

Joshua 07-08-03b

Let's pick up our study now in the book of Joshua chapter 13 and we've laid a lot of groundwork and it is confessively a bit dry but it's really important because we're getting to the issue of the division of the land and the fate of the tribes. Think about Jacob and his 12 sons. Who is the firstborn son? Who is supposed to inherit, receive the double portion, the priesthood, all of the stuff? Reuben.

However, in Genesis chapter 49 when Jacob is talking about his sons he says, Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity and the excellency of power. So far so good. Unstable as water you shall not excel.

It is not enough to have the excellency of dignity and the excellency of power. If you do not have stability, if you do not have consistency, these things cannot carry you. Unstable as water you shall not excel because you went up to your father's bed and you defiled it.

He went up to my couch. And you get the idea that Jacob is addressing Reuben directly using the second-person pronouns. You are my firstborn, you are my might, you are the beginning of my strength.

You went up to your father's bed and it is as though Jacob can no longer even look at Reuben and he looks to the rest of the brothers and he says, he went up to my couch. He shifts person at the end of that prophetic utterance because it is as though he cannot even look him in the face over this. Now, here is a little review and pop quiz kind of a thing.

Let's think about the twelve sons of Jacob. You know that there were multiple women involved. Who is the mother of Reuben? Leah.

Leah Coweyes, the less favored in many ways, the less favored sister. He thought he was getting Rachel, he worked for seven years, thought he was getting Rachel, but he got Leah instead. He had to work another seven years to get Rachel, the whole Laban thing.

And without going into the details of the sequence of the births, how many sons did Leah end up having? Reuben is the first and you got Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, right? And you end up with a total number of sons of Jacob from Leah of six. There are six sons total. Leah has Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun are the last two.

But she has a total of six. Now there are three other women involved, two sons each. So half the sons come from Leah.

What does the number six signify in Scripture? It's not quite the same. It's not quite seven. Close but no cigar.

Six is the number sort of of human effort and failure. Seven is the number of perfection. Six doesn't get there.

The number of the beast is six, six, six. It couldn't get to seven. It's just a series of sixes.

The best that the creature can do apart from God. Six days you labor and do all your work, but it's nothing without the seventh day. You don't have a complete week.

You don't enter into God's rest until you get to the seventh day. Six thousand years of human history, six thousand years of the record of human failure, it's the seventh day where you have the grace of God manifest, you have possession and inheritance and so forth. Leah, six sons.

Six other sons come from three other women. You've got the two handmaidens, Bilhah and Zilpah, and you have Rachel. We know the sons of Rachel, that's easy, Joseph and Benjamin.

And you've got Bilhah, who is Rachel's handmaiden, and her two sons are Dan and Naphtali. And you can kind of remember that Dan comes from Bilhah and then if you start running Dan backwards you get N-A and that's Naphtali. So Dan and Naphtali come from Bilhah.

Zilpah is Gad and Asher. Number seven, Gad, that we've been talking about on the wrong side of the Jordan there, that's Gad. He's son number seven.

Gad and Asher come from Zilpah, so that accounts for all twelve tribes. Now, here's the interesting thing to think about. Reuben was supposed to be the guy who gets everything, all of the privileges of the firstborn, but Jacob says, you missed out, you went up to my couch.

How did this come about anyway? Why do you have four women involved? Jacob, in good faith, thought he was getting Rachel, but some kind of way he got hornswoggled and he didn't end up with who he thought he was going to get. And you'd say, well, this may or may not actually be Jacob's fault, but once he's got both Leah and Rachel, and you say, this seems to really have been a part of the plan of God for Jacob's life because he didn't have a whole lot to say about getting Leah. It's sort of payback for slipping in and getting the blessing from his father Isaac, and now it turns out it's fair play.

He gets deceived. He ends up with something that wasn't quite what he wanted. It's kind of like, oh, well, I see what that's like now.

But yet it all works into the plan of God. God wanted Jacob to inherit. It could have happened in a way that did not involve deception.

He didn't have to do it by his own efforts, but that's what ends up. And in the same way,

he might have ended up with both Rachel and Leah anyway, but in this case it also comes by deception and it's sort of divine justice. However, when you think about it, you've got these two wives and you would think that you would end up with two sets of siblings that are related but have different mothers.

And it immediately puts you in mind of the two peoples of God. You've got Israel and you've got the church. So just keep that in the back of your mind.

But some human energy got thrown in and Rachel said, I can't believe it. My sister is just having kids right and left. She's had Reuben and Simeon and Levi.

She's just popping out all of these sons and I'm embarrassed. And since I can't seem to generate any sons, I'm impatient. I don't want to wait.

I'm not going to pray to God. I'm not going to do what Hannah will later do and petition God in a very similar situation. Instead, she comes up with her own solution.

Well, take my handmaid Bilhah. And the great fruit of this union is Dan, who is probably the most evil tribe in Israel. So evil that they eventually get subtracted out of the list of tribes in the book of Revelation.

Dan is not even mentioned. Dan, way up there in the north, is going to be a cesspool of idolatry and horrible behavior and intermingling with the Canaanites who were never fully defeated and so on. So this doesn't work out well, the tribe of Dan.

Naphtali, we don't really hear or see a whole lot from Naphtali. Then Leah says, well, two can play that game and I'm getting kind of tired of popping out these sons myself, so she runs her handmaid in, Zilpah. Zilpah has Gad as well as Asher.

Asher, again, is kind of a Naphtali nondescript, but Gad is the prominent one, just like Dan is for Bilhah. Then ultimately, after all of these other sons have come out, Rachel finally has Joseph and then she dies in the process of giving birth to Benjamin, Ben-Oni, son of my pain. And Jacob says, we can't bring this guy up calling him Ben-Oni, son of my pain.

That's going to blight the guy. He's going to grow up thinking kind of like the prayer of Jabez thing. Remember, Jabez says, oh, I can't have this thing hanging over me.

So Jacob says, no, no, no, we're not going to call him Ben-Oni. His mother's not around to argue with me anymore. Anyway, I'm going to call him Ben-Yameen, son of my right hand.

And that's Benjamin. So you have those last two. Now, think about this.

You would expect that when Reuben loses the privileges of the firstborn, they would go to whom? Who's the secondborn son? Simeon. However, if you remember the Dinah

incident, Simeon and Levi do that dastardly thing where they, again, deceive guys into saying, oh, be circumcised, and then while they're all sore and they can't fight, they go in and murder them all. And Jacob says, I don't even want to be associated with them and their fellowship and their offspring.

So that firstborn blessing skips Simeon and Levi. And so the next guy down would be Judah. However, it doesn't end up going to Judah.

All, hear me now, all of the privileges of the firstborn son go all the way down to whom? Joseph. Why? He's the eleventh son. But he is the firstborn of whom? Rachel.

The originally desired wife. The woman that Jacob truly loved. Her firstborn becomes the firstborn.

Joseph. He is the guy that ends up with the double portion. But why doesn't he end up with the rulership? Why does the rulership go to Judah? Judah ends up sort of taking it by force.

He is stronger than his brothers. For example, if you look at Deuteronomy 21.17, where you've got the case of the loved and the unloved wife in the law of Moses, He shall acknowledge the son of the unloved wife as the firstborn by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the beginning of his strength. The right of the firstborn is his.

The right of the firstborn, that's the double portion. And Joseph does get the double portion. But Judah ends up being the ruling tribe.

King David is going to come from the tribe of Judah. The Lord Jesus Christ is going to come from the tribe of Judah. And you say, why doesn't David come from Ephraim? Or even Manasseh? Why does he come from Judah? Well, I was puzzling over this, and I would like to offer you a suggestion as to why this is the case.

First of all, what I alluded to earlier, these two wives suggest, connote, Israel and the church. Ultimately, what the Lord Jesus is looking for is a Spirit-filled, inheritance-possessing, kingdom-dwelling people. That's what He's after.

But first, you start with the... there's something that has to come first. And that is the less ideal, the Leah phase, where something has to be demonstrated, something has to be illustrated that flesh is insufficient. Individual attempts at righteousness apart from God's grace and God's power are not going to succeed.

The law could not save. The law is a shadow of good things to come. The law is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.

By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. The blood of goats and bulls cannot atone for sin. But it is a necessary part of God's plan that that come first.

It reminds me, we've talked about this many times before, you're all familiar with AA, Alcoholics Anonymous, and the big book. And what is the principle? The first step is to acknowledge that you need something greater than yourself. You need something outside yourself.

You cannot continue to think that you can solve your own problem. That is the key first step. This is really what the law does.

It convinces the human race that we cannot do it ourselves. Israel being ignorant of the righteousness of God and seeking to establish their own has missed it. Paul talks about this in Romans 9, 10, and 11.

So, this is kind of the Leah phase. Jacob buys his time, he works seven more years, and he ends up with Rachel. And Judah ends up with rulership, but it's rulership in Israel.

It's an Israelite kingship. King David is king of what? Israel. The Lord Jesus Christ, David's greater son, is the Messiah to whom? Israel.

He is the Messiah. I am sent only to the lost sheep of the whole world. I am sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

He is the root shoot from the stump of Jesse. He is the son of David. Have mercy on me, the man cries out, son of David.

Now, what's interesting is, when you think about the rulership that pertains to the firstborn son, and all of the privileges of the firstborn son come down to Joseph, what does Joseph end up ruling? Egypt, which includes, in Goshen, Israel. The Levites are going to be the priests in Israel. Melchizedek, the author of Hebrews, as it pains to point out, has a priesthood superior to that of Aaron and the Levites.

Why? Levi, as it were, is still in the loins of Abraham, and Abraham does obeisance and shares the bread and the wine with Melchizedek. The priesthood of Melchizedek, the Lord Jesus Christ, is a high priest after the order of Melchizedek, and that order is higher than the order of Levi. How about the rulership of Joseph vis-à-vis the rulership of Judah? In the same way, before Judah ever generates a king, all Israel is in Egypt, and all of them are subject to Joseph.

In the same way that Abraham is subject to Melchizedek, Israel is subject to Joseph. And Joseph is what kind of ruler in the land of Egypt? Number one or number two? Number two. He is the second highest.

So, in that picture, who does Pharaoh represent? Think of the kingdom of the Father. All rule and authority at the end of the millennial kingdom are going to be returned to one higher. Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father.

He is the second to the greatest. So, Joseph, in many ways, pictures the Lord Jesus Christ in his global rulership, which transcends that of the Judean kings. So, you have priesthood greater in the Lord Jesus Christ through the order of Melchizedek.

You have rulership greater, pictured by Joseph, who dies and whose blood is shown to the Father on the coat of many colors. And it has died, as far as the Father is concerned, and then seems to come back to life and is seated in power and majesty and becomes the benefactor of all of his people. Such a great picture of the future ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, this is the firstborn son of Rachel. There is a lot going on in the tribes and what they are assigned and what their inheritance turns out to be. What does Reuben, who missed all of this, end up with? He is on the east side of the Jordan.

He is in the region of Ogd, king of Bashan. Actually, he is going to end up south of that in Moab. Take a look back now at Joshua chapter 13.

We saw this section last time up through verse 14, where the Geshurites and the Maakathites dwell among the Israelites until this day. And that is going to come back to haunt them, because David is going to marry Maakah, daughter of the king of Geshur. And the great shining product of that union is going to be whom? Absalom.

Sure glad we left the Geshurites there. Look at verse 15. Yeshimoth, all the cities of the plain, all the kingdom of Sihon, who reigned in Heshbon, Sihon king of the Amorites, whom Moses had struck with the princes of Midian, Evi, Rechem, Zer, Hur, and Reba, who were princes of Sihon dwelling in the country.

The children of Israel also killed with the sword Balaam the son of Baor, the soothsayer, among those who were killed by them. And the border of the children of Reuben was the bank of the Jordan. This was the inheritance of the children of Reuben according to their families, their cities, and their villages.

This is largely the land of Moab. Reuben ends up in the land of Moab. Now, is this appropriate? Think about his crime.

Why did he lose the privileges of the firstborn? He went up to his father's bed. Why is there a Moab? Who was Moab? Moab is the son of Lot. And who was Moab's mother? Lot's daughter.

He's the product of incest. So, it's appropriate, if you will, that Reuben, who essentially committed incest by laying with his father's concubine Bilhah, who wouldn't have been there except that Rachel messed up, and Jacob consented, now Reuben is going to dwell in the land of Moab. Ma means from.

Av means father. Moab, the son from my father. His mother named him.

Lot's daughter named her son Ben-Av, son of my father. That's where you get this whole I am my own grandpa thing, where you start having strange relationships. So, it is poetic as well as symbolically significant that Reuben ends up in the land of Moab.

Gad, who's his mother? Zilpah. This again was one of these non-standard things. Leah had a dry spell where she wasn't getting pregnant, so she ran the maidservant in to try to keep up.

Because Bilhah started having sons, and this is not the approved way to obtain progeny. And so you have Gad. He's the number seven in the lineup.

He's living over there. And this is going to be the region of Gilead. Well, this is the area to the east of the Sea of Galilee, a little bit south.

It's intermediate between Moab and the northern reaches of Bashan. But what is significant about this area? This is the first to be overrun. It's fertile.

It's green. They feed their flocks there. But when the king of Assyria comes down, these people are all going to be taken into captivity.

And the prophets talk about this. They are overrun. They are defeated because they stick over on the far side of the Jordan.

So they are the first to go. And then finally you have the half-tribe of Manasseh, firstborn of Joseph. They say, well, Joseph is the firstborn of Rachel, and so his firstborn Manasseh ought to devolve down to him all of the rights of the firstborn that came to Joseph.

But they don't, because of the crossed hands. So if you step back and think about this, in the first instance of Israel, there were people who came out of Egypt under the blood, who came up to the edge of the Jordan and decided not to cross. We're going to stay over here where it's safe, where it's fertile, where it's comfortable.

In that comfort zone, you do not end up with a permanent possession. You have what you think is a possession. It's kind of like Lot with those green fields that he chose in the days of Abraham.

You have it for a while, and it's comfortable, and it is a possession. It's a lot better than the wilderness. It's a lot better than dying as a slave in Egypt.

But it is not the land of promise on the other side of the Jordan. It's sort of a stop short. You could think of this as maybe the 30-fold field brand of believer.

And that's as far as they ever get, and they are the first to lose their inheritance. David is never going to fully rule over there. They are going to be amalgamated, and by the time you get down to the days of Ezekiel, remember the Babylonian captivity? Remember when we got into the woe songs to the various nations, and it talked about Moab and

Ammon, and woe to the children of Moab, woe to the children of Ammon over on the far side? Who are those people? That's what's left after the Assyrians in 721 BC came in and swept the northern kingdom and everybody on the east side of the Jordan away.

And who are the Moabites? Those are the people who came into the vacuum and are now occupying this inheritance. Reuben and Gad and Manasseh no longer dwell in Gilead and Moab and Bashan. The people Ezekiel is telling woe songs to have come in and taken over their territory, because they're gone.

They've disappeared. They were a flash in the pan. They looked good, they had prosperity, they seemed to have possession, but ultimately they're gone.

And it's a reminder that it isn't how you start, it's how you finish. We saw it in Ecclesiastes. It isn't the tall spirit that stands up with great boasting words at the beginning, it's the long spirit that endures and finishes well that counts.

A lot of people start well. A lot of people run a good middle of the race, but run out of gas when you've got to get that kick around the last turn, into the last straightaway to cross the finish line, there's nothing left. Stumble and fall, or Zola Budd steps on you and you kick her out of the race.

In chess, there are guys that have memorized a lot of the standard openings, they can play a great opening, they can get into the middle game and not lose points, they can set up their defenses, castle their king to safety and set up well, and there's exchanges and they stay even until the endgame. In chess, there's three parts. There's the opening, there's the middle game, and there's the endgame.

And in the endgame, you're usually down to a few pawns, your king, and maybe a piece or two. I got a book one time, Matt and I were going through this book, talking about the endgame and how you operate your pawns when you've got just a few pawns left, and there's a thing called the advantage. You have to wait until there's a certain sequence of moves so that when you move your pawn, he has the advantage.

He threatens first and the other guy is sort of put on the defensive. You don't want to be the guy that can't move his pawn because this guy is already controlling the square. You want to have the advantage so that when his king is trying to come up and kill your pawn, all you have left is kings and pawns, the pawn has the advantage and the king can't move in to check.

And there's a whole strategy of the endgame and you have to finish well. It doesn't matter if your opening was great, it doesn't matter if your middle game was superb, if you blow it in the endgame. Reuben, Manasseh and Gad are the first to take hold of their inheritance.

Their tribes dwell in their inheritance before the rest of Israel even gets across the

Jordan, but they don't hang on to it, they don't keep it. And you say, well, really none of Israel ultimately keeps their inheritance. These guys were the first to get it and they are the first to lose it.

It's a picture, it's a reminder not to settle for the minimum. Why settle for being a 30-fold field? Why settle for just average? I think a lot of us as believers think, well, you know, I'm not the greatest believer that ever walked, but I'm not a reprobate either. I'm just kind of in the comfortable mass of when the judgment, I'll just be another face in the crowd.

I'll be in the comfortable average. Not too great, not too bad. Most people feel this way.

A lot of unbelievers think, well, you know, if there is a God and He judges people, I'm a pretty good person. I've been nice. I've given to charity.

There's a lot of people that like me. My family tolerates me and I've got a few friends and my boss hasn't fired me and I'm okay. You know, the whole I'm okay, you're okay thing.

And people say, I just kind of want to blend. I don't want to stick out. I don't want to really press to achieve anything monumental.

I'll just not be too bad and not be too good. This is what happens. Reuben makes one bad decision and it knocks him out for life.

His tribe along with Gad and Manasseh settle for what looks good at the moment and they miss out. So this leaves the nine tribes on the other side. Nine and a half.

Ephraim comes across and that half tribe of Ephraim is going to wind up becoming so numerous that the whole northern kingdom of Israel is going to be referred to as Ephraim. They're a half tribe. They're supposed to be minimal.

He's the second son of Joseph. He's just kind of like the wild card guy that got in. Joseph was telling us about how they pick these bowlers and there's like 64 of them that get their way in and there's one they just pick and say, well, we'll give you a shot.

It's kind of an honorary thing. Just come in and bowl and see how you do. It really stuns everyone when that one goes on.

Same thing in the Super Bowl. The wild card team gets in as kind of a last choice and sometimes they'll go on to win. Well, Ephraim, you would think, well, if Grandpa hadn't crossed his hands, I wouldn't even be here.

And Ephraim winds up prospering and becoming large and they have this great potential. Of course, they're a picture of something else. But this is what's in view when you come to chapter 13 of Joshua and you see the division of the land.

This picture, this is before the later history of Israel. This is before the divided kingdom. This is before they ultimately go out in 721 and in 586 with the Assyrians and the Babylonians.

So Moses gave this land on the other side, but look at the, there is this ringing reminder of failure even here, even before you know the history. What do the slopes of Pisgah remind you of? What's Mount Pisgah? What happened there? Where did Moses look across and see the wonderful, fertile land of promise that he would never enter? Where did Satan dispute for the body of Moses? Where did God bury Moses? Where did he die? Where was he? It's Pisgah. He's over on the far side of the Jordan looking across.

It's this area. It's this region. And, you know, the suggestion is there of failure, of shortfall.

This is actually the springs of Pisgah. You have the reference to Balaam. Balaam who is a prophet of God.

Balaam who is directly confronted by God. Balaam who tries to ride the donkey down to go curse Israel and ends up blessing them. Balaam who is in direct communion with God winds up being slain by the children of Israel because he has not kept faith.

This is not the fate of a faithful prophet to be slain. He ought to be joining Israel. He ought to be welcomed by Israel, not slain by them.

So there is this sense of failure associated with Reuben. The border of the children of Reuben is the bank of the Jordan. That's their inheritance.

The land of Gad, Moses gave them. The territory of Jazer, the cities of Gilead, half the land of the Ammonites. As far as Aror, which is before Rabbah, Heshbon, Aramath, Pisgah, and Betanim, and so on.

You have all of these descriptions. The kingdom of Sihon, king of Heshbon, he's the guy that died and lost his stuff. As far as the edge of the Sea of Kenareth, which will be the Sea of Galilee, which will be where the Lord Jesus spends time with his disciples.

This is the inheritance of the children of Gad. Moses also gave an inheritance to the half tribe of Manasseh. It says for half the tribe of the children of Manasseh, but this is the half tribe of the children of Manasseh.

There are territories from Mahanaim, Bashan, all the kingdom of Og, king of Bashan, the towns of Jair, and so on. These areas which Moses had distributed as an inheritance. Notice, Moses had distributed, Moses had distributed, Moses had distributed.

This is inheritance under the law. It's sort of a reminder of what Old Testament saints could, how far they could go, how much they could achieve under the law. You can get

so far and no farther.

You can get to the edge of the Jordan, but not over. It takes something else, it takes something new to move into the land of blessing and inheritance. Then in chapter 14, these are the areas which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eliezer the priest, Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel distributed as an inheritance to them.

Two and a half tribes on the east side, Moses gave you that. These are vetted, these are gifted by Joshua the leader, Eliezer the priest, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel. That's all of the signatures on the title deed, as it were, below God's signature himself.

Their inheritance was by lot. Notice, was there any lot casting involved in Reuben and Gad and Manasseh? It was carved up and assigned by rule, by fiat, by declaration of Moses. On this side, God determines.

It's chosen by lot. When you cast lots in Israel, you're saying, Lord, tell me how this should go. Notice, in case we missed it, how many times we've been told.

Now, verse 3, Moses had given the inheritance of the two tribes and the half tribe on the other side of the Jordan. But to the Levites, he had given no inheritance among them, for the children of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim. They gave no part to the Levites in the land, except cities to dwell in with their common lands, for their livestock and property, as the Lord had commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did, and they divided the land.

Now, there's two or three points that we'll look at now, and then we'll see the story of Caleb next time. But think about this. It's divided by lot.

All of the people of Israel don't inherit all of the land. There are specific portions. There are specific enemies.

Remember, it's not all been conquered. Each area, each tribal boundary has undefeated Canaanites in it. Everybody's got a battle to fight.

If you sit and take the time to draw on the map every tribal border that's going to be described in this book, and go back to the list that God gave Joshua and said, Joshua, you're old, and here's all the undefeated people, there are undefeated people in every single tribal area for these nine tribes. How many undefeated people are there on the east side of the Jordan? Og, King of Bashan, Sihon, those guys are gone. No challenge, no battle.

They're settled. If they're going to fight a battle, they've got to go over and help the other guys on the west side. They're not warriors.

They're not engaged in the conflict. They're not exterminating the enemies of God. The nine tribes, nine and a half tribes, they are doing the work of God.

They are preparing, ideally, the environment in which God will dwell. So, it's distributed by lot. God decides who fights what battle, who clears what area.

God decides. We like to think of ourselves as believers who are going to go in and seize and possess the inheritance that the Lord Jesus Christ has for us through his victory on the cross. Faith and obedience qualifies us to share with him.

He wants to be the firstborn among many brethren. Romans 8, 29, 30. Remember that? There is a destiny, there is a mission for us, and it is to share in the inheritance of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's what these tribes are going to do, but God decides. Your battle is not my battle. That guy's battle is not this guy's battle.

That lady's battle is not this lady's battle. Different ones of us have different enemies to fight, different territory to seize, and it is a mistake to judge others by ourselves and to say, well, I've got a battle down here in the plain. I don't see you fighting in the plains.

You're up there in the hills. You're up in the hills, and somebody else is in the plains. You're fighting Amorites, and they're fighting Jebusites.

You're fighting one kind of battle, and they're fighting another. You say, well, you've got it easy. You don't have an uphill climb like I do.

And they say, oh, well, you've got cover and trees and ravines, and I'm down here in the flats where I'm widely exposed. Everybody is assigned a territory. Each of us has a mission.

It's not just evangelism. It's not just hang on until Jesus gets back. We have specific assignments.

Notice how specific and detailed these tribal assignments are going to be in the book of Joshua. You have a specific assignment. I have a specific assignment, and they differ.

Don't spend your time... It would be silly for the tribe of Asher to be looking over at the tribe of Naphtali and saying, well, your enemies are easier than my enemies, or, boy, I'm sure glad I don't have your enemies. It's silly. We ought to concentrate on the area that has been assigned to us.

By lot means God chooses. Don't argue with God's choice. Don't ask God, well, why didn't you give me that guy's land? Why didn't you give me that territory? God chooses.

You and I have specific battles to fight, specific territories to take, specific victories to

achieve that will result in specific kinds of inheritance. That's the message of this chapter. Don't get bogged down in the city names and who got what.

This is the picture. All these things have been written for our instruction, and it is important for us to remember day by day by day. Tomorrow is Saturday.

The next day is Sunday. Conversations, people, circumstances, situations, tests of various kinds, opportunities of various kinds. Somebody has run out of their walled city.

You need to run in and take it. Somebody is offering great, fierce resistance. You've got to go in and meet force with force.

You've got to be ruthless. You've got to be quick. You've got to be dedicated.

You've got to be persevering to win some battles. You've got to be quick and decisive and perceptive to win other battles. Sometimes you draw the enemy out and ambush him.

Other times you lay siege and you just keep banging away and banging away with the big log on the gate until it falls. All of us have these battles to fight. The scriptures constantly tell us we're in a war.

What kind of a war? This war. You have a specific assigned mission, and so do I. We perceive it, we recognize it, and we do not quit. We don't decide, well, I believe I'll go over with Reuben and Gad and Manasseh and sit in the green fields and wait for Jesus to come back.

Where's the fun in that? We can't hang on to that kind of inheritance. That's the law. I'm following morality.

I'm within the Ten Commandments. I'm okay. That's not God's best and perfect plan for our lives.

He wants us on the offensive. He wants us with our armor on. That's what you see here.

This is going to be personified. It's going to be illustrated graphically when we come back next time and see the example of Caelan. It's going to be illustrated graphically when we come back next time and see the example of Caelan.

You've got to go in and take the land. You've got to face the assigned enemies and seize the assigned inheritance. This is a great picture and a great encouragement for you and me because by God's grace, we can do it.

As I said, next time we'll see a great individual example of this, but for tonight, let's close in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the great pictures that you give us in Scripture that so graphically illustrate your plan and purpose for us, even in this age. We are

grateful for the Lord Jesus Christ and the gifts that he has given us as a result of his victory on the cross, the presence of the Spirit, the power of your word.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress these truths on our hearts, help us to live in a way that is pleasing in your sight, and that does enable us to seize and lay hold of inheritance both now and in the ages to come. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.