

## Joshua 15 Judah

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### Overview

Consider the two bodies of data:

- Boundaries in 15:1-12
- City list in 15:20-62.

Rather than tracing the tribal boundaries in detail, we will consider some episode of biblical history that involves their geographic location. We will try to select some episode that reflects on the tribe's character as indicated in the blessing that Jacob gave his sons in Gen 49.

Jacob's Blessing on Judah: Gen 49:8-10, tribe of the ruler (David, then Messiah). Focus on the role of Judah's geography in Israel's government.

### The Tribe of the King

Israel's first two kings did not satisfy Jacob's prophecy:

- Judg 9:6, Abimelech son of Gideon, of the tribe of Manasseh, 6:15, appointed by men.
- Saul was from Benjamin, not Judah, 1 Sam 9:1, 15-17. Note the Lord's words in 8:22, "Make them a king." The initiative is still the nation's. Had he been subject to the Lord, he would have enjoyed an everlasting dynasty, 1 Sam 13:13, (and we might wonder what would have become of Jacob's promise to Judah!). But in claiming the priestly role at Gilgal he lost this opportunity.

The king that the Lord intended (1 Sam 16:1, "I have provided me a king") is David, from the Judahite village of Bethlehem. Bethlehem is "little among the thousands of Judah," Micah 5:2, and in fact not listed in the city list in MT, though it is in the LXX of 15:59.

- God's covenant with him in 2 Sam 7 assures his family a perpetual dynasty.
- He is the ancestor (after the flesh) of the Messiah, Rom 1:3, of whose rule there shall be no end, Isa 9:6-7.

*Application:* God fulfills his promises through Jacob in Gen 49. His word is sure, and he will carry out what he has promised. Note how Saul's sin is bound up with the fulfillment of God's promise! God causes the wrath of man to praise him, Ps 76:10. Human sin cannot frustrate his purposes, but ends up fitting perfectly into them, though God takes no responsibility for it.

### Where was the Capital?

David's original capital, 2 Sam 2:1-4, in Hebron, central to Judah, 15:54

5:1-3, all Israel comes to Hebron to make him king.

Then he moves his capital to Jebus = Jerusalem, 5:6-10. Why?

**Reason 1: Its Ancient History**

Gen. 14:18-20, “Salem” = “Jerusalem” (Ps 76:2), the city of Melchizedek, a ruler of mythic proportions

- Abraham acknowledged his superiority (Heb 7:1-10) by
  - Receiving a blessing from him
  - And giving tithes to him
- Both king and priest, a combination of offices that God does not permit to recur until the Lord Jesus

Thus this city is marked out from antiquity as special to God and his people. By taking it as his capital, David may be consciously establishing a link with its ancient monarch, just as Saddam Hussein tries to identify himself with Nebuchadnezzar.

**Reason 2: It is a border town.**

Its king led the southern coalition against the invading Israelites, 10:1, and was defeated, 12:5, but the city was not taken at this time.

Judah’s border runs just south of it, 15:8

The city itself is in Benjamin, 18:28

History of its conquest suggests both tribes had an interest in it:

- lack of conquest mentioned in context of Judah, 15:63. Though the city lay strictly outside of their boundaries, they apparently had some interest in its suburbs.
- Judg 1:8 has Judah fighting against Jerusalem, conquering the city, ...
- ...but 1:21 notes that the Benjamites were unable to occupy it.

After the death of Saul, there is a division between Judah (following David) and the rest of the country (following Ishbosheth, son of Saul), 2 Sam 2:1-11. One claimant is from Judah, the other from Benjamin!

David is seeking to reunify the country. Placing his capital in either a Judahite or a Benjamite city would alienate the other faction. His choice of a border town that neither has managed to control up to this time is a shrewd political move. 2 Sam 5:9, he calls it “David’s City,” laying claim to it by conquest and thus superceding the tribal claims of both Judah and Benjamin. His action is analogous to the establishment of the District of Columbia as neutral territory between the states in the early days of our own country.

*Application:* There is nothing wrong with diplomacy in calming tensions among people. “A soft answer turneth away wrath,” Prov 15:1. Compare the wisdom of Solomon’s decision in the case of the baby. May God give us such “out-of-the-box” thinking.

## **The Future of Jerusalem**

### ***God's selected capital***

Ps 132:13,14, For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired [it] for his habitation. 14 This [is] my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.

Ps 48:2 Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, [is] mount Zion, [on] the sides of the north, the city of the great King.

Ps 78:67 Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: 68 But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved. 69 And he built his sanctuary like high [palaces], like the earth which he hath established for ever.

Ps 87 (whole psalm; citizenship of the Gentiles anticipated!)

### ***False hope in the 6<sup>th</sup> century***

Jer 26:1-11; speech against the temple and against Jerusalem was considered blasphemy. Cf. The accusation against Stephen in Acts 6:13.

### ***Future center of the Millennial Kingdom***

Isa 2:1-4; 27:13; Zech 8:1-6