

Journey Through The Cities of Refuge

Lesson #18

Legacy of Caleb: Start Strong; Finish Well

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Joshua 15 is a historical list of the borders of Judah's inheritance in the promised land. You find yourself skim reading the names of towns that are not easily pronounced. Surprisingly, in the middle of the chapter, the narrative breaks to include a story about God's faithful servant, Caleb, and his daughter, Achsah. Nothing in scripture is random.

When God inserts unexpected details, stop and take notice.

Her request is recorded twice in the Old Testament. [Also, Judges 1: Must be significant!]

Joshua 15:13-14 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*). ¹⁴ Caleb drove out the three sons of Anak from there: Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi, the children of Anak.

Joshua 15:15 Then he [Caleb] went up from there [Hebron] to the inhabitants of Debir (formerly the name of Debir *was* Kirjath Sepher).

Kirjath Sepher, also known as Debir, was an important Canaanite city, a strategic stronghold located nearby in the hill country, that needed to be conquered by Caleb to fully control his tribal allotment. They needed to fully possess the land that had been promised to them.

Battle for Kirjath Sepher was so important that it is recorded twice in the Bible.

Kirjath Sepher, a large administrative city, means City of Books or Scribes. It was a city where records were written down and kept and a place where the clay tablets were stored. It was the repository for the philosophical books of the Canaanites, including genealogical records, trading records, treaties, land ownership documents and much more.

The area was governed by the ways of man instead of the ways of God. It was well guarded.

Because it was a known center of Canaanite culture and learning before the Israelite conquest, it often represents the fallen, worldly intellect—knowledge that is devoid of God.

It is a picture of worldly wisdom, pagan knowledge, and human flesh.

Key: Ultimately, it represents worldly systems of thought or carnal human nature.

Truth: God had commanded the Israelites to remove the pagan people from the land.

It must have troubled Caleb greatly to see the corruption in the government of Kirjath Sepher. Caleb could not die and leave God's commandment to purge the land of paganism undone.

These giants, these false ideologies, needed to be overcome and replaced with the true Word of God.

In order to take possession of and secure the Promised Land, the governmental structure based on man's wisdom or learning, needed to be replaced with the Wisdom of God, His Law and His Word. It could not be reformed; it had to be replaced.

Caleb Seeks Out Spiritual Children Joshua 15:16-17

Num. 14:24 But as for My servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring him into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it. [God's Promise]

As Caleb began working to expand his boundary lines, he was simultaneously prospecting for a new son-in-law to propagate his blood line. He wanted to find the strongest and bravest man suitable as a husband for his daughter.

Consider Caleb's purpose. At age 85, Caleb had deliberately chosen to take the land of the giant men - the Anakim. He wanted to clearly show the people of Israel that faith in YHWH was the only way to live. He knew that the man who was able to take the city of Kirjath Sepher would probably be a man of physical bravery but, more importantly, he knew it would be necessary for that man to have a strong faith in YHWH. This is the type of man Caleb wanted for his daughter. It seems Caleb was looking for a man just like himself!

Caleb played a pivotal role in securing Kirjath Sepher. [Based on man's ways; carnal nature]

- He sought bold leadership to continue conquering territories.

Joshua 15:16 And Caleb said, [His Challenge & The Reward]

"He who attacks Kirjath Sepher and takes it, to him I will give Achsah my daughter as wife."

He realized that the land would mean nothing without descendants to occupy and maintain it. Caleb's promise serves as an encouragement for the Israelites to continue in their conquest of the land and a reminder of the rewards they will receive for their obedience and perseverance.

Testing Courage: The city was formidable, heavily fortified, and inhabited by giants.

Caleb offered his daughter, Achsah, in marriage as a reward to the warrior who possessed the courage and skill to attack and capture it.

Establishing Legacy: Caleb's actions were driven by a desire to fulfill God's promises and establish a long-term spiritual and tribal legacy for his family in the region.

Joshua 15:17 So Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, Took It; and he gave him Achsah his daughter as wife.

His capture of the city demonstrates his military prowess and faithfulness to God's command to possess the land.

He demonstrated a deep trust in God. His willingness to act on God's promises showed that He shared his family's courageous faith.

It served to eliminate the influence of the Canaanite people and their idolatrous practices. The city's conquest by Othniel was a spiritual victory. It represents the believer overcoming secular or worldly ideologies through faith and the power of God.

Joshua 15:18a Now it was so, when she came *to him*, [Othniel]

that she persuaded him [Othniel] to ask her father [Caleb] for a field.

As part of Jewish culture, Caleb gave Aksah a wedding gift or dowry. Her dowry was not the usual money or jewelry, but a piece of land. Not many fathers of that day would give such a treasure to their daughter because Jewish culture usually gave land to men.

Joshua 15:18b So she dismounted from *her* donkey, and Caleb said to her, "What do you wish?"

Note: When she came into her father's presence, she quickly dismounted.

It is a gesture of deep respect, humility and honor before her father.

Achsah's Moment of Courage

Joshua 15:19a She answered, "Give me a blessing;

since you have given me land in the South, give me also springs of water."

South in our English translations is "negev" in Hebrew which means "parched."

Caleb gave his daughter, Achsah, land in the south, the Negev, a dry, desert region which was unproductive and lacked a water source which was essential for productivity and survival.

- This would be a crippled inheritance. It would be extremely difficult to thrive.
- Achsah understood that her inheritance was more than acreage.
- Resources from my father are essential for fruitfulness.
- Her request for springs of water to make her parched land productive and fruitful aligns with God's Divine Purpose.

It is interesting that when Achsah asked for a blessing, she did not seek

to exchange her dry land for the more fertile and better watered lands further north.

She was content with the land she had been given, but she asked for springs of water.

Truth: Finding contentment in our circumstances can be difficult.

Phil. 4:12-13 I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation.

I can do all this through Him who gives me strength.

- Contentment is not dependent on our external circumstances.
- Contentment is not about settling for less or becoming complacent.
- Contentment is finding a deep-rooted peace that flows from trusting in God's provision and strength.
- True contentment cultivates an attitude of gratitude.

Consider: Are your circumstances dictating your contentment?

Key: She trusted her father's feelings toward her. She knew she could ask.

The land was an excellent gift, but there needed to be springs of water for it to reach its full potential.

Key: It seems this attitude was something she had observed and "caught."

Just as her father had earlier declared, "Give me this mountain,"

she had the confidence and faith to say, "Give me springs of water!"

Key: She had the Attitude Of An Heir ready to receive her inheritance.

Achsah desired to receive the same covenant blessings her father obtained as a result of his walk of faith. She was pursuing the God of her father, Caleb.

She doesn't just want the land; she wants the springs of water that will make it profitable, fertile, and fruitful. She doesn't settle for less than what will make her inheritance truly abundant and meaningful.

Joshua 15:19b So he gave her the Upper Springs And The Lower Springs.

A spring is a natural opening where underground water flows to the earth's surface.

The spring does not struggle to flow. It is made by God and is always fresh.

Achsah asks not just for water, but for springs, so that the provision of water would be a constant flow. Caleb gives her both the upper and lower springs that surround her inherited land, assuring her success. This act far exceeded her request.

This ensured her land had abundant, year-round water, symbolizing, in a spiritual sense, complete provision.

Isa. 41:18 I will open rivers on barren heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys;

I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.

What does this mean for that barren field? Instead of merely bringing water into the barren field, now the field will be caught in the middle of a flow that comes from the upper spring and connects to the lower spring. Caleb gives her access to a continual flow!

➤ Illustrates the concept of a, "double blessing" from God.

➤ Demonstration of God providing, "immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine".

"Rivers of living water will flow from my heart" is a promise spoken by Jesus in John 7:38.

This "living water" represents the Holy Spirit, which would fill and empower everyone who believes in Him, bringing inner renewal and overflowing spiritual life.

Viewing The Account Through The Lens Of Types or Shadows

Rom. 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

Luke 24:27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets,

He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

Caleb = Type of God The Father Othniel = Type of Jesus Christ Achsah =Bride

Othniel is a Hebrew name meaning "Lion of God," "strength of God," or "God has helped me". It represents divine strength. It is the exalted and fierce characteristics of the lion that are particularly linked to the name Othniel. He is a lion from the tribe of Judah.

Rev. 5:5 Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

Othniel's story begins during a dark and turbulent time in Israel's history.

It was the first time the people completely fell away from God.

- Joshua and the elders of Israel have grown old and died.
- The people did not choose to spawn a godly leader that would help them do the right things and follow the law of Moses.

Judges 2:10 Lack of teaching that had been done by the previous generation.

- Israel had this problem a lot; they would fail to pass on the word of God to their children.

Judges 3:7-8 So the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. They forgot the LORD their God and served the Baals and Asherahs. Therefore, the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and He sold them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia; and the children of Israel served Cushan Rishathaim eight years.

Cush-Rishathaim is viewed as a "type" [foreshadowing] of Satan or the antichrist.

As the first oppressor of Israel in the Book of Judges, his historical subjugation of God's people mirrors spiritual warfare.

The typological parallels between this king and Satan include:

- The Name: His name literally translates to "double wickedness" or "blackness of iniquities" which perfectly characterizes the ultimate nature of Satan and sin.
- Oppression: He forced Israel into an eight-year period of severe subjugation much like Satan holds humanity in bondage to sin.

Eight years passed. The children of Israel finally stopped crying to their idols.

They cried out to the One who delivered Israel out of Egyptian slavery not too long ago.

God's Response: He delivered them out of the bondage of Mesopotamia, and back to freedom in the land of promise. God Raised Up A Judge.

Note: A judge is a vindicator of God's people;

A judge is God's avenue of clearing His people when they turn to Him in repentance.

Judges 3:9 When the children of Israel cried out to the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer for the children of Israel, who delivered them: Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.

Othniel, the first vindicator that God raises up as a leader, is similar to Moses & Joshua. He is the first and only judge from the Tribe of Judah. As the first judge of Israel, his life mirrors Christ's role as the ultimate Savior, Deliverer, and conquering King.

The account of Othniel as judge is recorded in only three verses [Judges 3:9-11], but what God does with him is substantial.

- The "Spirit of the LORD" came upon him, and he went out to war. [Divine Empowerment] Othniel was anointed by the Holy Spirit to lead God's people to victory.
- God delivered the king of Mesopotamia into his hand, and he prevailed.
- They could not be freed without God's deliverance.

The Deliverer: Just as Cushan-Rishathaim enslaved Israel, his conqueror, the judge Othniel, empowered by the Spirit of the Lord, serves as an Old Testament type of Christ who ultimately defeats the powers of darkness.

Luke 4:18-19 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,
¹⁹ To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. [Teaching in the synagogue at Nazareth]

Othniel's final conquest delivered Israel from a tyrant and brought about decades of peace. Likewise, we look forward to Jesus' final conquest when He returns to earth to vanquish Satan and all evil, thus ushering 1,000 years of perfect peace and the glory of eternity. [Is. 9:7]

Jesus, the bridegroom, put His life on the line to redeem mankind. We currently live in a world ruled by the ideologies and wisdom of man. When Jesus Christ returns as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah at the end of the tribulation period, He will crush the kingdoms of this world. He will inaugurate His Millennial Kingdom where peace and righteousness will rule. Jesus Christ, the Word of God, will have the government upon His shoulders. Jerusalem will be changed to Jehovah Shammah, "The Lord is there," during the Messianic Age, the Millennium. This prophetic name is recorded in Ezekiel 48:35, marking the ultimate restoration and perpetual presence of God among His people.

Othniel, the first judge of Israel, delivered his people out of oppression and established 40 years of peace. [Judges 3:8-11] Then Othniel died.

After his death, the children of Israel are once again left without a human leader, and they soon go after evil again. The children of Israel would have continued in evil throughout those forty years too if it were not for one man and the great God who was with him wherever he went. Some may believe that one godly man cannot accomplish much.

Othniel was one godly man who kept an entire nation serving the LORD.

Truth: God chooses Ordinary People & equips them for Extraordinary tasks through His Spirit.

➤ Othniel was useful to the Lord because "*the Spirit of the Lord came upon him.*"

Truth: The Spirit of God will use us in ways that we can hardly imagine,
but we must yield to Him and His power in and over our lives.

Leadership in God's kingdom is rooted in submission to His will.

Recall: This battle over Kirjath Sepher needed to be won as this governmental change needed to occur for Israel to be able to take possession of the Promised Land.

It is a picture of worldly wisdom, pagan knowledge, and human flesh.

Ultimately, it represents worldly systems of thought or carnal human nature.

Othniel's victory over Kirjath Sepher transformed the city.

They changed the name of the city to Debir which in Hebrew means The Word.

- This name change illustrates that the false ideologies of Kirjath Sepher had been destroyed and replaced with the truth of Word of God.
- The city was now no longer ruled by the wisdom of man but by the Wisdom of God as embodied by His Word.

Interesting: Dispersion of the Priests: The priests and Levites needed to live among the people to teach the Law, offer sacrifices, and maintain the nation's spiritual well-being.

Debir was given to the priests so they could live throughout the nation and fulfill their duties. Because the Tribe of Levi did not receive a large territorial inheritance like the other tribes, they were given specific towns (like Debir) within the territories of their brethren to serve as spiritual and educational centers.

After Kirjath Sepher was defeated, the name was changed to Debir, Holy of Holies.

The Hebrew word *Debir*, is also used to describe the Holy of Holies, the area in the Tabernacle where God the Father dwelt and communicated with His people. It was in the Holy of Holies that the Ark of the Covenant was kept. Within it were the 2 tablets of stone containing the 10 Commandments given to Israel at Mount Sinai and Aaron's rod that budded.

- It is for this reason that the Holy of Holies is named Debir, the place of the Word.

It is the most sacred room, or Holy of Holies, in the temple separating the divine presence from the rest of the building.

As the innermost sacred space of the tabernacle, the Aaronic high priest only entered the Holy of Holies once a year on the Day of Atonement—no bells, no speaking and barefoot [Lev. 16:1].

When Jesus died on the cross, the temple veil dividing the holy place from the Most Holy tore in two from top to bottom, granting believers access to the Almighty God through Jesus' substitutionary death [Matt. 27:50-51a].

Heb. 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Consider: After Kirjath Sepher was conquered, it was renamed Debir, Holy of Holies.

Achsah entered her father's, type of God the Father, presence in a spirit of humility and boldness to request her desire for springs of water.

She was given abundantly, more than she asked.

She was given the gift of upper and lower springs with an unending flow like rivers of living waters. He gave her something that would bring continued blessing and fruitfulness both in her life, and in the lives of her children and grandchildren to whom she would pass it down.

Key Points: Achsah as the Bride

- A. Achsah was focused on her future inheritance. We have a future inheritance.

Col. 1:12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us

to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

#2427: hikanoó made adequate, make able; render fit; used on 2x in NT
God as the sole Agent who renders believers adequate for participation in the inheritance of the saints. It describes a decisive, divine bestowal of sufficiency that no human effort can manufacture. Discipleship curricula can ground believers' identity in their God-given qualification for the inheritance, fostering confidence and humility. [Biblehub.org]

- Focusing on the future is the key to seeing our life in perspective.
 - Never stop looking for the coming of Christ
 - Never take your eyes off the kingdom.
 - It's the ultimate reality for which we all are preparing
- B. Achsah was a seeker of solutions to life's problems.
- When the rest of the nation came to conquer the land, they could only see obstacles. Caleb saw great opportunities. His daughter Achsah shared that same spirit.
 - She didn't concentrate on the problem, that her portion was too parched.
 - She concentrated on the resources to turn it into a watered garden.

Truth: It's so easy to claim that the problem is too large, or the dangers too great, or the efforts too hard, but the faithful concentrate on how to overcome the issue.

- She sought the blessing of springs to solve a problem.

Anonymous: When God gives us a gift. He wraps it up in the problem.

So, we shouldn't focus on our problems.

We should focus on unwrapping them to find the solution.

Key: The faithful believe that behind every problem there lies an unexpected opportunity which will result in spiritual growth and progress.

Longing for More: My soul is seeking the springs of water that only He can provide.

"Streams of living water in the desert" is a powerful, enduring metaphor symbolizing spiritual refreshment, renewal, and hope in barren or difficult seasons. It points to a constant source of life and nourishment that sustains the soul even in the most arid circumstances.

The imagery is deeply rooted in Scripture, representing the Holy Spirit, healing, and God's provision:

Divine Provision: Assurance that God is ever-present and capable of transforming dry, desperate situations into places of life and abundance.

Internal Wellspring: The belief that the Holy Spirit dwells within a person, creating an unending internal supply of peace and joy that overflows to bless others.

Isaiah 58:11 The LORD will guide you always; He will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame.

You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.

A well-watered garden bursts with life, and as the Master Gardener, the Lord nurtures my spiritual growth with the living water of His Spirit. He ensures consistent moisture levels, knowing exactly what I need, how much, and when I need it.

Proper drainage is key: He helps me release my burdens by inviting me to cast all my anxieties on Him because He cares for me. This helps prevent the harmful effects of distress and sin from taking root in my life.

A thriving garden features rich soil. The Lord enriches the soil of my heart to receive His truth by treating it with ongoing reassurances of His love. An abundant harvest grows in good soil.

Minimal weeds are essential for a flourishing garden. The Lord shields me from the life-sapping lies of the evil one. Thanks to His vigilance, vibrant fruits and flowers, "the fruit of the Spirit, become the hallmark of such a garden.

What legacy am I leaving?

We want our children to not only believe in God but experience the abundance of His presence. We want God's indwelling Spirit - the true "upper and lower springs" of our promised inheritance in Christ.

Pursue your spiritual inheritance. Those who place their faith in Christ are promised the extraordinary, soul-satisfying experience of walking according to the Spirit who indwells all who believe. It is this life alone that is worth passing down to our children.

Ps. 90:16 Let us, your servants, see you work again;
let our children see your glory.

III John 1:4 *I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.*