

Joshua 15:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Ziph, and Telem, and Bealoth,

Analysis

Ziph, and Telem, and Bealoth—**Ziph** (צִיֵּף) appears elsewhere as a city in Judah's hill country (v. 55) where David hid from Saul (1 Samuel 23:14-15; 26:2); this southern Ziph may be a different location with the same name. **Telem** (טֵלֶם, "oppression" or "lamb") was later mentioned as one of Saul's clan cities (1 Samuel 15:4; 27:8). **Bealoth** (בְּעִלּוֹת, "mistresses" or "ladies," plural of baalah) may indicate a former Canaanite cult site dedicated to female deities, now cleansed and repurposed for Israelite settlement.

The transformation implied by including Bealoth demonstrates redemptive conquest—places previously devoted to pagan worship became part of the holy inheritance. God didn't merely give Israel uninhabited wilderness but reclaimed enemy territory, cleansing it from idolatry and dedicating it to covenant purposes. This foreshadows the gospel pattern where Christ takes lives enslaved to sin and transforms them into temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

Historical Context

Ziph's identification remains disputed; the hill country Ziph is identified with Tell Zif, 4 miles southeast of Hebron. The southern Ziph may be a separate settlement. Place name duplication was common in ancient Israel, requiring contextual clues for identification. Telem's association with Saul (of the tribe of Benjamin, not Judah) shows that some cities' tribal affiliations shifted or included mixed populations.

Bealoth's name suggests Canaanite origins, possibly a cult site for Baalat ("lady" or "mistress," female form of Baal). The goddess Asherah or Anat might have been worshiped there. Israel's transformation of such sites involved destroying high places, Asherah poles, and idols (Deuteronomy 12:2-3), then dedicating the location to Yahweh. This redemptive pattern appears throughout conquest accounts—taking what was defiled and making it holy.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What 'Bealoth' locations in your life—places, relationships, or practices formerly devoted to sin—has God redeemed and transformed for His purposes?
2. How does the redemptive conquest of Canaanite cult sites illustrate the gospel's power to transform what was enslaved to darkness into instruments of righteousness (Romans 6:13)?
3. What spiritual disciplines help ensure that redeemed areas of your life remain consecrated to God rather than reverting to former patterns?

Interlinear Text

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|-------------|------------------|--------------------|
| יִזְחָל | וְטֵלִם | וּבְעֻלֹת: |
| Ziph | and Telem | and Bealoth |
| H2128 | H2928 | H1175 |

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 23:14 (Parallel theme): And David abode in the wilderness in strong holds, and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand.

1 Samuel 23:19 (Parallel theme): Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us in strong holds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of Jeshimon?

1 Samuel 23:24 (Parallel theme): And they arose, and went to Ziph before Saul: but David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon.

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