind should not have remained out of the land. The half that did as God had told them to was given a portion in the land. Again, a good Bible with a map will be very helpful now. Looking at that map will tell you exactly who was where on the wrong side of the River Jordan....

1 And the lot of the children of Joseph fell from Jordan by Jericho, unto the water of Jericho on the east, to the wilderness that goeth up from Jericho throughout mount Bethel,

2 And goeth out from Bethel to Luz, and passeth along unto the borders of Archi to Ataroth,

3 And goeth down westward to the coast of Japhleti, unto the coast of Bethhoron the nether, and to Gezer: and the goings out thereof are at the sea.

4 So the children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance

5 And the border of the children of Ephraim according to their families was thus: even the border of their inheritance on the east side was Atarothaddar, unto Bethhoron the upper;

6 And the border went out toward the sea to Michmethah on the north side; and the border went about eastward unto Taanathshiloh, and passed by it on the east to Janohah;

7 And it went down from Janohah to Ataroth, and to Naarath, and came to Jericho, and went out at Jordan.

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8 The border went out from Tappuah westward unto the river Kanah; and the goings out thereof were at the sea. This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Ephraim by their families.

9 And the separate cities for the children of Ephraim were among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh, all the cities with their villages.

10 And they drave not out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer: but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites unto this day, and serve under tribute.

XVII

1 There was also a lot for the tribe of Manasseh; for he was the firstborn of Joseph; to wit, for Machir the firstborn of Manasseh, the father of Gilead: because he was a man of war, therefore he had Gilead and Bashan.

2 There was also a lot for the rest of the children of Manasseh by their families; for the children of Abiezer, and for the children of Helek, and for the children of Asriel, and for the children of Shechem, and for the children of Hopher, and for the children of Shemida: these were the male children of Manasseh the son of Joseph by their families.

3 But Zelophehad, the son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but daughters: and these are the names of his daughters, Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.

4 And they came near before Eleazar the priest, and before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the princes, saying, The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brethren. Therefore according to the commandment of the LORD he gave them an inheritance among the brethren of their father.

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5 And there fell ten portions to Manasseh, beside the land of Gilead and Bashan, which were on the other side Jordan;

6 Because the daughters of Manasseh had an inheritance among his sons: and the rest of Manasseh's sons had the land of Gilead.

7 And the coast of Manasseh was from Asher to Michmethah, that lieth before Shechem; and the border went along on the right hand unto the inhabitants of Entappuah.

8 Now Manasseh had the land of Tappuah: but Tappuah on the border of Manasseh belonged to the children of Ephraim;

9 And the coast descended unto the river Kanah, southward of the river: these cities of Ephraim are among the cities of Manasseh: the coast of Manasseh also was on the north side of the river, and the outgoings of it were at the sea:

10 Southward it was Ephraim's, and northward it was Manasseh's, and the sea is his border; and they met together in Asher on the north, and in Issachar on the east.

11 And Manasseh had in Issachar and in Asher Bethshean and her towns, and Ibleam and her towns, and the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, and the inhabitants of Endor and her towns, and the inhabitants of Taanach and her towns, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns, even three countries.

12 Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities; but the Canaanites would dwell in that land.

13 Yet it came to pass, when the children of Israel were waxen strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute; but did not utterly drive them out.

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14 And the children of Joseph spake unto Joshua, saying, Why hast thou given me but one lot and one portion to inherit, seeing I am a great people, forasmuch as the LORD hath blessed me hitherto?

~ Here we see the complaint of Ephraim. They were saying they weren't given enough land. If you consult your map, you'll see they were only given roughly half of what Manasseh was allotted. Also note they weren't given nearly the amount of land that Judah was given. Even Simeon was given more land than Ephraim. Well, there were a whole bunch of people in the tribe of Ephraim. Joshua belonged to the tribe of Ephraim. They had to have been thinking that, because Joshua was one of them, he would surely take care of them in a special way. Well, it didn't work out like that....

15 And Joshua answered them, If thou be a great people, then get thee up to the wood country, and cut down for thyself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the giants, if mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee.

~ If you tour the land you'll notice we're talking about a very hilly, mountainous and highly rugged topography – some of the most rugged terrain on earth. That's what Ephraim received from Joshua. Also, if you travel over there today, you'll notice there are no trees left. The centuries of enemy inhabitants that followed this time period that we are studying utterly denuded the forestry. Today, Israel has a great campaign of tree planting in that area. Many people go there just to plant trees. Even in the days when Jesus walked on the Mount of Olives it was literally a jungle covered with trees. Remember, Judas had to tag along to point the place out - or those men with staves and swords would likely never have found Him and the disciples. Currently, all you find there is a sparse clump of small trees.

So, the reply of Joshua is altogether remarkable, diplomatic and noble as he tells his own family to stop complaining and go carve out some more land if they didn't like what he had given them. You must remember there was still VERY much land available to them. So many – SO MANY – Christians

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complain about the situation they are in and the small amount of stuff that they occupy their life with. They always say they want to do this, that and the other thing for God but they are utterly lazy and, therefore, ineffective at laying hold of those spiritual possessions – so the vicious cycle of complaining worsens every day for them.

Make no mistake: if you're going to possess your spiritual blessings it is going to take some work. How much time do you spend in a sincere Bible study each day? Is it just the fifteen or twenty minutes it takes most of you to read these reports? That's a good start, don't get me wrong, but that's not going to get you there, friends. Are you running out of wisdom? Are you short on spiritual blessings? The answer is not a great big mystery. Your dedication to a sincere, educated and systematic Bible study dictates the level of spiritual awareness in this lost and dying world you will attain.

Also, we have an enemy; and Satan is going to slam the Bible shut on your fingers if he can. See, Bible study is hard work and there's no substitute for it - but it's very easy not to study the Bible. It doesn't take much for us to excuse ourselves. Other times, it will be as dry as dust, like this one, I assure you. That's when you are going to be required to moisten it up with the sweat off of your brow. That's when the Word of God comes alive and that's when it actually starts to mean something to us. The argument Joshua makes is a great argument for some very hard work, friends. Joshua is saying to these people, in a nice way, "... don't come whining to me – get out there and do something about it." This is the only way to do it, too – God doesn't just hand out land arbitrarily. What a tremendous lesson we have here and, as we read on, we see they always have an excuse not to...

16 And the children of Joseph said, The hill is not enough for us: and all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both they who are of Bethshean and her towns, and they who are of the valley of Jezreel.

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17 And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, even to Ephraim and to Manasseh, saying, Thou art a great people, and hast great power: thou shalt not have one lot only:

18 But the mountain shall be thine; for it is a wood, and thou shalt cut it down: and the outgoings of it shall be thine: for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong.

XVIII

1 And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them.

~ Shiloh was the place the children of Israel came to when they crossed over initially into the Promised Land. As we know, it is a very famous place; but it was not to be their permanent place. It was in the center of the land, but the place God had chosen, through David, would be Jerusalem. Shiloh was only the temporary place for the tabernacle. At THIS time this is the place where the children of Israel are to come to. Later in the history of the nation, we will see Samuel commuting from Shiloh to all over the place; but when we come to the reign of David, then the capital is moved from the center of the land into the southland of Judah. Mount Zion was King David's favorite place, and it's where he made Israel's capital city....

2 And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes, which had not yet received their inheritance.

3 And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which the LORD God of your fathers hath given you?

~ So, our safari ends this report with a challenge. The other tribes are just standing around twiddling their thumbs – or maybe their arms were folded – or their hands were in their pockets. Either way, they are asking Joshua

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what they are going to be given. Well, Joshua wants to know how long they plan on beating around the bush before they go up and possess their own lands. They had all been assigned a certain area and they were to go take it. God is asking YOU right NOW: "how long are YOU going to wait?" Have you been slack to go in and possess what God has already promised you? God has been good to you and has given us all spiritual blessings. Some of us can actually thank God for His wonderful grace, love, goodness and mercy - even in our time of extreme suffering. You'll only ever experience that by getting out there and doing something for Him. This is the time these tribes begin to move out. They now desire to possess the land that God has given to them....

4 Give out from among you three men for each tribe: and I will send them, and they shall rise, and go through the land, and describe it according to the inheritance of them; and they shall come again to me.

5 And they shall divide it into seven parts: Judah shall abide in their coast on the south, and the house of Joseph shall abide in their coasts on the north.

6 Ye shall therefore describe the land into seven parts, and bring the description hither to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the LORD our God.

7 But the Levites have no part among you; for the priesthood of the LORD is their inheritance: and Gad, and Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh, have received their inheritance beyond Jordan on the east, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave them.

8 And the men arose, and went away: and Joshua charged them that went to describe the land, saying, Go and walk through the land, and describe it, and come again to me, that I may here cast lots for you before the LORD in Shiloh.

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9 And the men went and passed through the land, and described it by cities into seven parts in a book, and came again to Joshua to the host at Shiloh.

10 And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD: and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel according to their divisions.

11 And the lot of the tribe of the children of Benjamin came up according to their families: and the coast of their lot came forth between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph.

12 And their border on the north side was from Jordan; and the border went up to the side of Jericho on the north side, and went up through the mountains westward; and the goings out thereof were at the wilderness of Bethaven.

13 And the border went over from thence toward Luz, to the side of Luz, which is Bethel, southward; and the border descended to Atarothadar, near the hill that lieth on the south side of the nether Bethhoron.

14 And the border was drawn thence, and compassed the corner of the sea southward, from the hill that lieth before Bethhoron southward; and the goings out thereof were at Kirjathbaal, which is Kirjathjearim, a city of the children of Judah: this was the west quarter.

15 And the south quarter was from the end of Kirjathjearim, and the border went out on the west, and went out to the well of waters of Nephtoah:

16 And the border came down to the end of the mountain that lieth before the valley of the son of Hinnom, and which is in the valley of the giants on the north, and descended to the valley of Hinnom, to the side of Jebusi on the south, and descended to Enrogel,

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17 And was drawn from the north, and went forth to Enshemesh, and went forth toward Geliloth, which is over against the going up of Adummim, and descended to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben,

18 And passed along toward the side over against Arabah northward, and went down unto Arabah:

19 And the border passed along to the side of Bethhoglah northward: and the outgoings of the border were at the north bay of the salt sea at the south end of Jordan: this was the south coast.

20 And Jordan was the border of it on the east side. This was the inheritance of the children of Benjamin, by the coasts thereof round about, according to their families.

21 Now the cities of the tribe of the children of Benjamin according to their families were Jericho, and Bethhoglah, and the valley of Keziz,

22 And Betharabah, and Zemaraim, and Bethel,

23 And Avim, and Parah, and Ophrah,

24 And Chepharhaammonai, and Ophni, and Gaba; twelve cities with their villages:

25 Gibeon, and Ramah, and Beeroth,

26 And Mizpeh, and Chephirah, and Mozah,

27 And Rekem, and Irpeel, and Taralah,

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28 And Zelah, Eleph, and Jebusi, which is Jerusalem, Gibeath, and Kirjath; fourteen cities with their villages. This is the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their families.

~ Our next report from our Spiritual Safari will reveal some remarkable Scriptural truths. Joshua had been so busy leading Israel that he had not been given his own inheritance. We'll see Joshua given the part of the land he really wanted; and, honestly, I have no idea why Joshua wanted the places he did. We'll see the places Joshua chose. It will be a very interesting report, you may be sure.

In this technical age, so many people totally and completely neglect their leader. They say they will pray for him, but they never give him anything. James had something to say about that in his epistle – chapter two, verses fifteen, sixteen and seventeen. The cold-blooded businessman takes better care of his indentured servants – employees – better than the teacher is taken care of by his students. In the secular world, you wouldn't even get a seat in the classroom without shelling out big bucks. Seriously, go check out what James says – that's James chapter two at verses fifteen, sixteen and seventeen; and then tell me you'll be praying for me.

In this sophisticated global society, the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ as I am teaching it - in the sound doctrine of the apostles - is simply dismissed wholesale. Truthfully, I just don't think God's people really care if the teacher teaches honestly or not – they think they know it all anyways. Most just want someone to reaffirm the religious theories and philosophies they have formed in total and complete ignorance of the Bible. We're also going to see, in the next report or two, the altar that gets built and how it deeply divides the people ~

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