

Judges 1:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And she said unto him, Give me a blessing: for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the nether springs.

Analysis

And she said unto him, Give me a blessing: for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the nether springs.

Achsah's request begins with "Give me a blessing" (ten-li berachah, תֵּן־לִי בִרְכָּה), using covenantal language of blessing that pervades Scripture. The Hebrew berachah (בִּרְכָּה) denotes more than well-wishes—it signifies tangible provision, prosperity, and divine favor. Achsah wasn't simply asking for good feelings but for concrete resources ensuring her household's flourishing. Her reasoning is logical: "thou hast given me a south land" (erets negev, אֶרֶץ נֶגֶב)—arid territory requiring water for productivity. The conjunction "therefore" is implicit—since you've given dry land, provide water to make it fruitful.

Caleb's response demonstrates covenant faithfulness and paternal generosity. He didn't merely grant her request minimally but exceeded it—"the upper springs and the nether springs" (gulloth illiyoth ve'et gulloth tachtioth, גִּלְלוֹת מַעְלִיּוֹת וְאֵת גִּלְלוֹת תַּחְתִּיּוֹת). The doubling emphasizes abundance—multiple water sources ensuring reliable supply regardless of seasonal fluctuations. This pictures how God responds to His children's prayers—"exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20). God doesn't grudgingly meet minimum needs but delights in generous provision (Matthew 7:11, Romans 8:32).

Water symbolism saturates Scripture. Physical water sustains bodily life; spiritual water (God's Spirit and Word) sustains spiritual life (John 4:10-14, 7:37-39, Ephesians 5:26). Israel's desert inheritance required divine provision of water (Exodus 17:1-7, Numbers 20:1-11). Similarly, the Christian life in a spiritually dry world requires continuous access to living water—Christ Himself and the Spirit He provides. Achsah's securing of springs pictures believers' need to remain connected to spiritual water sources through Scripture, prayer, and Spirit-filled community, without which our lives become barren despite other blessings.

Historical Context

The identification of these specific springs remains uncertain, though traditionally associated with areas near Debir. The Negev's hydrology depended on springs, wells, and seasonal wadis (dry riverbeds that flow during rare rains). Permanent springs were rare and valuable, often giving names to locations (e.g., En-gedi, "spring of the kid"; En-shemesh, "spring of the sun"). Control of water sources meant control of surrounding territory, making springs strategically and economically critical.

The distinction between "upper" and "lower" springs likely refers to elevation—higher springs feeding lower ones, or springs at different elevations on a hillside providing irrigation for terraced agriculture. This arrangement maximized agricultural productivity, with upper springs watering higher fields while lower springs served lower elevations. Terraced agriculture in the Judean highlands and Negev required sophisticated water management, with springs, cisterns, and channels directing water to maximize cultivation.

Caleb's generosity toward his daughter reflects covenant values of family responsibility and intergenerational blessing. While Achsah's brothers would inherit the majority of Caleb's estate (Numbers 27:8), providing well for a daughter through marriage portion (mohar) and additional grants ensured her security. This practice continues in Jewish marriage customs (ketubah, marriage contract) and appears in New Testament exhortations for parents to provide for children (2 Corinthians 12:14). Achsah's story shows that biblical inheritance

practices, while patrilineal, included provisions protecting women's welfare—fathers remained responsible for daughters' security even after marriage.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does Achsah's request for water to make her inheritance fruitful parallel the Christian's need for the Holy Spirit to make spiritual gifts and opportunities productive?
2. What 'south lands' (challenging circumstances) has God given you that require petitioning Him for 'springs' (resources and grace) to make them fruitful?
3. In what ways does Caleb's generous response exceed Achsah's request, and how does this reflect God's abundant provision for His children?

Interlinear Text

וַתֹּאמֶר	לֹא	הָבָה	לִי	בְרָכָה	כִּי	אֶרֶץ	הַנֶּגֶב
And she said	H0	unto him Give	H0	me a blessing	H3588	land	me a south
H559		H3051		H1293		H776	H5045
וַתֵּן	וַתֵּן	לִי	גַלְתִּי	מַיִם			
for thou hast given	for thou hast given	H0	me also springs	of water			
H5414	H5414		H1543	H4325			
וַתֵּן	לָהּ	כָּל־בָּ	אֵת	גַּלְתִּי	עַל־יָתֶר		
for thou hast given	H0	And Caleb	H853	me also springs	her the upper		
H5414		H3612		H1543	H5942		
וְאֵת	גַּלְתִּי	תַּחְתִּית:					
H853	me also springs	and the nether					
	H1543	H8482					

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