

Let's open our Bibles tonight to Joshua 16.

The book of Joshua (and we're getting closer, in fact tonight we're picking up the speed because it's a lot of land masses, and we want to get the big picture; we will slow down over the next five or six weeks as we head towards the end of the book) is really about the taking of the land, isn't it? The first five chapters got them there. Now they are ready to enter the land. The first five chapters they are ready to conquer the land, which the LORD records over about seven chapters, from chapters 6 through 12. And then there is this long distribution of the land as well as the personal responsibilities, and the last couple of chapters are Joshua's final words to the tribes before he's to die.

Chapters 6 through 12, which we finished a couple of weeks ago, cover basically the seven and a half years of warfare that the children of Israel engaged in once they went into the Land of Promise. It was filled with a bunch of heathen nations; they are collectively called the Canaanites, but they are listed with a bunch of "ite" names - the Perizzites, the termites, all those kind of "ites." (Laughing) And it really was the LORD's judgment upon these people who lived horrendous lives that He would use the children of Israel not only in promising this Land of Promise, but they would be used as kind of the hammer of judgment upon the tribes that were living there. So when Moses went to be with the LORD, and God handed the job to Joshua, for the first seven and a half years of the twenty-five years of this book (it covers it chronologically), Joshua led a coalition of people, collectively as a nation, that fought against the major powers in the land. And it was done over three different campaigns: one that went right up the middle of the country, since they came in at Jericho (if you look at your map, you'll see that as well); and then one that took care of the southern allegiances of kings that came against them; and then from the north as well. So over a seven-and-a-half-year period, thirty-one kings and their city states (you can read about them in chapter 12) were degraded enough to the point where Joshua, who's now older (93 years old), just said he couldn't do it anymore. And so the LORD decided this was a good time to divide up the land and to let every individual tribe now go into the place that God would put them and then deal with the resistance in that part of their land. And it really equates, on a spiritual note, to we come together and we're taught and we

learn, but we're supposed to go out and walk with God. Right? Every day. And it is that applying of what we've learned together that the Lord then helps us to grow by.

But by the time the seven and a half years were done, the strong resistance, the opposition in the land, was completely gone, and the children of Israel were really just asked to take their area. "Take the land. Where you put your foot, that's what I will give you. Possess your possessions." Unfortunately, the lesson of the book, in many ways, is they didn't do that. By the time we get to the book of Judges, which starts immediately after the book of Joshua (that generation dies), we will already see that these pockets of resistance which were left by the children of Israel (things that they didn't deal with) grew very large, and it overcame them more often than not. And so it's kind of like that for us, too. If the enemy is allowed to stay in the land, he's going to become our downfall. If you leave things in your life (as a Christian) where the enemy gets a foothold or a base of operations, a disaster will follow.

Well, last week we looked at chapters 13-15, and we mentioned to you that in the midst of all of this division of land God builds it around two men, Joshua and Caleb - both of them from the old guard, both of them (in the Bible) faithful when no one else was, seeing the LORD when no one else saw Him, hanging on to God's promises. And it is no coincidence, I think, that the LORD sets the distribution of the land and the assignments to these individuals around the lives of two guys who were the epitome of faithful service all of their lives. Caleb is 85. And Joshua is 93 - he'll die at 110, so he's really taken out of service seventeen years before he dies.

Well last week, chapter 13, we looked at the division of the land on the east side of the Jordan. In your paper it's the one to the right, on the other side of the Jordan where Gad, Reuben and half of the tribe of Manasseh settled. And we talked a lot about - was that the right place for them to go, was that something that the LORD wanted? Did He approve of it even though He consented to it? And we talked about that a lot, about God's best and then settling for less than His best. In chapter 14, we looked at Caleb who was so excited to get Hebron, a place that God had promised him through Moses forty-five years earlier when he had come back and given a good report. And now he had been waiting, and he and his boys (at 85) are going to go get the giants out of Hebron. And then in chapter 15 we looked at the inheritance God gave to Judah.

So tonight we will finish the distribution of the land before next week slowing down and looking at a lot of things that are important to us.

Father, as we study tonight, our prayer is that Your Word would teach us, that it would be applied to us in such a way that we would leave this place unwilling to settle for less when it came to our walks with You, really wanting to possess the possessions of our faith and of Your promises - that we could walk in them; that we could enjoy them, all that You have provided; that the enemy wouldn't get a foothold into our life at all; that You would keep us and keep us close; and that the lessons, even from these chapters, would seem in many ways just to have an abundance of lists of names - would speak to our hearts, and we would leave this place very encouraged to serve You in these last days. In Jesus' name, amen.

Now, if you've read through (and I hope that, before you come to church, you read through them; if you have time, you certainly should), there're a lot of names in these chapters. There are border towns, there are towns that no longer exist. We know their general proximity. There are property lines drawn that mean nothing to us. And you might have read it and said to yourself, "What are we gonna do with this? Where are we gonna go with this?" Now, on the map, we've listed for you some prominent cities that are still occupied in Israel today. They are the larger cities, certainly, in the areas of the tribes as far as Israel is concerned. But there're a lot of these names, and we're not going to be reading near as many verses as we would normally read because we're going to skip over the names and kind of get the bigger picture. But if you read them, you might say, "Well, that doesn't mean anything to me." And I think it kind of - I don't know if you've bought a house, but you get a real estate deed when you buy a house, and it explains how big your property is and where the line is. And if you're a first-time homeowner, I remember the first time we bought a house, I read that whole thing. It's boring! But it said to me this, "This is yours." I own stuff. I'm payin' for it till Jesus comes, but I own something. (Laughing) Right? And I was excited about it, and I think, in that kind of way, if you keep that in mind that for the Jews with Joshua (the 3½ million or so folks), this is the accumulation of forty-seven and a half years of anticipation - forty years of wandering, seven and a half years of fighting. And today is payday. The wandering stops, the camping stops, the moving stops. I am finally able to settle down into the place that God, 430 years earlier, promised to my great-great-great grandfather, Abraham. That's when He said we were going to have this land. And then Isaac told us about it, and then Jacob told us about it, and it is literally being fulfilled. And the details, I think, are extensive. They're

extensive. Towns and clans and families. And it may very well seem irrelevant in terms of, "Gosh, I don't even know where these towns are, let alone pronouncing them."

But on the other hand I hope that it convinces you that God is very much into details - down to individual names and people and places. He likes to be involved. He really does like to be involved in your life. I always think in terms of, when I read these chapters with a lot of names in them, Psalm 138:8 that says, "The LORD will perfect that which concerns me," and that's very personal. It's written in the first person, so to speak. God will complete in your life what concerns you. As busy as all of these things are, as complicated as it seems to be when you read them, here's the good news - God is interested in every detail of your life, and what's important to you about your life is important to Him. He's the One who will perfect that which concerns you. So when you go to pray about things, if you ever think, "Gosh, I wonder if the Lord cares about this," oh, He does. He wants to be a part of all of it. David was so moved by that whole concept of God's care that he wrote in Psalm 8:3-4, "When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him?" When I look at how big the universe is, and yet I'm this little dot, and yet God is interested in me, and He's interested in you, "and the son of man that You would visit him." I mean, think about it. It's a pretty good perspective. You live in this enormous universe, and you're a little speck on this floating sphere that is 8,000 miles in diameter, traveling 45,000 mph through the sky, and spinning around at 1,000 mph around the sun, and God will perfect that which concerns you. I mean, it goes from the big to the small, doesn't it, and from the great of our God to the amazing things. We go around a sun that's 93 million miles away, that is 860,000 miles in diameter - compared to the earth. Amazing! But it gives sense to when you get to Psalm 139:17, and you say, "How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand." So, when you get to these very intricate chapters, and you say, "That doesn't matter to me," it should. Because there's a lot that screams out to you and me - God's interested in all of it. Right? Jeremiah 29:11 says, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." So certainly these chapters, I think, would convince us that, as the Lord records this division, He does so with an intimacy and with a detail-oriented reporting that would just fascinate me and you. God is interested, and He wants you to know that He knows.

So we're going to read through some of these portions. Like I said, some of the city names are very foreign to us. We don't have them on a map. They are extinct as far as we know. Sometimes their precise locations, other than in the land that God gave to them, is unknown. But the map should help you to get a feel for it.

Verse 1 of chapter 16 says this, "The lot fell to the children of Joseph from the Jordan, by Jericho, to the waters of Jericho on the east, to the wilderness that goes up from Jericho through the mountains to Bethel, then went out from Bethel to Luz, passed along to the border of the Archites at Ataroth." Verse 4, "So the children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance." Now, if you look at your map, there is a Jordan River right in the middle, and we talked about the Manasseh, the half-tribe on the other side - to the right of your page. But now we're speaking about the descendants of Joseph, his sons Manasseh and Ephraim, and notice they have a lot of space, don't they? They run from the Jordan River all the way over to the Mediterranean Sea, and if you cross over to where they are on the other side, they took a lot of space, didn't they? And these are the sons of Joseph, and these are the boundaries of the division of the land of Manasseh. It is the western portion of their land. It is the half-tribe. It is, today, called the West Bank. So if you go to Israel, the Manasseh area is primarily that area (and that of Ephraim) that is called today the West Bank or on the west bank, if you will, of the Jordan River.

Verse 10 tells us, "And they did not drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites to this day and have become forced laborers." One of the things, I think, that we will learn as we go - besides the fact that these guys got two huge chunks of land because they had a lot of people - is that God continues in this reporting to point out the failure on behalf of these individual tribes to fully possess the land and do what God said, which was wipe out these foreign people with their idolatry - once and for all, no mercy, no grace. They needed to be destroyed. God's judgment had fallen. And because they didn't do it, it becomes the dramatic kind of consequence in the books that follow. It is repeated in verse 63 of last week; in the last verse of chapter 15, they didn't drive out the Jebusites. It is repeated here in chapter 16:10. It is repeated again in verses 12 and 13 of the next chapter. And God will continue to point it out. Now it does seem to tell us (verse 10) that when these two tribes took their land (as God gave it to them), that they took the people but rather than overthrowing them, they forced them into labor. Or, if you will, that their reason for not obeying the LORD was financial. The motivation was gain. "Let's put them

to work. We'll have cheap labor. They are our servants. We'll generate more wealth." But in order to do that, they had to compromise God's Word, and it's always a grave mistake, I think, when you set God's Word aside because you've figured out there's something better you can do than what He says. And that's dangerous. Right? If the Lord says, "This is right," even though on paper you go, "Well, this is even more right," you're going to find out that you're going to be wrong. And the book of Judges will tell us that these little groups - and they were little at the time - will, over time, over one generation, by the time that Joshua and all of the leaders with him died (you'll read this in chapter 24), the next generation absolutely isn't walking with God at all. Strong leadership kept these guys together even in their disobedience. But beyond that, nothing was able to take place. They didn't last very long. And you should write down (if you don't at least mark down in your Bibles somewhere) next to these verses that a little compromise can overthrow you in the long run. I've had people explain to me (in counseling), and you'll say, "Man, you shouldn't have that in your life," and they'll say things like this, "Look, I've got a lot of things that I'm doing right, and the Lord has my life in almost every way. This is no big deal. I can handle it. It's a little sin. Everybody's got sin." And they want to excuse leaving the Canaanites in the land, so to speak. But compromise will always lead to failure. It's just the way it works, isn't it? And to defeat. So here's the LORD. He says, "Here's the land. Seven and a half years. It's been cleansed. You just have some resistance. Go get it!" And you get to verse 10, and you go, "Ohhhh." But they didn't do what the LORD told them to do. They didn't obey. So they were given what God had promised, but it turned against them. It didn't work out for them.

Verse 1 of chapter 17 says, "There was also a lot for the tribe of Manasseh," (so Ephraim chapter 16 and west Manasseh, and then the other half of the Manasseh story is here) "for he was the firstborn of Joseph: namely for Machir the firstborn of Manasseh, the father of Gilead, because he was a man of war; therefore he was given Gilead and Bashan. And there was a lot for the rest of the children of Manasseh according to their families," and then again there's a list that begins with the descendants of Joseph. So these folks still in the West Bank, still that division of the land - that's that really big group that you find there on your map, the off-color pink, I guess.

Verse 3 says this, "But Zelophehad the son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but only daughters. And these are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. And they came

near before Eleazar the priest," (he would also die at the end of this book) "before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the rulers, saying, 'The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brothers.' Therefore, according to the commandment of the LORD, he gave them an inheritance among their father's brothers. Ten shares fell to Manasseh, besides the land of Gilead and Bashan, which were on the other side of the Jordan, because the daughters of Manasseh" (that was them) "received an inheritance among his sons; and the rest of Manasseh's sons had the land of Gilead." And so the question became - and it's not mentioned here, but it came up, if you will - in Numbers 27 (if you were with us then) that these daughters came because the rule was always you give it to the surviving son, and their dad didn't have any boys, just girls; and so they lost all of their inheritance. And they went to Moses at the time, and they said, "Why don't we, as women, get to receive our inheritance? We don't have any brothers." And Moses said, "Well, that's an interesting question. I don't know." And he went to pray, and the LORD came back, and He said, "They're right. Give it to them." And God was good and fair. And the girls asked for it, and they got land - very unusual in the sense of succession but right in God's eyes. And so the LORD gave to these girls a portion of the land in the land of Manasseh that you see there. We don't see them by families there, but they were part of the family of Manasseh, and they wanted their portion, not just to live on their brothers' land.

Verse 12, (and again we're just skipping over borders and towns that you don't know) "Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities, but the Canaanites were determined" (so here was an enemy) "to dwell in that land. And it happened, when the children of Israel grew strong, that they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but did not utterly drive them out." So here's the same warning. Don't make peace with your flesh. "We've come a long way. We're doin' pretty good." Well, that might be so, but you just leave a little bit behind, don't you, and you can't coexist with your flesh because the flesh wants the whole land; it doesn't just want a little bit. So, having told us about them (this is the half of the group that at least stayed in the land, as opposed to the other half that wanted to go on the other side of the Jordan - that we talked about last week), we are also told (in verses 12 and 13 here) that initially they were resisted by the Canaanites who apparently were stronger than they. That doesn't make sense if the LORD is with them, but apparently they didn't look to Him as such. But when they felt like they were strong enough, rather than getting rid of them and doing what the LORD said, they also turned it into an economic kind of a windfall for

them. And so they turned it around. It wasn't obedience. It was just practical kind of decision making that didn't at all do what God asked of them.

Well then we have this very interesting five-verse story about these children of Ephraim (chapter 16) and then the children of Manasseh (chapter 17), beginning here in verse 14 which says this, "Then the children of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, 'Why have you given us only one lot and one share to inherit, since we are a great people, inasmuch as the LORD has blessed us until now?' So Joshua answered them, 'If you are a great people, then go up to the forest country and clear a place for yourself there in the land of the Perizzites and the giants, since the mountains of Ephraim are too confined for you.' But the children of Joseph said, 'The mountain country is not enough for us; and all the Canaanites who dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both those who are of Beth Shean and its towns and those who are of the Valley of Jezreel.' And Joshua spoke to the house of Joseph - to Ephraim and Manasseh - saying, 'You are a great people and have great power; you shall not have only one lot, but the mountain country shall be yours. Although it is wooded, you shall cut it down, and its farthest extent shall be yours; for you shall drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots and are strong.' " So, if you look at your map, Manasseh got a lot, didn't they, and Ephraim got a portion inside Manasseh. But here's the deal - they come to Joshua as this division is taking place, and they say to him (verse 14), "Man, the LORD has blessed us more than others. We have a lot of people." And they counted their population as a blessing from the LORD. So, all right. "We need more land. You only gave us one portion in the land itself. We need a couple of portions. We're really big now, and we're growing, and we've come a long way." On the one hand, I think that's admirable. You want people that are not satisfied with where they are; they want to press ahead. On the other hand, this is kind of a corrective thing that they hear from Joshua because what Joshua will say to them is, "You haven't bothered to take everything God's given you yet. You've got plenty of places you can go, but you're avoiding the place that the enemy has a stronghold, and that could be yours as well."

So, here's the lesson - don't settle for less than what God has given you. And it is easy, I think, on the one hand, for us to want more from the Lord, but I think sometimes the Lord would say to us, "Why do I need to give you any more when you're not using everything that I've given you so far?" You'll see people in church sometimes - they want more attention, or they want a bigger role in something or a bigger position. And I think verse 15 would have Joshua saying to us, "Why don't



you just bloom where you're planted? Be faithful with what God gives you. Make the most out of what you've been handed." Rather than, "We need more," Joshua said, "You got more!" "No. There's bad people living up there. That's unusable land." "Oh, wait. The LORD gave that to you, and He said, 'Go wipe 'em out.' So go wipe 'em out. Because the LORD has blessed you" (verse 14) "you're a big shot guy, you're tough. Go get it! And you'll have more than you have now. You'll have more than you hoped for." Do the best with what you have, and then you'll have more than you need.

So the challenge from Joshua was, "You need more room for your large tribe? Okay. Go to the mountains, fight the enemy, take the land. The LORD said, 'Wherever you put your foot, that'll be yours.' So God'll fight for you. They may have iron chariots. You've got the LORD! You've been with us for seven and a half years. You saw what God has done. Trust Him!" And rather than walking by faith, you get to verses 12 and 13, and it says they didn't bother to obey the LORD, but they immediately came to complain they needed more. They weren't being faithful, but they needed more. There's that Scripture in Matthew 25:29, when the Lord was telling that parable there, and He said to them, " 'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.' " In other words, use it or lose it. Be faithful with what God gives you. And rather than being concerned with what you don't have, give yourself to what you do. Be faithful with what God has given you. Maximize the use of what God has put at your disposal, and, rather than wanting more to possess and then avoid the conflict, go fight the battles. There's no sense getting more opportunity until you've fully run with what you have. And that oftentimes is just not the case. So, for these with great hindrances of obedience, Joshua says, "Hey, you want more what the LORD has for you, then be obedient." And it does seem like verse 16 would say that the reason they weren't doing that is because they were afraid. Right? They had land. In the mountains were bad dudes - the giants and fighters and well-equipped - and they find themselves almost immobilized through fear. And it's natural, I guess, when you go into battle to be a little afraid. These men had certainly fought plenty. They'd seen God give them some amazing victories. Even one day, the LORD just had the sun stand still. They understood victory, but they weren't willing to be obedient. And so God hands them land. "Here is your land. Now, go take the land." And hopefully the past would have motivated them for the future, but it doesn't always do that. So it was Caleb who said in Joshua 14:12 (a couple chapters back), "LORD, give me the mountain which You have promised me. I know that the Anakim live there and that

the cities are walled and fortified, but, hey, let's go see what the LORD'll do." And he and his boys were willing to go fight. Here's a bunch of people - a whole tribe - that go, "Ohh, they're stronger than we are." First, in verse 12, they were determined not to leave, and so, "We felt like we were powerless, and then when we got stronger, rather than obeying the LORD, we just used them for our own purposes. And now we've come back to ask more from the LORD. Could You bless me some more?" And the LORD says, "You haven't been obedient in what I've given you, and now you're feeling like you don't have enough." So, interesting little five-verse story of these folks who should have known better. But that's the tribe of Manasseh and of Ephraim there in the middle of the country, in the West Bank.

Chapter 18, verse 1, "Now the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of meeting there. And the land was subdued before them." The name "Shiloh" means rest or peace. It is located (in fact, we still know where this is) in the hill country of Ephraim. Today it is called Nablus. You've heard that, maybe, in the news. We used to be able to take people on our Israel tours to Nablus. It is not under Israeli control in terms of policing, so we don't go there. But it is only located about fifteen or sixteen miles north of Jerusalem in the West Bank. It is in the heart of the country, but it is, interestingly enough, the first stop for God's tabernacle. You remember the tabernacle that Moses built, "God with us," place of worship, place of fellowship; no other place you could go worship, no other place you could sacrifice - you had to go there. God was there, and you came to Him. And this is the first time, in all of the years, that that tabernacle's not being set up and torn down and set up and torn down for generations. I mean, finally the thing gets to rest for a while. Historically, the tabernacle of worship stayed in Shiloh longer than it would stay in Jerusalem before the temple itself would be built. And so it stayed here for a long time. It's the first time it's settled down in the Land of Promise, where God's presence was with them in the land. And it'll stay here (if you watch, as you read through the Bible) until the Philistines will later on capture it, and it will be removed eventually by David to Jerusalem when he overthrows the Jebusites, the guys that weren't overthrown in chapter 15:63 (there at the end of the chapter), where they were allowed to stay there for quite some time. So, great picture. Great picture of gathering together. And here's the LORD's presence with them in Shiloh, a place to find rest. And it was the place where they would come to worship. So, chapter 18 begins with the whole congregation coming together to worship the LORD at a time when the land had been subdued. Now the land was not overthrown - we know that. The very chapters, as we read, we realize there're

lots of enemies, but there wasn't anything that they were incapable of doing now in the LORD, if you will. And besides, they are now gathered together before His presence, and He's in their midst.

I've always thought it interesting - religion has a way of showing man how to draw near to the LORD. And it usually takes the form of lots of rituals and religious kinds of activities. Yet here's a picture of the LORD with the people, and He's very clearly just directing them. And it has nothing to do with, really, their approach to Him as much as His availability to them. And so God's presence stood in the midst of all of these folks being sent in every direction. It came from the throne of God. It was a direction that came to them from the place of worship.

Well, verse 2 tells us, "But there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes which had not yet received their inheritance." We suspect that this didn't take place over a long period of time but over a little period of time. Verse 3, "Then Joshua said to the children of Israel: 'How long will you neglect to go and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers has given you?' " So I like the fact that Joshua, I think, sensed amongst most of these folks a real hesitancy to do what God said. And so there're seven tribes - they're still kickin' the dirt, "Where's our stuff? Where's our stuff?" And no one seemed to show much enthusiasm or drive to go - ambition, maybe - and possess the land. And so we start in verse 2 with there are seven out of these twelve tribes that haven't even gotten the land, and Joshua turns to their leaders, and he kind of confronts their lackadaisical attitude. "How long are you guys gonna hang around here? You know, the LORD's given us the land." Nobody shows initiative. Who does? Caleb. He interrupts before they give the land to anybody. And then Joshua, who does the opposite because he's the leader, waits till the last and takes what's left. He could push himself to the front of the line and go, "I think I'll take what I want." He waits till everybody's assigned, and then he asks for a specific city, and it's granted to him in the midst of another person's land. So there wasn't much ambition. " 'How long,' " verse 3, " 'will you show a lack of ambition, just sitting here waiting to be handed a portion?' " God had said to them, back in chapter 1:3, "Go in and take. Wherever your foot goes, that can be yours." It is such a contrast from Caleb. It's even a contrast from the Ephraimites that we read about in the last chapter, who came and said, "We want more land. We want more." Unfortunately, that wasn't driven by much spiritual hunger. But they all lacked initiative.

So let's translate this into practice for us. You have a Bible on your lap. That Bible is filled with promises. What are you doing with them? What are you doing with what the Bible promises to you? What do you do with them? You certainly are here hearing them a lot. You've read them. If your answer is, "I collect them," that won't help. "Well, I underline them in red." That doesn't help, really, much either. "I have a promise book. I read it every day." I read somewhere the other day that someone said, "The Bible should be wrapped in shoe leather so people could walk it out." I like that. So what are you doing with the promises?

That's really what Joshua said to these guys. "You've got God's promises, and you're all just sittin' on your hands, waitin' for something to be handed to you. When are you gonna get out there and hang on to what God has promised to you? When are you gonna start gathering it together?" I think when we started the book of Joshua I mentioned to you, maybe a couple of times, that even under the zenith of David's reign - where everything was clicking, and everything was positive, and victory was everywhere - the children of Israel only were able to successfully manage and oversee and take 30,000 square miles of property when God had promised them 300,000 square miles. So even at their zenith, when things couldn't have been better, they left 90% of God's promises laying on the table; not because God wanted them to not have them but because they didn't go forward. They settled in. "That's good enough."

We've talked about Christians grow for a while, and then they stop. And they do good in the first year, they make miles, they read quickly. I don't know how many of you, when you got saved, read through the Bible the first year, but you haven't done it since. "But I did it the first year." I actually called in sick to work for two and a half weeks so I could read my Bible. I lied on the phone to serve the Lord. This is what I did. (Laughing) I'm not proud, but this is..... and I didn't understand, I think, any of it. But I wanted to know it. Right? There's that hunger. And then pretty soon you get kind of where you look at me like, "It's 8:15. Are you going to go much longer because I'd really like to go now?" and you feel the resistance. You see it in a couple of faces over here. (Laughing) It's over here as well; there're a few more. We don't continue to go forward as we should. So, getting saved is one thing, but then running to be a vessel in God's hand, that's something entirely different. And so I sense that Joshua was a little bit frustrated with the folks that he's leading in. "Hey, man, God gave this to you. Go get it now!" And I always see it in terms of the Bible is so filled with God's promises, but what are you doing to act upon them?

Well, we read in verse 4 that Joshua advised them, " 'Pick out from among you three men for each tribe, and I will send them; they shall rise and go through the land, survey it according to their inheritance, and come back to me. And they shall divide it into seven parts. Judah shall remain in their territory on the south, and the house of Joseph shall remain in their territory on the north. You shall therefore survey the land in seven parts and bring the survey here to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the LORD our God' " (here in Shiloh). " 'But the Levites have no part among you, for the priesthood of the LORD is their inheritance. And Gad, Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance beyond the Jordan on the east, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave them.' Then the men arose to go away; and Joshua charged those who went to survey the land, saying, 'Go, walk through the land, survey it, and come back to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the LORD in Shiloh.' So the men went," (twenty-one guys or so) "passed through the land, and wrote the survey in a book in seven parts by cities; and they came to Joshua at the camp in Shiloh. Then Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD, and there Joshua divided the land to the children of Israel according to their divisions," beginning in verse 11 with the tribe of Benjamin.

Now if you look at your map, Benjamin's right in the center there, right underneath Ephraim. Jerusalem falls under Benjamin's care. And it's a small area, but they were warriors. Verse 11, "Now the lot of the tribe of the children of Benjamin came up according to their families, and the territory of their lot came out between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph." If you'll skip all the way to verse 28 (at the end), it says, "This was the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their families." So, again, all I'm doing is skipping over border towns and places that I have no idea where they are - except they're in this area that we've written out before you. Their positioning is important for a couple of reasons: Jacob, in chapter 49 of *Genesis*, as he's prophesying over his boys, talked about Benjamin being "a ravenous wolf," a warrior, and indeed he is. But his position is important. Later on, when the tribes of Israel split in two (and though God has put His name in Jerusalem like He did at Shiloh, and that was the place you could worship), a whole bunch of people - ten of them - went to north because of taxation and oppression. But staying in place in the southern kingdom was Judah (that's down there at the bottom) and Benjamin (in the Jerusalem area). So, two tribes stayed faithful to the LORD. During that split, the southern kingdom is called after Judah, the larger tribe. The northern kingdom is just called Israel, in general. And so the positioning of Benjamin being in Jerusalem - being in their

land, if you will - I think kept them in place, and God was able to bless them a lot because of it, and they would survive for years.

Chapter 19:1 says, "The second lot came out for Simeon." And verse 9 tells us, "The inheritance of the children of Simeon was included in the share of the children of Judah, for the share of the children of Judah was too much for them. Therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of that people." And, again, if you'll look at your map, down at the bottom is Judah, and in there is Simeon. So Simeon is given the southernmost area of Israel from Beersheba almost to Hebron, if you will. But it is all within the land of Judah because it was too much for Judah to handle. So here's an interesting picture of Simeon. They have no borders, they have no easements, they have no boundaries. So this little (we've been skipping twenty and thirty verses) - we only skipped nine now because there's nothing given to us to box them in. You might remember that Levi and Simeon were two boys who led the slaughter of the Shechemites (back in Genesis 34) when they came to avenge the defilement of their sister, Dinah. You remember that? Their actions caused great bloodshed. It was very deceitful. It was certainly a scandal for Jacob and for his family. But when Jacob was on his deathbed, he declared (Genesis 49) of these two men that they "are brothers; instruments of cruelty are in their dwelling place." And so he cursed them, and he said, "I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel." In other words, these two boys should not get their own place; which is interesting because one of them is Levi, who becomes the priest of all things. But they don't get their own place. And the other one is this fellow, Simeon, who also doesn't get his own place; he's stuck in someone else's land. And so what you read in Genesis 49:5-7, God fulfills here, and what the LORD said about these boys and their descendancies was true. Levi is scattered in the land. Judah hides Simeon in the land. And God's Spirit upon Jacob proves again that God's prophetic word will be sure.

Verse 10 says, "The third lot came out for the children of Zebulun." And again, verse 16, "This was the inheritance of the children of Zebulun according to their families, these cities with their villages." If you look at your map again, Zebulun is kind of to the left of the Sea of Galilee. It's a landlocked area. However, if you follow a little to the left, there's a little river there, a little cutout that's actually larger, obviously, than it presents itself on the map. But, again, Jacob predicted of Zebulun that "he shall dwell by the haven of the sea" (Genesis 49:13). And though he finds himself locked in, in many ways, here in the northern area of the Galilee, they had direct access to the water as Jacob had predicted. Zebulun is where

Nazareth is. It is a place that Gath Hopher is, which is the home of Jonah. It is where the Valley of Megiddo is. It is where Haifa is. It is where Mount Gilboa is. Pretty famous places if you travel through Israel. But it is in the land of Zebulun.

Verse 17 tells us, "The fourth lot came out to Issachar," and Issachar - you can find him there below Zebulun and kind of to the right of Manasseh in your map. They comprised the most fertile area in the Mideast. When it comes to the *moshavim*, the farms, or the *kibbutzim*, where there's a lot of farming going on, it almost all falls under Issachar's area. It's real rich soil in Israel. There's a lot of rain and mist that falls. From the *tel* at Megiddo, there in Manasseh, looking towards Mount Tabor, which is kind of across - if you look between those two mountains (I don't know if you can find those on your map), Megiddo to the left and Mount Tabor has that little triangle, that's in there where is the Valley of Armageddon or the Jezreel Valley as it's called. There have been more battles fought on that ground than anyplace else in the world when it came to bloodshed. And there's one final battle coming when Jesus returns here at the end of the Great Tribulation, with you with Him to rule and to reign. So that'll take place right there between Megiddo and Mount Tabor.

Verse 24 we are told, "The fifth lot came out for the tribe of the children of Asher." And verse 31 will say, "This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Asher." And, again, you can find them there on the map. It is way to the northern Galilee area, along the coast of Tyre and Sidon (which obviously today do not fall under a lot of Israel's control). He's not that far up to the north, but they were from the coastal plains. And because they were located there (in the Bible, as you read), whenever there were invasions from the Phoenicians from the north, they were always the first to get nailed. So they became kind of a border protection, if you will, buffer, for Israel in the years to come. Anna - you remember Anna from the New Testament, the woman in the temple when Jesus was coming to be dedicated? She was from the tribe of Asher. So she was way up there; now we meet her way down here at a place of worship.

Verse 32 tells us, "The sixth lot came out to the children of Naphtali," and that ends in verse 39. This is, again, a lot of cities that we won't necessarily be able to grab a hold of. You can see Naphtali again in your map, way towards the north. Beautiful section. It is the upper and then the lower Galilee it's called, where today there is a place called the Hula Valley. It is one of the more beautiful places in Israel. It is where Tel Dan is. It is where Caesarea Philippi is as well, in the

north. It was completely swamp land in the 40' and 50's. When Israel moved in, they started a rich plan of putting in eucalyptus trees that just sucked out all of the water out of the ground, and it left this really rich soil behind. And so it becomes a beautiful place for vegetation - lots of trees, gorgeous place to hang out. But that's Naphtali. And we spend a whole day, actually, up in Dan there, in Lachish (to the right) on the way towards Mount Hermon and on the road, then, to Damascus.

Well finally, verse 40, "The seventh lot came out for the tribe of the children of Dan." And verse 48, "This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Dan." Dan had a portion of land by the sea. In fact, if you go back to your map and down below Ephraim, notice there's that kind of blue color of Dan, where Joppa is along the Mediterranean coast. That was the initial place that the LORD put them. It is also the place where the Philistines were extremely strong, and the Amorites were there as well. It was a time of tremendous fighting. Samson was from Dan. Goliath was a Philistine who lived along the coast. The pressure on Dan became so great that they asked to relocate their entire tribe north, and so, as you read, you'll find eventually that Dan ends way up towards the north. And notice where Naphtali is - in the corner of that area of Naphtali, you'll find Dan. And so you see that little parenthesis at Laish, where it says Dan. And they were just a few miles south of Mount Hermon, which is the largest mountain in the area as well. If you ever have a chance to go to Israel with us, there is, in Dan, an ancient gate that they discovered several years ago. It is made of mud and bricks. It's an amazing site. They covered it up and done everything they could to not only support it but to keep it standing because it's mud and bricks. It is in one of Israel's northernmost holdings, but it's a gate from the days of Abraham that went into this city (that's marked here Laish). So that's still standing, and that's pretty interesting because that's a whole lot of years old - 3,700 years old.

Well, we end with verse 49, and then we read, "When they had made an end of dividing the land as an inheritance according to their borders, the children of Israel gave an inheritance among them to Joshua the son of Nun. According to the word of the LORD they gave him the city which he asked for, Timnath Serah in the mountains of Ephraim; and he built the city and dwelt in it. These were the inheritances which Eleazar the priest, Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel divided as an inheritance by lot in Shiloh before the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. So they made an end of dividing the country." So Joshua waited till the end. He specifically



wanted a hill country place. And, again, you can go to Ephraim, there in the middle of the land. He took a city in Ephraim. I always like - here's a leader that could have said, "Me first," and he didn't. He waited till the end. And the LORD directed the leaders to give him the city. "What do you want?" "I'd like this city if the LORD allows." And so they gave it to him. It reminds me a little bit of Abraham being separated from Lot (*Genesis 13*). Abraham said, "Pick what you want," and Lot goes, "I'll have all that stuff that's green, and you can have dirt." And he said, "Fine," and then the LORD came back and said, "Look around, Abraham. Green and dirt - it's all yours. I'm going to take care of you." So the humble act of Joshua is one of his last actions and is certainly characteristic of his heart. So notice verse 51. This is the end of dividing the land. In two little weeks, we covered all of that division.

We have left to look at the cities of refuge, which God develops. And there's a lot to be learned, I think, about capital punishment and about trials and all that the LORD intends for man to fulfill. And then there're some really interesting stories: chapter 22 about those guys that chose to go on the other side of the Jordan and what a headache that was for them in terms of misunderstanding; and then we have two chapters at the end, one that Joshua speaks to the leadership; and then the last one where he speaks to the general population. So, we're going to be a while yet, but there's lots to learn before we head to the book of Judges.

Submitted by Maureen Dickson  
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