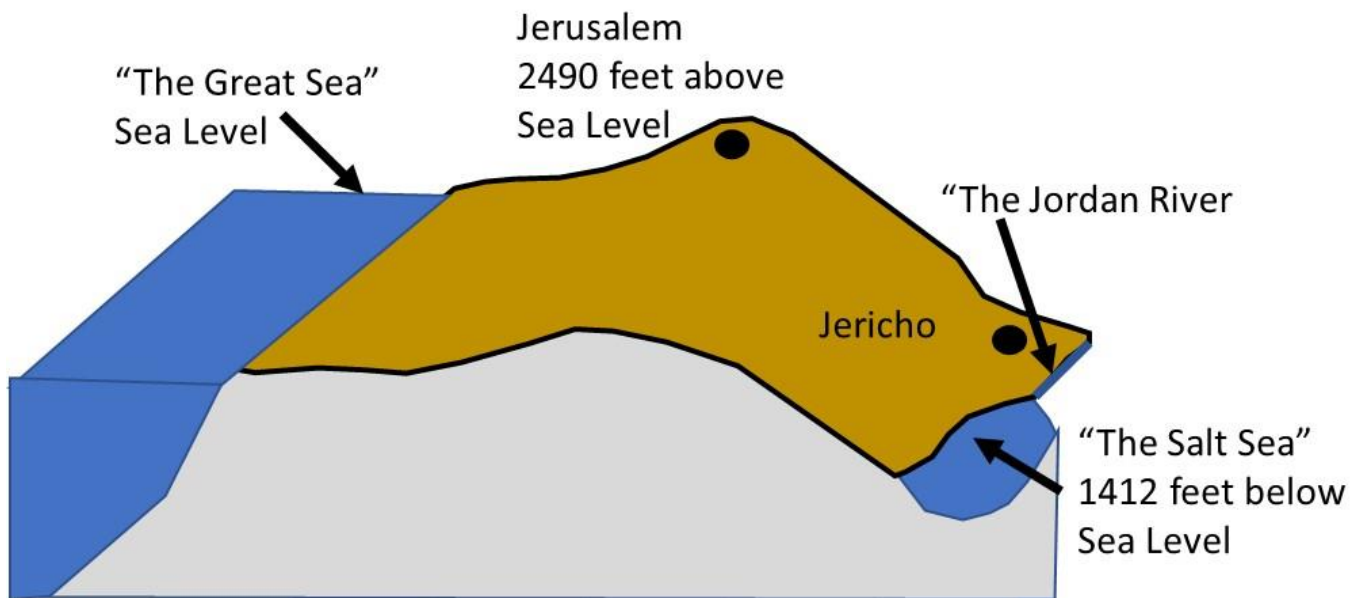


## Judges Chapter 1 Part 2

Back to Joshua 1:1

**Joshua 1:1 “...Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?”**

**Go up.** Often used in connection with attacking. It is also indicative that they are going uphill. For instance, Jerusalem is on a mountain. So, often the Jews “went up” to Jerusalem. Later Judah will “go down” to fight the Philistines on the coast.



Elevation of Jerusalem

**First.** This is the beginning of the mopping-up operation. Under Joshua, the Israelites conquered the land. God gave them the title deed. Now comes the hard part of individual tribes taking control and occupying the areas for which God gave them their title deeds. This could also be translated “at the beginning” or “at the commencement” as in the Young’s Literal Translation. (on the next page). If all the tribes had

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**Judges 1:1-12**

started moving at once, in different directions, chaos would have ensued. So, there had to be an order of their moving out.

**Against the Canaanites.** It is interesting to note that in the English, “against” is used twice in this sentence. But, they are different words. This first one is literally “to” or “toward.” They will be advancing toward the Canaanites in order to fulfill God’s command to destroy them.

**To fight against them.** The word for fight is interesting. The root relates to eating bread or coming together to eat bread. Caleb uses it in Numbers 14:9 “...they (the indigenous people of the land) will be our bread...” Is it possible they are using Caleb’s terminology? The second use of “against” here is “with.” To fight with. Translating it “against” is OK. It just obscures the fact that there are two different words with different thrusts of meaning. In the first one, the Israelites are advancing toward the Canaanites. In the second one, the Israelites are engaging with the enemy in battle.

The Young’s Literal Translation brings out some of this nuance:

**Judges 1:1 (Young’s Literal Translation) And it cometh to pass, after the death of Joshua, that the sons of Israel ask at Jehovah, saying, ‘Who doth go up for us unto the Canaanite, at the commencement, to fight against it?’**

Now on to the next verse.

**Judges 1:2 (NASB) The LORD said, “Judah shall go up; behold, I have given the land into his hand.”**

**The Lord said.** The Lord (Yahweh) said. In this context, He responded. God answers prayer. The text does not indicate how He responded. Some

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suggest that it was by means of the Urim and Thummim (Exodus 28:30; Numbers 27:21). The means of delivering the message is not the point here. The point is the content of the message. In the next chapter, the pre-existent Christ in the form of the Angel of the Lord will address the Israelite leaders directly.

**Go up.** This word has many nuances. It is often used later in the Old Testament and even in the New Testament in the Greek of going up to Jerusalem. This city was on a mountain and was higher than the surrounding land. Of course, this would also have a spiritual connotation once the temple is built. There is today the ‘Aliyah, going up, as a term for Jews immigrating to Israel to live. Here is a connection between ancient history and current history. Israel will continue to “go up” to Jerusalem even into the Millennium when Jesus Christ reigns from Jerusalem. Here, the Lord is using their terminology, “go up.”

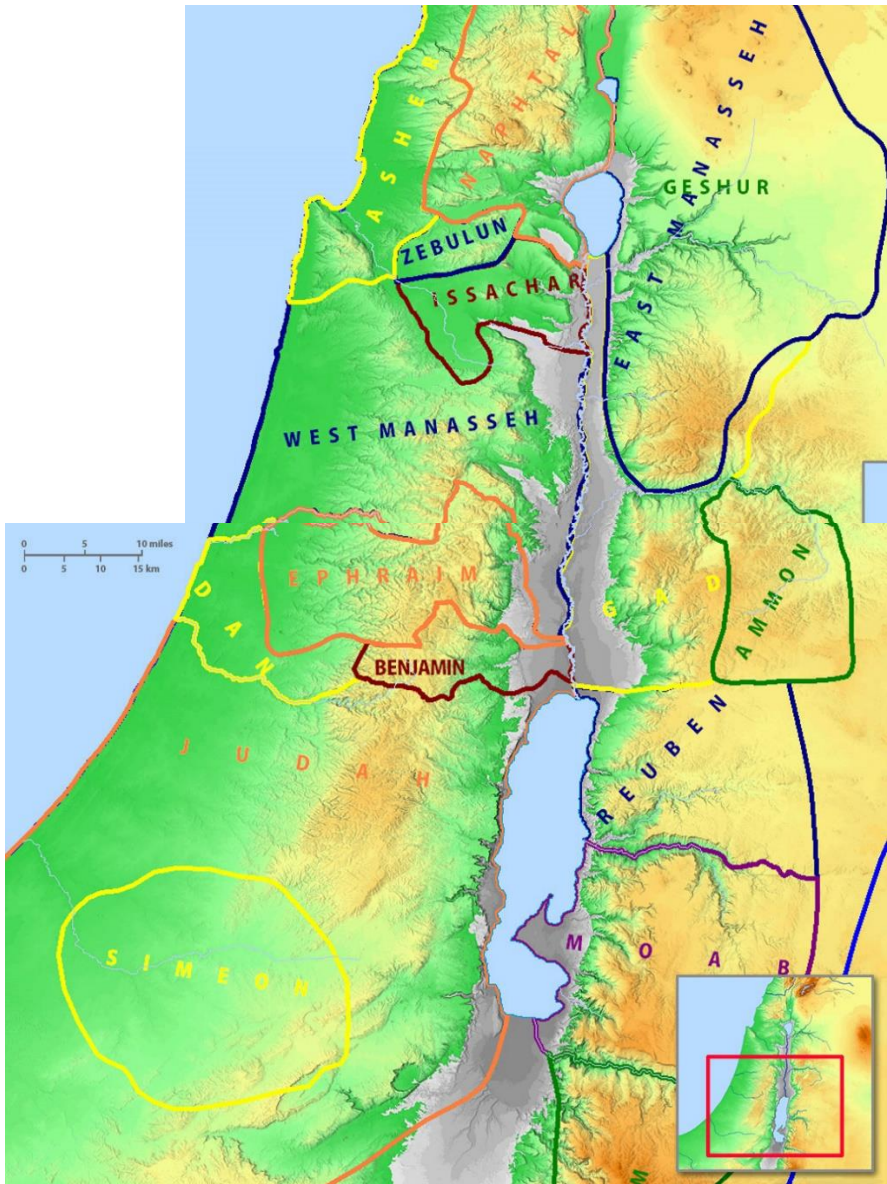
**Behold.** This is a demonstrative pronoun in the Hebrew. It serves to emphasize what God is saying. It can mean, Look! Here! Pay Attention!

**Given.** The first use of the Hebrew word “natan” in the Book of Judges. To give. God gives grace. This is the title deed to the land. Judah still needs to defeat the enemy and take control. But as always, defeating the enemy is based upon faith dependence on God. The repeated use of “natan” will give this word emphasis and importance in the book of Judges.

**Judges 1:3 Then Judah said to Simeon his brother, “Come up with me into the territory allotted me, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I in turn will go with you into the territory allotted you.” So Simeon went with him.**

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**The territory allotted me.** Again, there is a link to the book of Joshua. In Joshua 13-21, God allotted land to the various tribes. Gad, Reuben and half tribe of Manasseh already had their land east of the River Jordan (Numbers chapter 32/Joshua chapter 13). The other tribes had an allotment of land outlined in Numbers chapter 34. Judah's allotment was identified in Joshua chapter 15. Below is a map outlining the tribal territories.

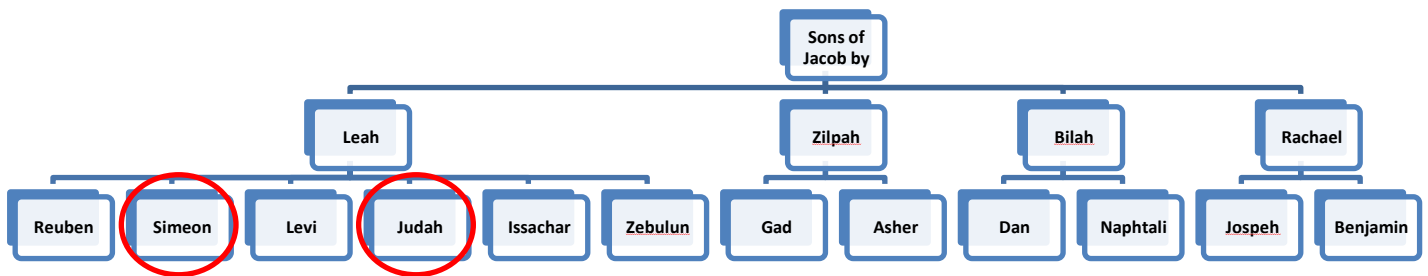


Tribal Territorial Allotment (from [Biblos.com/FreeBibleImages.org](http://Biblos.com/FreeBibleImages.org))

## Judges Chapter 1 Part 2 Judges 1:1-12

An obvious, logical question is why did Judah ask Simeon to help him? There are at least two good reasons:

1. Judah and Simeon are full brothers. Jacob had two wives and each wife had a maid she “gave” to Jacob. Leah had several sons by Jacob. See the following chart. Based upon reading about Saudi culture, in particular, the Saudi kings, brothers of the same mother share a stronger bond than brothers of different mothers. Full brothers are closer. If you are interested in this subject, look up The Sudairi Seven of the Saudi Royal family. Now, this can’t be the only reason since there were other full brothers of Judah.



2. Simeon’s land is contiguous to that of Judah. Actually, it is surrounded by Judah’s land. So if they travel together towards Simeon’s territory, they will fight together first for Judah, then for Simeon. This makes sense.
3. From a purely human viewpoint, there is strength in numbers. Judah’s successes in battle were better than the other brothers successes.

**Judges 1:4 Judah went up, and the Lord gave the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their**

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**hands, and they defeated ten thousand men at Bezek.**

**Judah went up.** It is Judah's fight, but as noted in the previous verse, Simeon is with him.

**The Lord gave.** Here is the second use of the Hebrew word "natan" to give. Trust the Lord God. Then He acts and does the work. Remember, we are in a daily battle against the flesh, the kosmos and the Devil, But that fight is in our mind. Jesus did the work on the cross bearing our sins for our salvation which is by faith. The Holy Spirit does work through us by faith.

**Into their hands.** Note the plural "their." This takes cognizance of Simeon fighting alongside Judah. So far, so good. We came; we fought; we won. Kind of like the Latin "veni, vidi, vici." I came, I saw, I conquered.

**Bezek.** The exact location is not certain. Different commentators locate this differently. It could have been north of their territory. If that is the case, they may have had to fight through Bezek to get to their territory.

**Perizzites.** Thomas Constable says: The Perizzites are believed to have been an aboriginal people of a different race from the Canaanites, who settled in Canaan before Abraham arrived there (cf. Gen. 13:7). Other commentators are not so certain. They show up in a couple of places in the Old Testament (Genesis 13:7, 34:30; Judges 1:4,5; Judges 17:15-18; 1 Kings 9:20; 2 Chronicles 8:7. Based upon their name, they may have lived in unwalled villages (per Unger).

To emphasize the context, look at

**Deuteronomy 20:16 Only in the cities of these peoples that the Lord your God is giving you**

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**as an inheritance, you shall not leave alive anything that breathes.**

**Deuteronomy 20:17 But you shall utterly destroy them, the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite and the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, as the Lord your God has commanded you,**

Back to Judges 1:4.

**Defeated.** The Hebrew word can mean anything from attack to wound to defeat to kill. In this context, and keeping in mind the instructions to kill all Canaanites and Perizzites, this means killed in combat. Saying defeated here is a euphemism. Judah took no captives, except one, which we will see was a mistake.

**10,000.** According to Thomas Constable, “The word translated "thousand" (Heb. eleph) can also mean "military unit." In [Judges] 20:10, it refers to a unit of "10 men." Consequently, its meaning here may be "10 military units" rather than "10 thousand" soldiers.” Without additional clarifying information, I will go with a literal 10,000.

**Men.** Typically, in the Old Testament, soldiers were men, not women. There are physiological differences that would make it difficult for women to fight. Again, following the instructions from God and in this context, it is logical to assume there were women and children killed as well.

**Judges 1:5 They found Adoni-bezek in Bezek and fought against him, and they defeated the Canaanites and the Perizzites.**

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**Adoni-bezek.** Bezek is the city or village. Adoni in Hebrew means Lord. In this context, it is probably a title like Mayor or King of Bezek (per Dean).

**Judges 1:6 But Adoni-bezek fled; and they pursued him and caught him and cut off his thumbs and big toes.**

Where did they get the idea of cutting off his thumbs and toes? This is not Mosaic Law. This is Canaanite procedure. Uh Oh! Besides being cruel punishment (in Western thought), it maims the person such that a man cannot hold a sword or walk upright. In other words, it makes a man unfit to engage in combat. As we will see in the next verse, this is what Adoni-bezek did to other kings that he conquered.

In addition, this was not authorized by God. He said they must die. Remember that line from the James Bond movie, Gold Finger? James Bond asks, “Do you expect me to talk?” Goldfinger responds, “No mister Bond, I expect you to die.” God told the Israelites to kill the Canaanites and Perizzites. They were expected to die. When they didn’t, that became a “snare” for the Israelites. Almost immediately they start picking up bad spiritual habits from the indigenous people.

**Judges 1:7 Adoni-bezek said, “Seventy kings with their thumbs and their big toes cut off used to gather up scraps under my table; as I have done, so God has repaid me.” So they brought him to Jerusalem and he died there.**

Adoni-bezek explains this is what he did to other kings. Interesting number 70. In the story of Gideon, his son killed 70 brothers.

So they brought him to Jerusalem. Why? He was now a prisoner of war who they maimed and have to take care of. They go to Jerusalem to wage



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war against it. But they are taking their first mistake with them. They were supposed to kill Adoni-bezek. Then they go to Jerusalem and make another mistake that is not specifically called out.

But we will see that come back to bite them in Judges 1:21 when the tribe of Benjamin cannot defeat the Jebusites at Jerusalem. Wait you say! Look at the next verse.

**Judges 1:8 Then the sons of Judah fought against Jerusalem and captured it and struck it with the edge of the sword and set the city on fire.**

If the tribe of Judah reinforced with the tribe of Simeon “struck Jerusalem with the edge of the sword and set the city on fire,” how can the Jebusites be living there still in Judges 1:21? Because, they didn’t occupy the site. They set it on fire and then left. The context of verse 21 would suggest the Jebusites came back and reinforced Jerusalem. Hence, the first mistake, Adoni-bezek dies at Jerusalem where they don’t wipe out the Jebusites. It takes David a couple of hundred years later to conquer and occupy Jerusalem.

Another question to consider: “Jebus,” the name of Jerusalem prior to David conquering it later is actually in the territorial allotment of Benjamin, Joshua 18:28. So why did Judah even attack Jerusalem?

First, Judah’s territory abutted Benjamin’s territory at Jerusalem. Second, Jerusalem is on a mountain. Actually, the area of Jerusalem is on seven hills. “Jerusalem's seven hills are Mount Scopus, Mount Olivet (Mount of Olives) and the Mount of Corruption (all three are peaks in a mountain ridge that lies east of the old city), Mount Ophel, the original Mount Zion, the New Mount Zion and the hill on which the Antonia Fortress was built.” (<https://www.biblestudy.org/maps/map-of-jerusalem-and-its->

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[seven-hills.html](#)). Jerusalem is a strategic high place. In order to control the land south of Jerusalem, the enemy must be cleared from the mountain(s) north of it.

**Judges 1:9 Afterward the sons of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites living in the hill country and in the Negev and in the lowland.**

**Afterward.** Time marker showing progression of the action.

**Sons of Judah.** Remember that Simeon is with Judah, but Judah is calling the shots.

**Went down.** Here we have Judah going from the “hills” of Jerusalem toward the hill country and the Negev which were at lower altitudes.

**To fight.** The same root as found in verse 1. Here to fight with.

**Against.** This is the preposition “with.”

**Canaanites.** One of the indigenous people of the land.

**Living.** This is a word for living, residing, dwelling. It or a form of it from the same root is used 27 times in this chapter alone. It is the most repeated word in this chapter. So, this is important. The Israelites are supposed to replace the indigenous people and take up residence in their place.

The promise was to dwell in the land by killing the indigenous people and living in the land in their place.

Today, as Christians, we have physical blessings. Our emphasis should be on spiritual blessings that might also include physical blessings. God will provide for our needs. The emphasis in our lives is to dwell in the power of the Holy Spirit as preparation for an eternity with God. Are you

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dwelling in the power of the Holy Spirit or have the indigenous unbelievers and out of fellowship believers corrupted your thinking?

**Romans 12:1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.**

**Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.**

**2 Corinthians 10:5 "...and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."**

**In the hill country And in the Negev.** Judah went from mountains or hills to the hill country to desert. Within this area is Caleb's allotment.

The following two verses are setting up the story for Caleb and Othniel.

**Judges 1:10 So Judah went against the Canaanites who lived in Hebron (now the name of Hebron formerly was Kiriath-arba); and they struck Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmi.**

**Went against.** A word for go or walk. Against is toward. The moved toward the target.

**Lived.** Again, it is the Canaanite who lived or dwelt in the land. The Israelites are to kill the Canaanite and dwell in the land.

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**They struck.** Notice that in much of this narrative, the Israelites moved or traveled toward the enemy with one verb and then a second verb indicates what they did to the enemy. The Hebrew verb does mean to strike. In the context, the conclusion is that they struck them dead, they killed them.

**Judges 1:11 Then from there he went against the inhabitants of Debir (now the name of Debir formerly was Kiriath-sepher).**

**Went against.** Again, they moved toward the objective.

**Inhabitants.** The noun form of the word for live or dwell. The “dwellers.”

**Judges 1:12 And Caleb said, “The one who attacks Kiriath-sepher and captures it, I will even give him my daughter Achsah for a wife.”**

Who was Caleb?

Why bring up Caleb here? What connects him to this scene during Judah’s occupation effort of the land? Also, observe that Judges 1:12-15 is a duplicate of Joshua 15:16-19. As such, this passage is an emphasis. Let’s take some points on Caleb to make it a little easier to comprehend who he was and his greatness as a spiritual warrior.

***Who Was Caleb?***

1. Caleb is first mentioned in the Bible in Numbers 13 as a member of the reconnaissance team sent into Canaan to spy out the land.
2. Caleb was 40 years old when he became a member of the reconnaissance team (Joshua 14:7).

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3. Caleb was a member of the tribe of Judah per Numbers 13:6, **“from the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh;”** However, we will see later that he may have been a convert from the Edomite tribe of Kenaz.
4. Caleb, the name, is from the same root as “dog,” keleb. He is not Dog the Bounty Hunter. He is Dog, the Faith Warrior.
5. Caleb as a member of the reconnaissance team, provided a positive report. **“We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will surely overcome it.”** (Numbers 13:30). Other than Joshua, the other 10 members of the team gave a negative report.
6. After an outcry by the people against going into the land from a human viewpoint, Joshua and Caleb reiterated the positive report based upon divine viewpoint:

**Numbers 14:6 Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes;**

**Numbers 14:7 and they spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, “The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land.**

**Numbers 14:8 If the Lord is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it [natan] to us—a land which flows with milk and honey.**

**Numbers 14:9 Only do not rebel against the Lord; and do not fear the people of the land,**

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**for they will be our prey [bread or food]. Their protection has been removed from them, and the Lord is with us; do not fear them.”**

7. God gave a special land reward to Caleb because of his faith.

**Numbers 14:24 But My servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it.**

This is reiterated in Deuteronomy:

**Deuteronomy 1:34 “Then the Lord heard the sound of your words, and He was angry and took an oath, saying,**

**Deuteronomy 1:35 ‘Not one of these men, this evil generation, shall see the good land which I swore to give your fathers,**

**Deuteronomy 1:36 except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him and to his sons I will give the land on which he has set foot, because he has followed the Lord fully.**’

Rather than put the entire 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of Joshua here, please turn with me to Joshua 14. I want you to understand the faith greatness of Caleb. It is kind of a mystery to me why his name is not mentioned in Hebrews chapter 11. Perhaps it is because it was obvious. There is never a bad report about Caleb. He made it look easy. All the other faith heroes had

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personal issues that they had to deal with. Caleb was single-mindedly focused on faith. Today, believers are individually rewarded for faith dependence on the Holy Spirit. We may be blessed in time. More importantly, we will be rewarded in eternity for relying on the Holy Spirit and following God the Father's plan.

8. Caleb was apparently not originally from the sons of Israel but was an Edomite (descendant from Esau, the twin brother of Jacob). Here is Thomas Constable's report: "Caleb was a Kenizzite (Num. 32:12; Josh. 14:6), the Kenizzites being descended from the Edomites (Gen. 36:11, 15, 42; 1 Chron. 1:36, 53)."
9. Surprisingly, Caleb is not in the so called "hall of fame for faith heroes" in Hebrews chapter 11. Why? I can only suggest a response to this question. Look at all the people mentioned in that chapter. What bothered me as I read that chapter over and over is that none of the people named there were perfect. They all have documented sins. How can they be faith heroes with so many documented sins? Then look at Caleb. He never waivered in his faith. Do you think you are like Caleb or more like Gideon or even Jephthah? You see? If I am like Gideon, an ordinary person, or even a Jephthah, a rogue, then I can still become a "faith hero" if I just stick with the Bible and walking in the power of the Holy Spirit. I could never be, have never been as single-minded as Caleb appears to be in the Bible.