

Joshua 15:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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. Achsah's request demonstrates theological insight wrapped in practical need. Her opening, "Give me a blessing" (tenah li berachah, (תְּנַהֵּלִי בָּרָכָה), frames the petition spiritually—she seeks not mere property but berachah, divine blessing channeled through her father. This language elevates physical land to covenant promise level, recognizing earthly gifts as expressions of divine favor.

Her logic is compelling: "for thou hast given me a south land" (eretz ha-negev, אֶרֶץ הַנֶּגֶב). The Negev was semi-arid, receiving 8-12 inches annual rainfall—adequate for grazing and dry farming but challenging without irrigation. Achsah essentially argues, "You've given good land, but it's incomplete without water to make it fully productive." She requests "springs of water" (gullot mayim, גַּלְתָּה מַיִם), permanent water sources essential for sustained habitation and agriculture.

Caleb's generous response—"the upper springs and the nether springs" (both upland and lowland water sources)—exceeds the request, providing comprehensive water access. This generosity mirrors our Heavenly Father who "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20). The springs made the Negev land productive, illustrating how God's provision often comes in layers—first the land, then the means to make it fruitful.

Historical Context

Water scarcity defined life in the Negev region. Annual rainfall averages 8-12 inches in northern Negev, decreasing southward. Ancient settlements clustered around springs, wells, and wadis that captured seasonal runoff. Archaeological surveys reveal sophisticated water management systems including cisterns, channels, and terracing to maximize agricultural potential. The "upper" and "lower" springs likely refer to elevational differences—upland springs fed by mountain runoff and lowland springs from aquifers. Controlling multiple water sources provided security against drought and supported diverse agriculture (orchards requiring perennial water, grains using seasonal rainfall). Modern identification places these springs near Debir in the Hebron hills. Achsah's acquisition of prime water rights made her and Othniel's inheritance exceptionally valuable, supporting not just minimal survival but prosperity.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does Achsah's bold request for 'springs' after receiving 'land' challenge you to ask God not just for basic provision but for resources to make that provision fully fruitful?
2. What spiritual 'springs'—ongoing sources of renewal, wisdom, strength—do you need to request to make your God-given callings and responsibilities fully productive?
3. How does Caleb's generous response (giving both upper and lower springs) illustrate God's character as one who delights to exceed our requests when we ask in faith?

Interlinear Text

וְתִּשְׁמַר	לֵבִי	תַּתְּנוּ	בָּרוּךְ הַ	כִּי	פֶּתַח	תְּבִ	אֶרְצִי	אֶרְצִי	פֶּתַח	תְּבִ	אֶרְצִי
Who answered	And he gave		me a blessing		land		me a south				
H559	H5414	H0	H1293	H3588	H776	H5045					
וְתִּשְׁמַר	לֵבִי	תַּתְּנוּ	בָּרוּךְ הַ	כִּי	פֶּתַח	תְּבִ	אֶרְצִי	אֶרְצִי	פֶּתַח	תְּבִ	אֶרְצִי
And he gave	And he gave		me also springs		of water		And he gave				
H5414	H5414	H0	H1543	H4325	H5414	H0					
וְתִּשְׁמַר	לֵבִי	תַּתְּנוּ	בָּרוּךְ הַ	כִּי	פֶּתַח	תְּבִ	אֶרְצִי	אֶרְצִי	פֶּתַח	תְּבִ	אֶרְצִי
me also springs	her the upper		me also springs		and the nether						
H853	H1543	H5942	H853	H1543	H8482						

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 9:5 (Parallel theme): Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness.

Genesis 33:11 (Sin): Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. And he urged him, and he took it.

Deuteronomy 33:7 (Sin): And this is the blessing of Judah: and he said, Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people: let his hands be sufficient for him; and be thou an help to him from his enemies.

1 Samuel 25:27 (Sin): And now this blessing which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord.