

Joshua 07-08-09a

This is Friday the 9th of August 2007. We continue our study in the book of Joshua. We resume in chapter 13.

We will, by God's grace, move into chapter 14 tonight. Let's take a moment as we begin to take the opportunity to go to the Lord in prayer. It's a chance to focus our concentration, to remember that the success and the fruit of this endeavor depends almost entirely on the ministry of God's Holy Spirit.

Shall we pray? Father, what a privilege it is for us to spend time together in fellowship and in the study of your word. We are grateful for the gifts that you have distributed to each one of us and the blessings that we enjoy when we gather in your name. We thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ and the life that is ours through him and in him.

We ask your blessing on us now as we study your word together. May God the Holy Spirit find us ready pupils and minister these truths to our hearts in such a way that will enable us to grow in grace and knowledge. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. This is an interesting section of scripture to interpret. Chapter 13 of Joshua and the general area of the book in which we find ourselves because at first glance it is just pasty dry.

It's as bad or worse than a genealogy at first blush, at first glance. This is why I say so. In a genealogy, real easily, you can do this.

If you want a little exercise, if you want to have a little enjoyable time of meditation, pick a genealogy, any genealogy. Get a Strong's Concordance and look up the meaning of the names. As you decode the names into their English equivalents from Hebrew and then re-read the passage and think about the passage in its context, you are going to quickly discover that God had those people named with those names for a reason.

We saw this in Genesis looking at the parallel lines of Seth and Cain. It is amazing, it's stunning to see the contrast between people with the same or similar names and people who have opposite names in the same generation and how the line that seeks to please God and exercises faith is distinguished from those who go their own way under the line of Cain. But you can't do that with a section like this because these are place names and if you, and I've tried, sit there and decode all of these place names, many of them we don't know what they mean anymore.

Many of them we don't know where they are anymore. Archaeology has endeavored and has found a few of them. We know the general borders, we know the general shape of these territories, but many of these specifics are completely opaque to a reader 3,400 years after the fact.

So, as I suggested last week, we ask ourselves the question, why does God include this in Scripture? You think about Christians just in the last two millennia or the last several hundred years. What if you don't have a map? What if you don't have the advantage of a lot of Bible encyclopedias and you've got your Bible and you're off someplace and you're trying to read this section? Is this section meaningless if you don't have a map? Is it meaningless if you don't have a lexicon or a concordance? Why would God include this in the precious pages of His Word if it can only be deciphered with a lot of outside help? So, that leads me, and hopefully you, that it leads me at least to believe that there is another way to approach this material. I assume that if God has allowed the locations and the meanings and the unique local associations that belong to these places that are listed, particularly in Joshua 13, to disappear from history, to no longer be current and extant, that we don't need them.

I believe that information that we need, God provides. And we should not have to move heaven and earth and have a whole team of scholars to tell us what it is. A believer with an average education, with a pretty good understanding of the geography of the Holy Land, ought to be able to benefit from this chapter and these verses.

Every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. So, it occurs to me that knowing exactly where the places are or exactly what their names mean isn't really the key. So now we know, or we have assumed at least what's not the key.

What is the key? What does enable us to get some applicability? Because that's what it all boils down to, right? There ought to be something that we can leave here and apply, having looked at this chapter. So, we fall back on a more overview type perspective. We step back and look at the bigger picture.

We look at the symbolic values, at the metaphorical aspects, at the prefiguring of the ministry of Jesus Christ. And immediately, in my mind at least, this becomes suggestive. We've already established the close association between the Old Testament Yeshua and the New Testament Yeshua, right? And we see in this situation, even if you don't know where all these places are, what do we know? We know that there's two and a half tribes that are content with what they see on the east side of the Jordan.

Moses gave it to them. Moses ever and always suggests, symbolizes, speaks of, evokes the law. And there are those who are content with what the law, or operation under the law, provides.

They got this territory under Moses. And guess what? There is no further conquest required. Sihon and Og have been defeated.

They're gone. Their people are vanquished. And this land is open.

It is uncontested. It's there to sit upon. Turn with me for some verification of this, back to

the book of Deuteronomy.

And in a second, I will give you the chapter. Deuteronomy chapter 7. What is the destiny that God has given to Israel? Way back, early on. When the Lord your God brings you into the land which you go to possess and has cast out many nations before you, does it say the people of Bashan, the people of Gilead, and so forth, the people on the east side? No.

It is the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you. When the Lord your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them.

You shall show them no mercy. You shall not make marriages with them. Do not give your daughter to their son, and so forth.

All of this is the mission. This is what is given to Israel for a mission. Now, the settling on the east side of the Jordan is a choice.

And what we end up with as we look at this Joshua 13 scenario is we've got three different kinds of Israelites, don't we? We've got Israelites who accept a possession that is really outside the land but is granted to them by Moses. Moses says, you want this land? You can have it. That's one type of Israelite.

There is a second kind of Israelite, which is the nine and a half tribes that go across and engage in the conquest. Now, who's left out? Who's the third type? Who has neither settled on the east side nor conquering the west side? Who's left? The Levites. If you remember this passage, they are mentioned twice.

And they are not given an inheritance in the land. They are to go in with the people, but they have got a different calling. They've got a different scenario.

So you've got three different kinds of Israelites, those on the east, those on the west, and those with no inheritance whatsoever. Now, the passage I was trying to find earlier is Deuteronomy chapter 3, verse 12 through 22. And it harks back to Numbers 32.

But you can write both of those down. Numbers 32 and Deuteronomy 3, 12 through 22. Look first at Numbers 32.

The children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of livestock. This is category number one of the three categories we're looking at. Great multitude of livestock.

When they saw the land of Jazar and the land of Gilead, that indeed the region was a place for livestock, the children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spoke to

Moses, to Eleazar the priest, and to the leaders of the congregation, saying, and now they're going to list nine cities. Adaroth, Debon, Jazar, Nimrah, Heshbon, Eleah, Shebon, Nebo, and Bayon. The country which the Lord defeated before the congregation of Israel is a land for livestock, and your servants have livestock.

Therefore they said, if we have found favor in your sight, let this land be given to your servants as a possession. Do not take us over the Jordan. Moses said to the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben, shall your brethren go to war while you sit here? Why will you discourage the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the Lord has given them? This is the equivalent of your parents telling you when you were a little kid, well, what if everybody did that? You've thrown that litter on the ground.

What if everybody threw the litter on the ground? You've made this choice. What if everyone chose that? Are you trying to discourage all of the people to just live on the east side of the Jordan? This is what your fathers did when I sent them away from Kadesh Barnea to see the land. They went up to the valley of Eshkol, saw the land.

They discouraged the heart of the children of Israel so that they did not go into the land which the Lord had given them. So the Lord's anger was aroused on that day, and he swore an oath, saying, Surely none of the men who came up from Egypt, twenty years old and above, shall see the land which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because they have not wholly followed me, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite, and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have wholly followed the Lord. The Lord's anger was aroused against Israel, made them wander in the wilderness forty years.

All the generation that did evil in the sight of the Lord was gone. Now look, you have risen in your father's place a brood of sinful men to increase still more the fierce anger of the Lord against Israel. For if you turn away from following him, he will once again leave them in the wilderness, and you will destroy all these people.

So how great of an idea is it to ask for this land on the east side of the Jordan? Not too hot. So they said, Well, look, we'll build sheepfolds and cities, then we'll arm ourselves, and we'll come help fight, and we won't return to our homes until everyone has received his inheritance. We will not inherit on the other side, then we'll return and take our inheritance on the eastern side.

Moses said, If you do this thing, if you arm yourselves before the Lord, for all your armed men cross over the Jordan, and the land is subdued before the Lord, then afterward you may return and be blameless before the Lord and before Israel, and this land shall be your possession before the Lord. But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out. Rather famous statement of Scripture, Be sure your sin will find you out.

Build cities for your little ones, and flocks for your sheep, and do what has proceeded out of your mouth. Children of Gad, children of Reuben, spoke to Moses saying, Your servant will do as my Lord commands. Interestingly, all the way through this account, two of the three tribes are mentioned.

Someone is notably absent here. Who is it? Manasseh, right? And Manasseh is, what's his birth order? He is the firstborn of Joseph, but in that classic reversal, Ephraim is going to get the right hand, and Manasseh does not, and so Manasseh is going to join Reuben, the overlooked oldest offspring of Leah. Manasseh, the oldest overlooked offspring of Joseph.

Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and so on, there in the cities of Gilead, your servants will cross over and fight. So, that's an accommodation. It's a second best.

What would be the ideal? And how do we know it's the ideal? What is the apportionment of the land in Ezekiel? When you get over there to the division of the land in the Millennial Kingdom, where is the apportionment for all twelve tribes? And, Levi. It's on the west side. Remember that? We studied it.

It's all parallel sections, and it's from north to south, right down the land. It's all on the proper side of the Jordan. So, how do we, what do we do with that information? It's interesting historically.

You can see in the later history of Israel that these choices have historic consequences. It's been pointed out that these territories had no natural boundaries on the east. There's no natural defense.

There's not a river. There's not a mountain ridge. So, they, for the rest of Israelite history, are going to be constantly exposed to the threat of invasion.

The Moabites invade them. The Ammonites invade them. The Canaanites invade them.

The Arameans invade them. The Midianites invade them. The Amalekites invade them.

When the Assyrians come down, that's the first territory to fall, and they disappear at that point. Their tribal identity sort of vanishes. So, in chapter 13, again, that's one group.

So, spiritually speaking, if we recognize that the law is a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ, and that after the church age began, Paul, in Galatians and other places, continues to teach, you've got to get past righteousness by works. You've got to get past legalism. You've got to get past this idea that if you just structure your life a certain way, and if you hit certain marks, God will bless you.

That is the shadow of the law. That is not the fullness of Christ. But if you settle for that, I

think your picture is Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh.

What's interesting to me is it doesn't mean if you're in that group, if you're in that category as a church age believer, it doesn't mean that you're not going to fight spiritual battles. What it does mean is if you have settled, if you're fighting because you have promised that you would, but you're not fighting because this is going to be my land. You notice what happens when God says to Joshua, look, you're getting old.

You need to go ahead and divide up the land. There are still enemies to conquer, but assign the land and let the individual tribes fight their own battles from now on. You can split up, and these will be tribal battles.

These are battles of possession, not battles of conquest. This is the transition we have in chapter 13. Chapters 1-12, that's the story of the conquest.

Beginning in 13, now we're talking about possession. And it is at pains to tell us a couple of times Joshua conquered the whole land. Yeshua has been victorious over the whole region.

Now it is going to be apportioned, and the remaining cleanup battles are to be fought by the individual tribes. It doesn't mean that there's nothing left to fight and nothing left to win, but the strategic battle has been won. Now it's a matter of tactics, and Israel is going to divide into tribes and take possession by conquest.

What about the soldiers from Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh? They're going to fight for the conquest when Israel is united as an army and exploits the generalship and the brilliance of Joshua's leadership and the grace of God in giving them a strategic victory. But what's going to happen now that they divide up into tribes and begin fighting for their tribal possession? Are the Reubenites, Gadites, and Manassehites going to split up into 12 parts and go assist each tribe as small militias and clans and families? This is the point at which they're going to go back across the Jordan and go home to their cities and sheepfolds. So the battles for possession, the battles for inheritance in the land proper, the glorious victories against the seven nations that are enemies of God are not going to be their portion.

They're going to go back and squat on old victories, victories under Moses. What is the interpretation application in this life? There are different kinds of church-age believers. And this is our picture.

What kind of believer are we going to be? Are the tribes of Reuben and Gad and Manasseh numerous? They are very numerous. Are they prosperous? They are very prosperous. Do they have, at least initially, a sense of great peace and prosperity? It reminds you a lot of the story of Lot back in Genesis.

Chapter 13 is it, where Lot and Abram go their separate ways. Lot goes toward the

grassy, fertile plains in which are the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. In the same way, on the east side of the Jordan, up north, you've got the unconquered, undefeated Geshurites and Maakathites who are eventually going to be responsible for David's wife, Maakah, who is going to give birth to Absalom, who is going to deeply divide the land and is going to set the stage for the later division of the nation, because it is only with great difficulty that the United Kingdom survives through the end of David's reign and through the reign of Solomon, and it immediately tears apart afterward.

So, again, what can we say, what sort of believer, what would be the characteristics of a church-age believer corresponding to these two-and-a-half tribes? Well, what is intriguing is they go across and fight. They participate. They exploit these strategic victories, but they're not there for possession.

What do the battles in Canaan represent, spiritually speaking, in spiritual terms? What is the symbolism? What is our spiritual metaphor? We put our armor on, and we fight against unseen enemies, do we not? We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, powers, rulers. Our combat is with the world as well as the flesh, as well as the devil. Spiritual conflict.

And what is at stake in the spiritual conflict? We're here in Bible class, and everything's great. We've got our Bibles open. But later on, we're going to be in conversations.

We're going to be performing tasks. We're going to be mowing and washing and doing various kinds of work, checking things off our list. A lot of you are going to be in school here.

Don't you like hearing about that in the middle of your summer vacation? School's going to start before long. And there are obligations. There are duties.

There are tasks. And we're not here to keep our Christian life in a neat little box that we take out a couple of times a week for Bible class. It's supposed to permeate.

It's supposed to be the conditioning factor. Our life is an excuse to be spiritual. Spirituality is not a thing that we're going to do a couple of times and then basically go live life.

And once in a while, we stop life and go get spiritual at Bible class. The only reason we have a life is to be spiritual. To walk by means of the Spirit.

To walk by faith. To lay hold of righteousness by faith. And this is really where the answer to my question lies.

How do you take possession? What is it we are taking possession of in our daily walk? Two people can be sitting there doing dishes. One is washing and one is drying. One, in the act of washing dishes, is laying up for themselves treasure in heaven.

Why? Because every time they're tempted to be annoyed, every time they're tempted to be impatient, every time they're tempted to wish they were doing something else, why do I have to do the dishes again? So-and-so is doing something else. So-and-so never has to do the dishes. I always have to do the dishes.

And then we stop. We say, wait a minute. Whatsoever you do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord.

If the Lord Jesus Christ had come in and said, Sam, would you mind cleaning these dishes up? How anxious would I be? How fast? How efficient? How energetic would I be washing a sink full of dishes if the Lord Jesus Christ had personally come to me and said, Sam, would you do this for me? Couldn't do enough. You couldn't wash it. So, Lord, fill the sink.

Give me more. Bring me the neighborhood's dishes. If you're asking, I'll do it.

Well, that ought to be our attitude all the time. And so we talk ourselves through that rationale. We say, you know what? I'm not going to ruin the opportunity to lay hold of righteousness in this situation.

I'm going to do this, and I'm going to do it heartily as unto the Lord. I'm going to have a good attitude. I'm going to put the interests of others ahead of myself.

I'm going to win this little mental battle. Nobody's going to see it. Nobody's going to know.

To look at me, I'm just serene, untroubled waters. And yet inside, I'm fighting this battle, and I'm going to win it. And when I win it, I am taking possession of something in the land that is going to be mine.

I am laying up treasure for myself. God is writing it in His book. It accrues.

It counts. It is kept track of. And it's a great victory.

Angels keeping the books up there are saying, great, look, somebody finally gets it. Somebody understands the life of faith. This is great.

Hey, angel number two, come over here and look at this. Look at what I get to write down for this believer. They get it.

They figured it out. And day by day, increment by increment, battle by battle, Canaanite by Canaanite, city by city, they're taking hold of their inheritance. That's our opportunity.

So again, what about these people on the other side? What is that a picture of? Can you fight battles against enemies and not end up with possession? Can you be striving for righteousness and endeavoring and struggling and end up with nothing by way of

possession? At least nothing that God intended. You end up with the possession you chose. You picked it out.

Were there any lots cast for the land on the east side of the Jordan? Reuben and Gad and Manasseh chose that land for themselves. I want this pasture right here. God chose the inheritance of the tribes.

Remember, it was done by lot. Do you want to pick your own reward? What does Jesus say about the Pharisees and their righteousness when they stand on the street corners praying, when they make sure that their offerings are observed? I hope everyone sees what an impact I am having. I hope everyone sees what a good thing I'm doing here.

I'll let it slip. I'll make it known. I'll reveal it in some fashion.

I'll leave this to be discovered so that someone will pat me on the back. As soon as we do that, guess what? We have transferred our membership into the tribe of Reuben. We have transferred our membership into the tribe of Gad or Manasseh.

And where we should have been the firstborn and we should have inherited, we've given it away. Might as well be Esau. Get your little tasty bite of pottage and that's all you're going to get.

That's the contrast. You still fight the battle and you end up with just the grassy pasture of your own choosing. You're not fighting God's battle.

You're not winning God's war. You're not reflecting God's glory. You're over there tending your own cows and your own sheep.

Those are the options. But there's a third. What about the 13th tribe? What about the tribe of Levi? Isn't it emphasized here for us in Joshua 13? The Lord came to Joshua.

Moses my servant is dead. Here are the borders. Every place the sole of your foot will tread.

Wilderness in Lebanon. As far as the great river Euphrates. The land of the Hittites.

The great sea going down to the sun. It will all be yours. No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life.

Be strong and of good courage. It talks about the Reubenites and the Gadites and the Manassehites and then it mentions the Levites. And it reminds us that they receive no inheritance.

One of the things that this does is it lists all of the tribes. We have the nine and a half tribes mentioned in verse 7. We've got the other two and a half tribes mentioned in this land division on the east of the Jordan. And then in verse 14 it says the tribe of Levi he

gave no inheritance.

The sacrifices of the Lord God of Israel made by fire are their inheritance as he said to them. Then it goes on talking about Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh and then look at chapter 14. These are the areas which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan.

Elijah the priest, Joshua the son of Nun, heads of the fathers of the children of Israel are distributed as inheritance. Their inheritance was by lot as the Lord had commanded by the hand of Moses for the nine tribes and the half tribe. Moses had given the two and a half on the other side of the Jordan but to the Levites he had given no inheritance among them.

So what's the deal on the Levites? Here's a trivia question for you. Do the Levites have soldiers in the army? Yes or no? Are there Levites bearing arms in the army? To save you the trouble of looking it up, no. How do we know this? You go back to Numbers.

Numbers chapter 3. The reason it's called Numbers, this is where the tribes are numbered and when you go to the description of the tribes and their orientation around the tabernacle in Numbers chapter 2, it tells you where all of the tribes go. Every one of the children of Israel camped by his own standard, by the emblems of his father's house, camped some distance from the tabernacle and meeting on the east side toward the rising of the sun, standard of the forces of Judah, shall camp according to their what? According to their armies. Not shown the son of Amenadab will be the leader of the children of Judah.

His army was numbered at 74,600. Next to him is Issachar. Next to him is Zebulun.

On the south side you've got Reuben with his armies and his leaders. His armies at 46,500. Then Simeon and then Gad.

Reuben and Gad both on the south. The south is far from the north. Then in the center in verse 17, Numbers 2.17, the tabernacle and meeting shall move out with the camp of the Levites.

It gives the east and it gives the south then it gives the center. The Levites are with the tabernacle of meeting in the center of the camp. As they camp they shall move out everyone in his place by their standards.

On the west side you have Ephraim. Ephraim, his army 40,500. Then the tribe of Manasseh and the tribe of Benjamin.

You basically got all of your Rachelites on the west, right? Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin. Then on the north you've got Dan, Hasher and Naphtali. These are their numbers.

And for each of the tribes there's a number given in Numbers 2 but not the Levites. It tells us in verse 32, These are the ones who were numbered of the children of Israel by their fathers' houses. All who were numbered according to their armies of the forces were 603,550.

But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel just as the Lord commanded Moses. There is a separate census of the Levites in the next chapter. And their disposition in the center of the camp is given.

And you've got the families of the Levites organized under the three major houses. You have the three sons of Levi, by Gershon, Kohath and Merari. And they're going to end up being on the north, the west and the south sides.

Three major divisions of the Levites. The Kohathites, the Gershonites and the Merarites. So now, who's going to be on that favored eastern side? You've got the three families of Levites on north, west and south.

Do you remember who's on the east side of the center of the camp amongst the Levites? Well, they're on the outside of the camp, but in the tabernacle precincts where all the Levites hang out. You've got your outer four groups of Israel, but now inside in the tabernacle precincts, you've got Levites on the north, Levites on the west, Levites on the south. Who's on the east of the Levitical camp? Moses and Aaron and the sons of Aaron who are the priests.

Remember, the Levites are not all priests. All priests are Levites, but not all Levites are priests. That's why they call them the priests and the Levites.

And if you read Numbers chapter 3, you find that the duties of these various families of Levites are described. Some of them carry implements, some of them have work related to the sacrifices and so on. And from Merari come the Molites and the Mushites.

And they camp on the north side and they carry the boards of the tabernacle, the bars, the pillars, the sockets, the utensils, the works related to it and so on. But in verse 38, those who camp before the tabernacle on the east, Moses, Aaron and his sons, keeping charge of the sanctuary to meet the needs of the children of Israel. The outsider who came near was to be put to death.

So then you have the number of the Levites given at the end of that chapter. All who were numbered are the Levites whom Moses and Aaron numbered at the commandment of the Lord. It's not the end of the chapter, it's the end of the section, verse 39, are 22,000.

So, why have I detailed all of that? In the march order for the 40 years of wilderness wandering, there is an assigned location for each of the tribes of Israel. And within the Levites, there is an assigned location for each family. Once you cross over the Jordan,

there are assigned locations.

Was there any lot casting for these positions around the tabernacle? This is the law. This is under Moses. God says, you will camp here.

Judah is on the favored side on the east. Moses, Aaron and the sons of Aaron, Abraham and the priests are on the favored side on the east. It is the side of hope.

It is the side where the glory of God comes and goes. Jerusalem, it is the eastern side that faces the Mount of Olives. It is the eastern side that is going to see the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ going and coming.

Everything happens on the east. Interestingly, now, when we're in the time of the conquest, the eastern side of the Jordan is not the place to be. That's not the best place.

God doesn't say, Behold the tribe of Judah and I will give the inheritance to the Levites on the eastern side of the Jordan. Not now. Now, it is the other side.

It's a new thing. It's a new economy. Now, we're not organized in a cross shape.

Now, we're organized according to territories. And they're irregular. If you ever look at a map of the assigned territories in the land of promise, it's irregular.

It's unpredictable. It's cast by lots. It follows natural borders and so on.

It's flexible. It's adaptable. It's somewhat unpredictable.

And most of the tribes never fully conquer everything that's assigned to them. It reminds us a lot of this age where it's not so cut and dried. In the camp that wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, you always knew where your tribe was.

You always knew where you were supposed to be. There's a rule. It's simple.

I'm in the tribe of Dan. I've got to go north. I'm in the tribe of Benjamin.

I've got to go west. I'm in the tribe of Reuben. I've got to go south.

It's very simple. But, once you get into the land, now, God says, I throw the dice. Here's your assignment.

Go take it. Figure it out. The Reubenites, the Gadites, and the Manassites are going home.

It's up to you. You fight. You take possession of your land.

To the extent that you fight, to the extent that you are obedient, to the extent that you have faith, to that extent you will possess. And it's a great picture of this age. That is

why the author of Hebrews in chapter 3 and chapter 4 refers back to Psalm 95 and says, there remains a rest for the people of God.

If Joshua had given them rest, David would not have said in Psalm 95, there remains a rest for the people of God. He would not have said, do not harden your hearts, it's in the rebellion. And that call has persisted down through history to take possession of what God assigns to us.

Don't worry about the other guy. You have been given an assignment more or less by lot. We all get dealt a certain set of circumstances, a certain heredity, a certain environment.

That's what we're given. That's what we have in this chapter. So, back to my original thought here.

Do we really need to know the precise location of these cities? Do we need to know the detailed boundaries? It's kind of like asking in the New Testament, do we really need a detailed chart for the organization of a local church? Do we need Paul to have written one more epistle where he lays out church polity and church structure and says, this is how many deacons you should have, this is how large you can be, this is whether or not you should have a building or pews or a parking lot or an education building or a choir or a piano or an organ or should it be a board of elders or a board of deacons, should you have one pastor or many pastors? Do we really need that? In the same way that we don't need precise knowledge of what was assigned to Israel in this day because that was up to them, that was for those tribes. But the principle is clear, is it not? They knew what their assignment was. Nobody knew it better than them.

Somebody that had been given an assignment down south would have no idea about these cities up north. Someone up north wouldn't know the details of the cities down south, even in Joshua's day. They didn't have Rand McNally, they didn't have Google Maps, they didn't have MapQuest, they didn't have GPS.

They couldn't just call it up and say, oh, I see. It's hearsay. They're saying, well, you know, these cities and these territories and these borders, well, I've heard of that, but I've never been there, haven't seen it.

They would have had imperfect knowledge even in Joshua's day. What's the point? We only have to ascertain our own challenge, our own allotment, our own row to hoe in God's field. What is my row? I don't have to worry about the other guy and what he's working on.

I don't have to worry about whether his battle is tougher than mine or easier than mine. I don't have to worry about whether those Canaanites over in his neck of the woods are tougher or taller or meaner or if they're just pushovers. Well, why did he get the easy, fat

guys that didn't have any kind of an army and I've got these lean, mean, Spartan type of guys I can hardly kill one given a platoon.

Doesn't matter. The only thing that counts is what has God assigned to me. Now, that all sounds fine, but think about it.

Can you think of anything, I can certainly think of things that are on my plate that I'm pretty sure are not on your plate. I have a particular job, I have a particular family, I have a particular set of circumstances and I am accountable, I am responsible to make decisions in those areas and to win battles in those areas and to not let myself be defeated, to not let myself be ambushed. Joshua is old.

Joshua is not going to be around. Remember the disciples, they always had the Lord Jesus to follow. He made the decisions about what town and how long to stay and who to minister to and where to go.

Then he said, I will not much longer be with you. You need to start standing on your own two feet. I am going away to a place where you cannot follow.

This Yeshua, God says, you're old and you're not going to be here in the flesh to help the people of Israel much longer. Give them their allotments so that they can make their own decisions and they can fight their own battles without your presence. And that's what the Lord Jesus has done for us.

He said to the disciples, He said, the things you've seen me do, you will do greater than these. He said to his disciples, you have seen. He said to Thomas, you've seen and you believe.

Blessed are those who not having seen still have faith. Joshua will soon be off the scene. In less than a decade, Joshua is probably over 100 here and he's going to die at the age of 110.

He passes the baton. He says, look tribes, here's your inheritance. Here's your allotment.

Here's your assignment. Go for it. I'm checking out.

I'm not going to be here to lead you. The strategic victory is won. You go after these possessions.

Don't settle on the wrong side of the Jordan. That's not God's victory. This is the side of God's victory.

This is the side of possession. I would compare those two and a half tribes to the 30-fold field. Yes, they made it out of Egypt.

Yes, they have an inheritance. But it isn't kicking out the seven evil nations. It isn't

possessing the land that God promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

It's second best. So many believers settle for second best. We have the chance to look at this example, recognize that it's our assignment now to do the very same thing and to enter into that rest.

We're going to pause here and take our break. When we continue after the break, we're going to move into chapter 14 and see how one individual is going to be emblematic of what all of these tribes are supposed to do. That's Caleb, the son of Jephunneh.