

Joshua 07-08-03a

This is Friday, the 3rd of August, 2007. We continue our study this evening in the book of Joshua, resuming at chapter 13. Let's take a moment as we begin to go to the Lord in prayer.

As always, we are reminded that it is the ministry of God's Spirit which, though often misunderstood in our day, is primarily there to lead us into God's truth, to assist both the teaching and the hearing of God's Word, to help us perceive, understand, remember, and apply the principles, the promises, the doctrines of God's Word to our daily experience, to our hour-by-hour thinking processes. There is no more important time to cultivate that ministry and ensure that we are susceptible to it than during the time that we study God's Word together. Shall we pray? Father, we are so grateful for our salvation.

We recognize that it is your gift through the Lord Jesus Christ. We neither earned it nor deserve it. We were without hope, without you in this world, when the Lord Jesus Christ came as an expression of your love and gave himself on our behalf.

And he continues to minister through intercession and awaiting that day when you sent him to collect us and receive us to himself. We know that this intervening period is very important and it is our opportunity to learn and to grow in grace and in knowledge of the Savior through both the New and the Old Testaments. We thank you for the passage that is before us this evening and we ask your blessing on us as we study it.

May we be thoroughly equipped for every good work as we seek to understand it and see its application in our lives. We pray your blessing on us as we study, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Joshua is the record of the conquest of the land. It is a seven-year process and it immediately puts us in mind of the whole purpose of human history. When you step back and look at the sweep and the scope of God's plan through the ages, you see that there is a 7,000-year plan, 4,000 years from Adam to Christ, 2,000 years of the Church Age, 1,000 years of the Millennial Kingdom.

And in the same way that there remains a rest for the people of God, as it tells us in the book of Hebrews, you look at especially chapter 3 and chapter 4, talking about the rest that remains to the people of God. David talks about it in the Psalms. And the author of Hebrews, who I personally think was the Apostle Paul, points this out.

There remains a rest for the people of God. And this is really the key to getting something out of, especially this section of the book of Joshua, because to the unaided eye, to the casual observer, this particular portion is a little bit dry. When you look at it, the exciting scenes of the falling walls of Jericho and the Gibeonites with their moldy

bread and their worn-out sandals and the battles taking place in the south and later in the north, these have all subsided.

And now we have sort of almost administrative details of which tribe gets what land. And we would be tempted to think, well, this was probably really beneficial for maybe the initial recipients, or maybe it has some pertinence for Israelites who are in the land and trying to figure out, well, where does my tribe live and how did we get this land? But for me, as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, living in the year 2007 or whatever year it is, if you hear this lesson later on, you think, well, that was a long time ago. 3,400 years ago, somebody got assigned a patch of ground, so what? So it is our task, because we understand that every Scripture is God-breathed.

All Scripture is profitable. Well, we have to find what is the profit, P-R-O-F-I-T, in this particular section. And one of the keys, one of the things that helps us is remembering what the symbolic values are.

It's kind of like if you read *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, and you're figuring out, well, who does the lion sort of represent? It's not a one-for-one correspondence. There's a loose association, but somebody is sacrificing himself on others' behalf, and through his death, others live. Who does the lion really represent there in the story? Many times in a parable, there is a correspondence.

There is a close similarity between the king who gives a banquet for his son, and there is a bride, and there are guests who are invited, and they refuse to come because they're too busy, and so the highways and byways yield other guests. And we figure out that this is more than just a story about a wedding feast, as it tells us something about God's plan and God's purpose. Well, the Old Testament, we are told, was recorded and written down for our instruction.

So, as we come to this section, where the southern campaign is complete, the initial forays, the initial coalition that forms in the north is defeated by Joshua. Now we come to chapter 13, and we're going to get some historical details, some specifics of which land is allocated to what tribe, and we think, well, where is the symbolic correspondence? We begin by recognizing that this is a seven-year campaign to take the land of promise, to take possession of the inheritance. What are you and I supposed to be doing as Christians? The most common answer you will hear today, if you ask someone in the conservative evangelical world of Christianity, what should we be doing? We should be winning the world for Christ.

We should be getting the lost saved. This is a wonderful endeavor. I am a big fan of evangelism, and you should be too.

It's a wonderful thing. So is prayer. So is ministry.

So is growth in grace and knowledge through the study of God's word. So is faith. So is patience.

So are all of the different fruits of the Spirit. But you can't select any one of those and say that is the mission, because none of them are. They are all component parts of a healthy Christian life.

You've heard me often make this comparison. We are warriors in a spiritual battle. Scripture often makes this correspondence.

And if you look at any of our military services, they have a component that is dedicated to recruiting. But we don't have a Navy or a Marine Corps or an Army whose mission is to recruit. That would be kind of silly.

The only organization I can think of whose primary mission is to recruit is Amway and its clones. We exist to reproduce. It's a pyramid type of thing.

And the soap and the products are kind of a grease for the skids, and that helps generate the money. But mainly, you become a distributor, and you get other distributors, and other distributors under them. And as you climb the pyramid, why all of this incidental money goes flowing uphill? Christianity is not Amway.

We are not a pyramid organization. We do not live to reproduce. It is an important function.

Every organization must recruit. Every organization must find people. But that's not its reason for being.

And it's the same in God's kingdom. It's the same in God's family. It is the same in the Christian life.

And so, we need to recognize, first of all, that the Bible does not teach evangelism as the Christian mission. What are the verses that are most often cited in this regard? Matthew 28, 19, Jesus speaking to the disciples. It's not even the church age yet.

Mark 16, after verse 9, does not even exist. It's not inspired scripture. Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

It's not scripture. It's not inspired. It doesn't belong in the Bible.

Everything after verse 9 in Mark needs to be scratched out. Mark 16, 10 and following, get rid of it. It's a later addition by some unknown, uninspired person.

There are three or four different endings of Mark, and none of them are inspired. Look at the epistles of Paul. Look at the epistles of John.

Look at the epistles of Peter. These are the apostolic fathers of the church. These are the guys who dispensed the wisdom of God with regard to the church, and not a one of them ever tells a church to go evangelize.

I find this to be significant, and I think you should as well. So, if that is not the mission, then what is the mission? This is what we're looking at in the book of Joshua. These people of God are commissioned to receive the inheritance that God has given, but it is not a passive receiving.

What does Ephesians 2, 8 and 9 say? We've memorized it as a group. It's in our memory verse pack. What's Ephesians 2, 8? For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves.

It is a gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. Going on into verse 9. It's a gift of God, not of works. However, that gift still has to be actively received.

Same thing here. God has said over and over and over again, I am taking you to a land. I am giving you the land.

Everywhere Abraham set his foot, I am giving you this land. So here, Joshua and the Israelites have showed up. They've crossed the Jordan.

They're in the land. And so, did they just say, well, here it is. Let's just pitch a tent.

Move into an empty house. It has to be taken. It is a gift of God, but it still must be seized.

It must be laid hold of. Now, I'm not going to go down the whole road of refuting, for the umpteenth time, Reformed theology with this idea that everything in the Christian life is passively received. That God's grace is efficacious.

God effectively moves us to salvation. Because as soon as you accept that, you must believe that your subsequent spiritual life is also dictated by the sovereignty of God. How do I know that? Because Scripture says, As ye have received Christ, so walk in him.

Now, if you receive Christ efficaciously, through no fault of your own, God in his sovereign, inscrutable grace, just threw a dart at the map, and it hit you on the head, and you became saved, guess what? The degree to which you become a spiritual giant, or don't, is also entirely up to the sovereignty of God. No. It is a gift of God.

There is inheritance. Lay up not for yourselves treasure on earth, lay up treasure in heaven. You have need of faith and patience, Paul says, so that after you have suffered, Peter says the same thing, you receive the promises, you receive the inheritance.

Faith and patience are things that we do. We actively decide to trust. We actively decide to obey.

We actively decide, The trial of your faith worketh patience. Let patience have its perfect work. You have to do that.

It's a choice. These Israelites under Joshua, under Yeshua, come into the land, and by obedience, by following orders, Joshua says we're going to do an 18-mile all-night march, and they do it. They don't say, hey, wait a minute, I thought God was just going to give us the land.

I just want to sit here and gilgal, and just tell me what the assignment is. Why should we have to do any fighting? I heard a good friend of mine once say, Christianity is not a crutch. It's a stretcher.

God carries you in to grace and prosperity and fullness and so on. Not at all, and we see that here. So, once again, 7,000 years of history, seven-year campaign to take possession of the land.

It's an analogy. It's a picture. And the people of God are to go in by faith with active obedience.

With active faith. I will act in faith. I'm not going to sit in faith and wait for God to act in every instance, because God says, go, take it.

I have given them into your hand, but God didn't slay them with the breath of His mouth. Jesus didn't speak with a sharp sword, and all of the Canaanites suddenly folded over with heart attacks. The Israelites had to go swing the swords, heft the javelins, throw the spears.

They hacked and slashed their way manually into their inheritance. Now, the reason I'm reviewing those concepts is we have a very interesting picture in Joshua chapter 13. Let's read a little bit of this and see what it is.

Chapter 13, verse 1. Now Joshua was old, advanced in years, and the Lord said to him, You're old, advanced in years. You get the idea that Joshua would say, Well, thanks. I thought I was feeling pretty good.

But the Lord comes to him and says, Joshua, you're old. You're up there. There remains very much land yet to be possessed.

Joshua has been diligent. Joshua has been faithful. Joshua has been leading battle after battle, campaign after campaign.

We've had a big list of kings that were all defeated. But the Lord says, You're old, and the job's not done. There's a bunch of land that has not yet been seized.

It's an imperfect conquest at this point. This is the land that yet remains, all the territory of the Philistines. Do you remember that? It's over by the sea, between the plains and

the coast.

You've got that area of the five cities of the Philistines over there. All that of the Gesherites. These are the Gesherites down, not Gesher up there by Ma'akah, but another Gesher.

Sihur, east of Egypt. That's way down south. As far as the border of Ekron northward, which is counted as Canaanite.

The five lords of the Philistines, Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. The Avites, this is kind of a small, seemingly insignificant tribe. This is one of the few places they're even mentioned.

I think they're mentioned in Deuteronomy 2. Down in the south, all the land of the Canaanites and Me'arah that belongs to the Sidonians. Remember, Sidon is way up there now in Lebanon, up north, on the coast. To the border of the Amorites, the land of the Gebelites, and all Lebanon toward the sunrise.

This is eastern Lebanon, way up north. From Baal, Gad, below Hermon, as far as the entrance to Hamath, all the inhabitants of the mountains from Lebanon, as far as the brook Mishrafoth, and all the Sidonians. God says, Them I will drive out from before the children of Israel.

Only divide it by lot to Israel as an inheritance, as I have commanded you. Now therefore, divide this land as an inheritance to the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh. Now what does this all mean? God first of all says, Here's all the areas that have not yet been taken.

But He says, Go ahead and divide the land. What's going on? What's going on? There is a sequence where you would expect we will take the land, and then we will divide the land. Right? You think about the bread and the fish that were distributed, the feeding of the 5,000.

A disciple gets his bread and fish from the Lord, and then he goes to a group of 50, and he distributes it. In this case, not all the land has been taken. Not all of the land is yet in their possession.

And people thought, Well, we'll conquer the land, and after we possess it, we'll divide it up. Now God says, Look, Joshua, you're old, and before you get any older, let's go ahead and divide the land, even though it's not yet taken. Divide the land, although you don't yet possess it.

Now this might seem a little bit premature, but think about it. This is an analog, it's an analogy. What are our symbolic values? How does this translate into interpretation and application for us? We are the people of God.

There is a spiritual inheritance that we are to seize and lay hold of. It is described, for example, in the Overcomer passages of the letters to the seven churches in Revelation chapter 2 and 3. To him that overcomes, I will give. I will grant.

And you remember all of those great and precious promises. So there is a contingency. Here is your assigned territory, tribe of Israel.

Here is your assigned territory, Christian believer, even though it is not yet taken. When it is taken, it will be yours. But you're basically, once it's assigned to you, guess who it is that's supposed to go in there and drive out those enemies.

There are two things at work here. First of all, it is the authority of Joshua. Joshua is the clear successor to Moses.

He is the national leader. And before the twelve tribes scatter and divide up to take possession of their territories, they are still all together. The army is still all in one place.

They are not dividing into militias, as it were, where there is a tribal militia that's going to defend the tribal land. They are still all together as a conquering and invading army. It is Joshua's authority.

When Joshua says, okay, tribe of Asher, tribe of Naphtali, tribe of Judah, here is your assigned territory, it has to be done while Joshua is still alive. Who after Joshua would have the authority that would be recognized to say, this is your assigned territory? Do we have any subsequent history of squabbling and fighting and internecine warfare, intermural warfare between the tribes about, well, I thought this land was mine. Oh no, we thought it was ours.

And we want the brook, and we want the valley, we want the mountain, we want the plain. These assignments are definitive. And you don't see any signs of dispute because it has been clearly outlined.

The borders are very distinct. And this is due to God's provision through Joshua for a definitive title deed to each tribe. There is no dispute about where the borders are, not of any significance at this time.

Joshua says it, that settles it. This is your tribal allotment. He has the authority from God.

No one questions Joshua's authority. He has been sitting in the house of God under Moses for 40 years. He has led all of these successful campaigns, never lost a battle, never been attacked, always been the attacker, not the attackee.

So when he says, tribe, this is your territory, that settles it. But yet, a lot of this land is not actually conquered. And it reminds us of the fact that as believers, we have battles to fight, and we have unconquered enemies in our souls all through our lives.

It doesn't matter how old we get. We can be as old as Joshua. I suspect he's approaching the century mark if he has not already hit it by this time.

We know that Caleb was around 40 at the time that the spies first went into the land under Moses, had to wait until that generation died 40 years later, and he's 85 now at the time of the conquest. We'll find this out in the next chapter. And Joshua is probably a similar age and perhaps older.

So he's getting way on up there. And it is a reminder to us that there are always going to be challenges. Don't expect to arrive.

Don't expect to become a spiritually complete and unassailable and perfect. I think we're all practical-minded enough to know that we're always going to fail. We're always going to have challenges.

We will always have somebody attacking our borders. There's always going to be the unseen conflict, wrestling against the principalities and powers. We get assailed and sabotaged, and the traitor of our own flesh comes and attacks us, blindsides us when we least expect it, just when we think we've got our temper under control, just when we think we've mastered the art of patience, just when we think that we're not going to get tripped up by that besetting sin while we fall on our face again.

Don't be discouraged. It just means there are still Canaanites in the land, and we still have to go out there with the sword. God has given us that land, but you've got to drive the enemies out of it.

Now, what is coming up down the road? What's going to come up 400 years from now, in the time of David? The temple is going to be built. God's presence is going to permanently reside in Jerusalem, on Mount Zion, in the temple, but that doesn't happen yet. The presence of God, the cloud and the fire have disappeared now.

The tabernacle, we don't hear much about the tabernacle. The thing is four decades old now, and over the next 400 years, it's going to get dilapidated. Its component parts are going to be separated.

You're going to wind up with some pieces of it at Shiloh, and other pieces of it up in Dan. It's going to get scattered and tattered, and very little is going to remain. The ark is going to be on its own.

We know this from the book of Judges. We know this from the book of 1 Samuel. And it is not down until the time of David when the last of these enemies are defeated.

David is going to be the man of war. David is going to be the man of blood. He is the lion of the tribe of Judah.

And he's going to come in and finish what Joshua starts. This work will not be finished. Samson is going to attack the Philistines.

Gideon is going to attack. All these different guys are going to attack. But it's not even until after the time of Saul and Jonathan that the Philistines are finally going to be defeated.

And a lot of the rest of these Amorites and the hangers-on and enemies that have been in the land are going to be driven out enough to where God can establish His permanent resident presence. And His glory cloud is going to fill the temple in the days of Solomon. But that's the goal.

But it takes 400 years. Ten times a generation. And that is the task that we have in our souls.

So, I will drive out these enemies from before the children of Israel. Divide it by lot and by inheritance. What's interesting to me is, initially, the initial entrance into the land, all of Israel is together.

Even the two and a half tribes on the east side of the Jordan. Who are they? Who are the two and a half tribes on the east side of the Jordan? Reuben, number one. Manasseh, number eleven, slipped to twelve.

And Gad, number seven. Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh are the two and a half tribes. Manasseh is a half tribe.

Half the tribe of Joseph, right? On the east side of the Jordan. But even their warriors, they all come in united into the land. Analogy-wise, what does this speak of? You and I are trying to get into that land of promise.

We are trying to take possession of God's inheritance for us. The Lord Jesus Christ, our Yeshua, has led us across the Jordan. Not in salvation, this is in maturity.

This is the quest. You can be immature and stay on the wrong side. You can be immature, way immature, and drop in the wilderness and never get there.

But if you're a growing believer, if you're walking the narrow road, if you're trying to go through the straight gate that leads to life, you're going to enter into a phase of your spiritual life that involves combat and conquest. You are going to engage. Many, many, many believers, many of us as Christians, never get to this phase because we never reach the point of following Christ into the actual spiritual warfare.

No understanding. Looking over the shoulder, it's like the pillar of salt. It's like the leeks and garlicks of Egypt.

They're people who get saved and never disassociate themselves from life as a carnal,

secular-minded human being. You can be saved and you can drop in the wilderness. All of those people that came out of Egypt under the blood, all those people who went through the Red Sea, baptized with Moses, as it says, dropped and they didn't make it.

They ate the manna, they drank from that rock that followed them, that rock was Christ, and they dropped. Crossing the Jordan into the land of Canaan is not a picture of salvation. It is a picture of victory.

It is a picture of laying hold of inheritance. This is the difference in the kingdoms to come. Kingdom of the Son, Kingdom of the Father, Millennial Kingdom, and the kingdom after that.

Who is going to have privileges and access and who is not? Who is going to be on the inside, in the light, sitting down at the table, sharing the manna, and who is going to be outside the door that is closed? Depart from me, I never knew you. Lord, Lord, I did all this work. You see the difference.

It is possible to be reprobate. It is possible to be whatever you want to call it. Good old Baptists call it backslidden.

You can be a backslider. You can drop in the wilderness. You have not lost your salvation.

You are saved yet so as by fire. There is a distinction. There are those who are first in the kingdom, and there are those who are least in the kingdom.

The last shall be first, and the first shall be last. Some of the people who seem most inconspicuous are winning great victories of faith, and they are going to be first in the kingdom. They are going to have access to Jerusalem.

They are going to have access to Israel. There are some who seem mighty and prominent and well-known and publish books and have resources that you can order and pay money for, and they have got gold-plated bathtub faucets and everything else. They are going to be on the outside.

There are people who are very self-righteous and make the same mistake Israel made, being ignorant of God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own. Zeal for God, not according to knowledge. Outside.

This is one of the most misunderstood truths in Christianity today. You can be saved, and you can goof. You can miss.

You can fall short. You can drop and not go across and take possession of everything God has for us in the land. That's why Paul says you've got to have faith.

Ongoing faith, living faith, daily faith. You have to have patience. You've got to

persevere.

You've got to keep on grappling with the enemy. Don't just lay there. This reminds me of an episode that happened to me in kindergarten.

I had a half-day kindergarten when I was out there in California. Sunny California. The days when you're that young, when you're five, six years old, days just stretch into infinity.

Each day is just so long. And a half-day of school just was killingly long. But there was a bus to take me up to Palm Coast Elementary there in Oceanside.

I went up there, sat on the green rug. I even had a little nap. I can't believe all the stuff we did in a half-day kindergarten.

Well, I went to kindergarten for half a year. And I would come home on the bus, and there was a bully who rode the bus. We lived on a hill, and he was at the top of the hill.

I lived two-thirds of the way down the hill. This bully, about once or twice a week, got the idea that after I got off the bus, because I was kind of a little scrawny guy, he wanted to just tackle me and sit on me. And he would do this.

Once or twice a week, he would tackle me and sit on me up in some neighbor's yard way up there. Well, this was tedious. Because I had things I wanted to do, and I didn't want to actually engage in combat with this person who was seemingly twice my size, because I knew that I would probably get hurt.

And so what I did was, I kept saying, I remember laying under this 70 or 80-pound fat kid from up the street, saying, I am not going to fight you. Why do you keep tackling me? I'm not going to fight you. And he would just sit on me, sit on me, sit on me.

And I just laid there, defeated, sat upon, useless to struggle. I said, I'm not going to fight you, I'm not going to fight you. Well, this wore thin over the weeks.

And there came a day when he tackled me, and the place in the favorite neighbor's yard where he would typically tackle me had a tree in it, or a little shrub or something, and it was lined with rocks. And I saw the opportunity, and I reached up and grabbed him by the hair, and I started banging his head on that rock. And I said, get off! Get off! And I just started tugging his head down and banging it on the rock until he rolled off of me.

Well, he never did tackle me again. And I learned a valuable life lesson. As a kindergarten child, you can't lay there and be sat upon.

You've got to engage in the conflict. We can't let our sinful nature, we can't let the pressures of this life, we can't let things just sit on us and keep us from getting up and going where we're supposed to go. We are supposed to follow Joshua across the Jordan

and get in there and seize the inheritance.

And it is a battle. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. They are more powerful than we are.

Man is lower than the angels, it tells us in the Psalms. However, greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. And with God, all things are possible.

We have been given power that transcends ourselves, and we've got to learn to use it. So, say all that to say this. There are those who are out and those who are in.

We have to decide. How do I want to spend the thousand years of the millennial kingdom? How do I want to spend eternity in the kingdom of the Father? Do I want to be on the outside waiting for somebody to bring me the healing leaves of the tree of life that grows by the river of life that flows from the throne of God? Or do I want to be on the inside? Do I want my life and my existence to glorify God and reflect His glory? Or do I want to be ever someone who needs the grace of God, who needs help, who is going to be on the receiving end of ministry, never a conqueror? We are more than conquerors, or we're supposed to be. And we can, but we've got to follow our Yeshua.

We've got to lay hold of the grace of God that has been given to us. We can't just lay there being sat on by a fat kid. So, now this is important.

It leads up to something, because look at this. I will drive out all of these Gemoalites and Amorites and Sidonians and so on before the children of Israel. Divide this land as an inheritance to the nine tribes and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

Now, we reviewed this last time. There's Ephraim and Manasseh. Who is the older son of Joseph? He had two sons.

Our Joseph has two sons. This Joseph had two sons. Ephraim and Manasseh.

Who's the oldest? Manasseh is the oldest. Ephraim or older? You know, when you have two, it's older, younger. If you have three or more, it's free.

English point there, no charge. Manasseh is the older. Ephraim is the younger.

However, Jacob crosses his hands and puts the right hand of blessing on Ephraim. Ephraim. And puts the left hand of not-so-hot stuff on Manasseh.

Now, I will tell you that verse 7 and 8 are troubled in the Hebrew text. I'm not going to go into gory detail, but suffice it to say that what it is supposed to say, and you can go to the Septuagint, you can go to other early versions, Samaritan Pentateuch doesn't help us here, but there are other early versions that do. It's talking about the nine tribes on the west side of the Jordan and the half-tribe of Ephraim.

On the east side, you have Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh. Just take with a grain of salt the fact that it seems to say nine tribes and Manasseh on the west side. It's talking about Manasseh on the east.

I don't want to go through all the convolutions of what happened in the Hebrew here. But, look at verse 8. With the other half-tribe, and again, just bear with the text here, what it's talking about is the half-tribe of Manasseh, Reuben, and Gad received their inheritance which Moses had given them. By the way, you can look at this in a New American Standard, and they have done a much better job with it.

They have, well, and even they haven't done it right. There ought to be a period after nine tribes. The half-tribe of Manasseh, Reubenites, and the Gadites received their inheritance which Moses gave them beyond the Jordan to the east, just as Moses, in the Sermon of the Lord, gave it to them.

From Aror to the River Arnon, midst of the ravine, plain of Medeba, Divan, Sihon, King of the Amorites, Heshbon, and so on. Okay, we know all of this. You can look this up on a map.

I don't want to get bogged down in the details. Here's the point. Pay attention now.

Here's the point. You've got two and a half tribes on the east side. We talked about this last time.

This is the land of Moab. This is the land of Gilead. It's fertile.

It's well-watered. In the later scriptures, it will be a symbol of prosperity. Bashan is over here.

You've got Moab, Gilead, and up to the north, you've got Bashan. Bashan is given as a place of great fertility, great well-watered grasses and oak forests, and so on. In the later Old Testament, after the purely geographic descriptions, for example, in Psalm 22, this Messianic Psalm talking about the enemies that have surrounded, ultimately, the Lord Jesus as He's going through the experience of the cross.

And He says, Many bulls have surrounded Me. Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled Me. Why would it be a strong bull of Bashan? These are the best fed.

We talk about corn-fed beef that grows up in the plain states and that kind of thing. Well, if a bull grew up in Bashan, he's been eating well all of his life. He's the strongest, biggest bull you'll ever find in the region.

Later on in Ezekiel, oaks from Bashan were used to make oars and planks for this great ship that's strong, fine-grained wood that comes from this fertile plain. So, here's the point. In Micah 7.14, if you go to the beginning of that chapter, Woe is me, I am like

those who gather summer fruits, and so on.

Every man hunts his brother with a net, that they may successfully do evil with both hands. The prince asks for gifts, the judge seeks a bribe. The great man utters his evil desire, they scheme together.

The best of them is like a briar, the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge. The day of your watchmen and your punishment comes. Now shall be their perplexity.

Don't trust a friend, don't put your confidence in a companion, guard the doors of your mouth. These are bad times Micah is talking about here. Verse 7, Therefore I will look to the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation.

My God will hear me. Do not rejoice over me, my enemy, Micah says. When I fall, I will arise.

When I sit in the darkness, the Lord will be a light to me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him until He pleads my case. He will bring me forth into the light.

I will see His righteousness, and ultimately those who are despising me, because I'm under discipline, I've screwed up, and now I've gotten judged, but I'm going to return. God is going to bring me back. This is the idea.

In the day, verse 11, he's talking about the time of restoration. When your walls are built, decrees will go far and wide. They will come to you from Assyria, from the fortress to the river.

God will forgive Israel. Look at verse 14. Shepherd your people with your staff, the flock of your heritage, who dwell solitarily in a woodland, in the midst of Carmel.

In the shadow of Mount Carmel, the plains and the foothills that surround Mount Carmel. Another very fertile, very productive, agriculturally speaking, region. Carmel and Bashan are huge agricultural regions.

The flock is going to dwell in Carmel. Let them feed in Bashan and in Gilead, as in days of old. As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I will show them wonders.

The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might. They shall put their hand over their mouth. Their ears shall be deaf.

They shall lick the dust like a serpent. They shall crawl from the holes like snakes of the earth. They shall be afraid of the Lord our God and shall fear because of you.

Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He does not retain his anger forever because he delights in

mercy. He will again have compassion on us and will subdue our iniquities. What is Micah talking about? Ultimately, this is the restoration of Israel.

They are going to come back. They are going to have another shot at the opportunity to avail themselves of God's promise. The dry bones are going to be covered with sinews and flesh and skin.

They are going to stand on their feet like a mighty army when they are prophesied to, when the Spirit enters them. They are going to be resuscitated. This is the kingdom age.

This is the millennium. But notice where they are. Where are they? It doesn't picture them in the fertile plains of Judah, down by Bethlehem, where the shepherds watch their flocks by night.

Not up in the Galilee, with all of the fertility and the prosperity up there in the farming regions. It's over on the east side of the Jordan. Why? Because that's where you're poised for opportunity.

That's where you have another chance. Are you going to cross the Jordan or not? You're in Bashan. You're in Carmel.

You're in this place where there's well-watered fields. But are you going to go in and take the land? You're poised. It's a place of potential.

But you can get fat. You can get comfortable in that prosperity and never move into the place of possession, into the place of inheritance. When Joshua took over from Moses, they were on the east side of the Jordan.

And he led them across. Moses never made it across. You can't get across under the strength of the law, under the strength of righteousness by works.

You've got to go in by faith. You've got to go in and seize it by conquest. And that's this picture of Micah and the idea of Bashan.

This is the inheritance of Reuben, of Gad, and of Manasseh. It is an inheritance. It's a lot better than being a slave in Egypt.

It's a lot better than dropping in the wilderness and having nothing at all. But it falls well short of what God has designed and what God has promised. These tribes asked for that land.

They were satisfied to dwell on that side of the Jordan. What is the consequence of dwelling on the side of the Jordan? What if you become a believer and you get to sort of a comfortable, low level of spiritual understanding of your spiritual walk? You've got sort of the desperate emergency faith, but you don't really have a living, growing, abiding, laying hold of righteousness by faith, laying up treasure in heaven type of faith. You're

just kind of a comfortable dwelling sort of faith.

Well, this is what Reuben and Gad and Manasseh represent. And this detailed description of their territory tells us something. What does it tell us? We'll pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we'll see what happens to these tribes in the later history depicted for us in the Old Testament. Let's pause here and take our break.