

## Joshua 07-09-21a

This is Friday, the 21st of September, 2007. We're in the book of Joshua, chapter 16, looking at some of the most exciting material imaginable, legal descriptions of territories assigned to clans and families and various tribes, rip snorting good stuff. Let's take a moment as we begin our study this evening to focus our attention and center our concentration and recognize the ministry of God's Holy Spirit as we spend this time together.

Shall we pray? Father, we are grateful on this occasion, as always, for the ministry of your Holy Spirit and the strength and the transformation that takes place when he works his work within our souls through your word. We thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ and his work on the cross, saving us and enabling us to have a life of meaning and purpose. We pray that as we study this portion of your word this evening, that each of us will find in it those truths that will sustain us and enable us to grow and be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

We ask it in Jesus name. Amen. This section of the book of Joshua, as you recall, is sort of a different sort of a thing.

We had battles and invasions and attacks and counterattacks and hailstorms and walls falling and all sorts of things in the earlier portion as Joshua and the Israelites moved into the land to take possession of their inheritance. This section, chapters 15 and 16 and 17, form a section. It forms a unit and it's got a very specific structure.

I began to talk about that structure last time. You have an introductory formula in chapter 15, verse 1, where it says, this is the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah. We're going to see that repeated as we go through these next several chapters in Joshua.

This is the lot. Now, why do we care about that? You say, well, it's a structural marker. Great.

I can have a real neat outline for this portion of the book of Joshua, but so what? So what? Why is there a structure in this portion of the book? Who cares? I would suspect that up to the point that we started studying this book, nobody had really sat down and read it. And after we leave it, it'll probably be a long time before you sit down to read it again. And yet here are these chapters with this legal boundary information and the designation of tribes and clans.

It's sitting here, God spent three or four chapters in his word on this material, and it's got this nice, neat structure. So what I would suggest is it's up to us. This is not so easy as a parable.

It's not so easy as a gripping narrative story. It's not so easy as a teaching passage. It's one of those where you have to be a little bit more of an advanced student to get what's here.

This isn't for your toddling, grippy, diaper type believer wandering around. Those people would go to the promises. Those people would go to simple, straightforward portions of the word of God, where it is very easy to see, just as you wouldn't slap a college textbook on a second or third grader.

This, in terms of spiritual truth, in terms of God's revelation, is more advanced. Your shallow thinking, quick reading, short attention span believers are going to zip right past this. But you and I have the opportunity to dig a little bit deeper.

So as I suggested last time, one of the first clues is the structure. We don't know who these clans were. We don't know where all of these towns and cities were.

Even the text in this section, in terms of the specific towns and things that are mentioned, is somewhat troubled. And I have spared you a great deal of agony by not laying the text of the Septuagint, for example, next to the Masoretic text and pointed out all of the differences. There's differences in understanding.

Sometimes they will... You know how it is in Hebrew names, people's names or place names. They all mean something. It's kind of like you see in the movies about the Indians.

Well, this fellow is running bear and this fellow is, you know, swaying tree. And this is wolf who limps badly. And this is, you know, they've got all these different names and it actually means something.

It dances with wolves, you know. Well, it's really sort of the same thing in Hebrew. Place names weren't really borrowed from other languages so much.

They meant something. So we had Kiryat Sefer. You remember what that meant? City of the book.

You have Kiryat Arba, the city of four. And so people would say, well, I'm heading over to the city of four in their language. That's how it sounded.

Well, when we, many hundreds of years later, thousands of years later, try to translate these, it's hard to know. Well, do you translate this or do you transliterate it? Because it's really a place name. Would you say Philadelphia or would you say brotherly love? How would you treat this? And so even the Septuagint translators who had the advantage of being 2,000 years ago plus weren't sure.

And so the Masoretes do it one way, the Septuagint people do it another. So this is some

of the challenge that we have. This is why this is not a grade school text for Christians in particular to study.

So the first thing I have suggested to you is the structure is a big help. Do you remember what we saw in the section aimed at the tribe of Judah? They're the first tribe. Leadership wise, they have risen to the top, even though that's not the birth order, but Reuben and Simeon and Levi, we know why they all got disqualified.

So Judah, not only because he's the fourth born, but because of his actions in the days of Joseph in Egypt with Benjamin and that whole scenario, Judah really redeemed himself. He reclaimed the leadership role in Israel that was lost and had pachinkoed all the way down. You know what pachinko, I say pachinko and then people say, what's pachinko? If you've seen one, you can never forget it.

Over in Japan and places, it's a vertical board with holes in it and nails sticking partway out and there are little channels and there's a steel ball that drops out of the top. And these are like slot machines. They're like pinball only straight up and it doesn't bounce around like pinball does with rubber bumpers and electrical contacts and things.

This is all mechanical and they've existed for a long, long time, but the ball starts at the top and you have a few little controls, but basically once it comes out, it just bounces off of different nails and it'll bounce around and bounce around going ever downward and it'll eventually enter one or another of the holes and depending on which hole it enters, that's your score or your prize or whatever. And so it falls down in a seemingly random way and then dives away. And that's what you think of when you think of the leadership role and all of the blessings that should have been Reuben's, they bounce down and they go down to Simeon.

Well, Simeon was involved in the Dinah incident, so he loses it, goes to Levi. Well, Levi was also involved in the Dinah incident, he loses it. Judah lost it.

It goes all the way down, goes all the way down to Joseph. And Joseph would have been the ruling tribe. Jesus Christ would have come from the tribe of Manasseh or Ephraim, depending.

But during that whole episode in Genesis with Jacob back in the land and the brothers coming down to buy grain and the hidden cup in the sack and holding Benjamin for ransom and one thing and another, Judah stands up. The whole reason I'm reminding you of this is there is a huge divide in Christianity today on one issue. Is everything fated and decreed by God or is the determination of your fate and your life and your future based on what you choose? Some people say it's all the decree of God.

Some people say, well, God decrees most things and you just have a little bit of choice. And other people say it's totally free. You can choose to be saved.

You can choose. And so you have what they call Calvinism on one end, they have Arminianism on the other. That's the way they like to frame it.

Here's the point. What does the Bible say on the issue of what determines your fate? Is your fate determined by the family you were born into? Is your fate determined by your genetics? Is your fate determined by the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune? Well, how was I to know that I was going to contract polio at the age of three and be crippled and my whole life has gone down a bad track? That was true more so in decades gone by than it is now. We've pretty well eradicated that particular disease.

But you see my point. Look at the word of God. The decree of God says the firstborn son is to get the inheritance.

What does experience and practice indicate? You can make bad decisions as the firstborn son and lose your inheritance. Ishmael lost it. Esau lost it.

Reuben lost it. Over and over again, you see the firstborn son falling short. You look at human history with Israel as God's firstborn son in the human race and the church as sort of the ones who come after.

And Israel as God's firstborn son, so to speak, made bad decisions and lost the fulfillment of God's promise at that particular time. So there's an example where God said the firstborn son is going to be the one who inherits. And yet that's not how it turns out.

Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph that we're looking at right here, their inheritance in the land was actually determined partly by circumstances beyond their control. When their great, great, great grandfather was standing in front of Jacob, Ephraim and Manasseh, the two sons of Joseph, are standing there. Joseph says, Father, here are my two sons.

I'm hoping you'll confer a blessing on them because here I am, the son, and this is the inheritance scene. This is the same scene that Isaac had with who he thought was Esau and it was actually Jacob. Now Jacob is living out that same scene where he had gone in with the hair strapped to his arms and received the blessing that belonged to Esau.

Now he is passing that blessing on to who is now standing in the place of the firstborn. And it's not Reuben. It's the sons of Joseph.

Joseph gets the double portion. So two sons are standing there. And so Jacob is all enfeebled and everything.

He rises up on his bed. Here's the two boys standing there. And Manasseh is standing in front of him on the right and Ephraim is standing in front of him on the left.

And he reaches his ancient feeble hands out and then he crosses his arms and he puts

his right hand on Ephraim's head and he puts his left hand on Manasseh's head. And Joseph says, Oh, Father, you're screwing up here. Let me move the boys or you move your hands.

But you've got this backward. And Jacob said, basically, shut up, son. I know exactly what I'm doing.

And he proceeds to make the sign of the cross with his arms as he blesses those two boys. The last shall be first. The first shall be last.

And it foreshadows so many things. It's that constant theme of reversal. But who is the first to enjoy the kingdom blessings of spirit being poured out on all flesh and carrying around the wisdom of God and being your own priest and representing yourself directly in God's presence? All of those were blessings promised to Israel.

But who gets them first? It's as though God crosses his hands and he has conferred those blessings on us. We're the Gentiles. We're the goyim, the unwashed, unchosen, wild olive tree branches out there.

But what did the firstborn son do? Bad choices. Bad decisions, disobedience, faithlessness, apathy. Well, all that spiritual stuff.

You know, I've got a life to live here. I've got a business to run. I've got kids to raise.

I've got bills to pay. I'll go through the motions and all that. But hey, that's not real life.

All your spiritual stuff and holy smoke and whatnot, that's not the real thing. And by thinking that way and living that way, the nation of Israel missed God's decreed promise. God's, they like to call it an unconditional promise to Abraham.

Your descendants will be blessed. Well, they ultimately will. But guess what? Not all of them.

And not at the time that they should have been because they made bad choices. So interestingly, these first three tribes that we're looking at here are those three. Judah, the rulership tribe in Israel.

And we saw the structure of how the clans and families receive their inheritance. The first thing God does through the lot is say, here's your border. Here's the circle in which your inheritance is going to reside.

And all of these landmarks have names that reflect warning. Warning about hubris. Warning about going to Edom and making the mistake of Esau.

Warnings about the stone of, I can't think of that guy's name now. That dropped in battle, got too proud, started dropping his shield or whatever and got killed. All of these

different ones that we looked at several weeks ago.

That's the border. Then it goes back and says, now here's the assignment within that. Not everybody inside the border is going to have the same circumstance.

Some people are in the Shephelah. Some people are in the Erebah. Some people are in the mountains.

There's different assignments. The mountain dwellers can be looking down at the valley dwellers and saying, you got it soft down there, you bunch of wimps. You can't climb a mountain.

You're wanting to be farmers. You got no guts. We're up here in the Spartan, rarefied thin air, hacking and coughing around here, climbing and catching goats and slaying Canaanites.

And you're down there in the soft, fertilizer-filled valleys, making fun or being envious of one another. Why didn't I get the soft, fertile, plain farming thing? I'm up here climbing up and down. I'm just getting to and from my house is a big work.

You got to go clear down to the creek to get water. You people can dig wells. And doesn't this happen today? Isn't it easy to look at somebody and say, well, boy, you know, you sure got this spoon in your mouth when you were born.

And look at me. I got a fork. And I've been, you know, getting stabbed and been hurt.

And ever since, I just got dealt a bad hand. How could I possibly? How can God expect me to X, Y, and Z with this set of... Look, look at the Word of God. It's trying to tell us something in this section.

God controls the lot. Every single one of these clans, every single one of these families, every single one of these tribes got their assignment in the land of Canaan. Their little group of godless, pagan, Gentile, Canaanite people to wipe out was assigned by God.

Some of them got little skinny, wimpy, underfed Canaanites to kill. Others of them got great, giant, muscular sons of Anak to kill. Well, the people that got assigned the sons of Anak can't waste their time going over and saying, Trajan, God assigned it.

God assigned it. Now, look, you have a life. You have a family.

You have opportunities. You have obligations. You have tasks and assignments.

All of us do. And guess why you have them? God assigns the lot. That's the message of this passage.

And you can see why this is not a message for baby believers. Baby believers are still

trying to keep from falling over. Stand on your feet.

How do you identify sin? What do you do if you do sin? Acknowledging your sin. Figuring out how the filling of the Holy Spirit works. Figuring out how the Word of God... Figuring out how to apply it and discern it and find a good source of teaching of it and how to meditate on it.

Your basic skills. You don't teach a four-year-old how to drive. It's just there are too many other things he needs to learn before he gets to that stage.

This is material. This is a section for believers like us. Believers who know some things.

Who already know that it's important to live your life in the light of God's Word. Who already have the basic skills of walking and keeping your balance. And not bumping into things when you try to go somewhere.

You have to have that down. If you don't. If you are a four-year-old.

If your feet can't reach the pedals. This section of Joshua is going to be opaque. It's going to be dull.

It's going to be inapplicable. And you're just going to be saying, when are we going to get back to the hacking and slashing and the giants falling and the walls crumbling? When are we going to get to the good stuff? Well, this is the good stuff for those of us who are ready to make an advance. Some of us have been studying the Word of God for years.

And we're kind of in a cruise mode. We've gotten out of town. We got on the highway.

We set the cruise control. And now we're just staying between the lines. Well, that's not all that God has for us in this life.

It's just getting rolling and staying between the lines. There are things to learn. If you want to be a 100-fold field.

If you want to truly bear the fruit that God assigns to believers who love Him, who are called according to His purpose. This is the kind of passage we have to sink our teeth into. We have to think about.

We have to dig out the truth. And speaking of digging, we're going to see a reference to that when we get a little bit further down. So that's what's going on.

That's why these sections are important. And I hope you, like me, appreciate that it is no accident that this stuff is here. It's not just filler.

It isn't like, well, we've got this stuff laying around. We need to flesh out the book. It

doesn't have enough pages.

Have you ever watched a movie that is that way? My goodness. I saw one of the later episodes in the series, one of my favorite series called The Rockford Files. But TV had a different pace in its earlier days.

If you remember, Mannix. I mean, come on, Barnaby Jones. You know, Jed Clampett 40 years later.

The guy was 90 and he was going to be a detective and go around. A lot of you probably haven't seen that show. But if you take Jed Clampett, age him 30 years, and then put a gun in his hand and put him in a suit.

His collar is like four sizes too big. He's just pruned up and wrinkled and he's going around going to catch the bad guys. I mean, you just, you're afraid somebody's going to look at him too hard and he's just going to go over.

But they could get away with that because the pace was very slow. He had Lee Merriweather or somebody around there answering the phone. They just sort of ambled through the episodes.

And, well, I think I'll go over and read the documents at the police station. In some kind of way, the bad guy just kind of twisted around and fell and got arrested. It was a slower pace.

The Rockford Files, I watched this thing and it was kind of like what I'm doing right now. It was just filler that went on and on and on. You keep waiting to get to the point.

And they show Rockford riding in the back of a car. They have him blindfolded and guys are looking out the window. And you see the car going down the road, cut back to the inside, guys looking out the window, going down the road.

This is not that. And I'm through giving you an illustration of what that is like. But you see my point? It's not filler.

It's not idle. And actually, some of those old shows, if you really pay attention, there is a purpose in those things. If you watch the Andy Griffith show, those quiet portions are necessary to appreciate the humor of the situations.

And in my mind, it's actually a superior quality. Same thing here. If you take the time to appreciate what God is doing in this section, you will learn things that you're not going to get by memorizing two verses.

So, tribe of Judah. Assignment. Here's the perimeter.

Here's the stuff inside. There is a structure. We're going to see the same structure,

basically, used again for the tribes of Joseph.

The first thing in chapter 16 that you get in the first three verses is the boundary. He's going to start with the southern boundary. And in verses 5 through 9, you're going to get the borders of Ephraim, the southern border in verses 5 and 6, the eastern northern borders.

So the first nine verses of chapter 16. Remember we had chapter 15 was all about Judah. Give me the borders.

Give me the stuff inside. Chapter 16 for Joseph, which is going to be broken into Ephraim and Manasseh, starts out with the borders. The first nine verses, it's all border stuff.

Why? Well, you have to know your assignment. You have to know when you are stepping out of your place. I remember the first time I drove down to Texas from Oklahoma.

Had never been in the state of Texas. I was stationed at Fort Sill, and I was ordered as a lieutenant to bring, I think, 10 privates down here who had done well in their training at Fort Sill. They have a basic school up there, and these guys had pegged the meter.

They were the top man in their platoon or whatever. So as a reward, they said, we will take you to the state fair of Texas. I was the guy that got tasked with driving the government van full of these PFCs, or whatever the equivalent is in the army, down here to Dallas.

Never been in the state of Texas. I remember when I crossed the border and said, welcome to Texas, I had the distinct feeling that I was in a foreign country. I thought, you know, they think different down in Texas.

Women are packing down here. Every other woman in the purse, there's a revolver in there. There's just a whole, suddenly all the landscape was covered with trucks.

All the highways and streets, it was just pickup trucks everywhere. There's a difference. You cross the border, and it's different.

Well, in Israel, these tribal areas were very quickly to be characterized by those tribes and by the ethos and the culture of those tribes. And so these borders are pretty distinct. And they're important.

And you've got to know when you're in your own place and when you have crossed over into somebody else's place. So, once again, just like in Judah, here in the sons of Joseph, you've got the borders in verses one through nine. Now, in verse 10, we have something very similar to what we had up in verse 63 of chapter 15.

Do you remember verse 63? We talked about it last time in some detail. What was the matter with the tribe of Judah? What did they fail to do? When they got up to Jerusalem,

they did not kick out the Jebusites. So, in verse 63, it said the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah, could not drive them out.

What did God promise? I will drive out the nations before you. Judah gets up there, and it says Judah couldn't drive them out. What's the conclusion you draw from that? God said, I will drive them out.

The Bible says Judah could not drive them out. What did Judah fail to do? Look to God for the victory over these cursed, judged, sentenced unto death Canaanites. God said, I have judged them.

I have sentenced them. They are ready for execution. You go carry out the execution.

Judah goes over there and tries to pull the rope to drop the thing out from under him. They'll hang by the noose. And, yeah, I can't pull the rope.

It's too hard. God says, chop off their head. And they go up there, and his neck's too thick.

I can't... God says, put them at the firing squad, and they're just missing. They're jerking the trigger. They can't hit the target.

Here's somebody that's been judged and sentenced. And God says, I will make sure that they're gone. And Judah can't do it.

It is a failure of faith. What is the application? Do we have promises from God? I will never leave you nor forsake you. My God shall supply all your needs.

You'll renew your strength. You'll mount up with wings like eagles. You'll run and not be worried.

Walk and not faint. And yet we find that many times we are fainting. And we're falling out of the sky like quail at a quail hunt instead of soaring like eagles.

We find that we don't have provision. We find that we don't have peace. Peace I give thee.

My peace I leave with thee, Jesus said. And we don't have peace. We have tribulation.

We have anguish. We have stress. We have angst.

We have all kinds of troubled water. And we're like Peter. Peter says, Lord bid me come to thee.

And Jesus says, come on. And so he gets out of the boat. He starts walking on the water.

Then he looks around and goes down like a lead anchor. And why? Did Jesus' power fail?

Why did Peter sink? Specifically took his eyes off the Lord and started looking at the wind and the waves. Started thinking in human terms.

Wait a minute. People can't walk on water. And sure enough, he couldn't.

He started operating on human wisdom instead of Jesus saying, come to me. As long as he kept his eyes on the Lord and said, I'm doing what Jesus said, he is doing this extraordinary thing. He's only the second, only two people ever walked on water.

And he's number two for a while. Well, same thing with Judah. They took their eyes off the Lord.

They stopped claiming the promise of God. All of the victories in the land were credited to God, were based on God's promise. But when you stop trusting God's promise, you stop getting God's fulfillment.

It's God doesn't fulfill promises that you don't believe, that you don't claim. And so they could not take it. Well, we talked about that last time.

Look down here at verse 10 of chapter 16. The children of Joseph, Manasseh, and Ephraim took their inheritance in verse 4. Here's the border. But they did not drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer.

But the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites to this day, and have become forced laborers. By the way, that last phrase, have become forced laborers, isn't in the Septuagint. It's one of those dicey elements.

We don't really know if it belongs there or not. It's kind of a stock phrase that's used elsewhere. But one thing we know for sure that's present in all versions of the text is the Ephraimites failed to complete the mission.

They did not drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer. When you get to chapter 17, which is the half-tribe of Manasseh, remember Joseph, Ephraim, and Manasseh. Manasseh was the firstborn, but notice he's listed second.

Because Ephraim and Manasseh are another example of that reversal. There was a lot for the tribe of Manasseh. Chapter 15 starts out, here's the lot for the tribe of Judah.

Chapter 16, here's the lot for the sons of Joseph, starting with Ephraim. 17, the lot for the tribe of Manasseh, the firstborn of Joseph. Then it says, Makir, the firstborn of Manasseh, the father of Gilead, because he was a man of war, he was given Gilead and Bashan.

Remember, that's on the other side of the Jordan. Manasseh had already taken possession of that. There was a lot for the rest of the children of Manasseh, according to their families.

We have all the families listed. We can do the same kind of analysis we've done before. But, here's the point.

You have in the first couple of verses here, you have the clans, Abiezer, Helech, Asriel, Shechem, Hefer, and Shemitah, the male children of Manasseh, the son of Joseph, according to their families. So, then we get an interruption. Now, when did we recently have an interruption talking about the inheritance of a tribe? There's only been two other tribes, and it was Judah.

We started talking about the inheritance of the tribe of Judah, and then there was an interruption. And what got inserted in there? It was Caleb. It said, wait a minute, Caleb's got a prior claim based on something that happened in the days of Moses.

Very important. Think about it now. For the inheritance of Judah, there's a prior claim based on a promise made in the days of Moses.

Yes? Now, who is the leadership tribe in Israel? Who has risen to the firstborn slot in the sense of leadership? It's Judah. They are the first. They are the premier.

They are the ruling tribe. Messiah is going to come from the tribe of Judah. Who is the rock-bottom tribe, last on the totem pole now? Should have been Ephraim, because he's a half-tribe, right? Or it would have to be one of the Rachelite tribes, either Ephraim, Manasseh, or Benjamin.

Benjamin is the lastborn, right? But Benjamin's the baby of the family. Benjamin gets subsumed up with Judah very soon in the history of Israel. But after the divided kingdom comes into existence and the northern kingdom goes out, there's only two tribes left, and it's Judah and Benjamin.

In the same way that Judah took Benjamin under his wing at the very outset in the days of Joseph in Egypt, at the end of the time of the nation of Israel, Benjamin is under Judah's wing. When it talks about the kings of Judah, that's actually Judah and Benjamin, those two tribes. It's the only other tribe in Israel that ever generated a king.

Right? Who's the kingly tribe? Judah. What other tribe had a king? Saul, the son of Kish, was a Benjamite, because those two tribes are very closely associated. So if you take Benjamin out of the equation, because he's kind of under his big brother's wing, that leaves you with the Joseph tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh.

Who's the firstborn son of Joseph? Manasseh. But, hands got crossed, so who's the last guy now in Israel? It's Manasseh. So here's the tribe of Manasseh.

The first tribe, Judah, and all of these have been rearranged. The first tribe should be Reuben, the last tribe should be Benjamin, but people's decisions and the way things have gone have scrambled the order, because it is not by decree, it is by faith that the

plan of God moves forward. God's decree said Reuben first, Benjamin last.

Human volition comes into it, and when all is said and done, Judah first, Manasseh last. And Manasseh is the son of Joseph, who got the double portion. And you think, well, he's going to be up there somewhere.

Maybe it ought to be Judah, Manasseh, Ephraim, Benjamin, and then the rest of the brothers, according to God's decree. But no, it's all based on choice. So right in the middle of this, and here's the point, there was an interruption in a prior arrangement that came into play when you talk about the tribe of Judah.

Same thing with the tribe of Manasseh. This is what we have in verse 3. Let's pick up there and read this. They're going to throw the lot for the children of Manasseh, according to their families, that haven't already gotten an inheritance over on the other side of the Jordan.

But Zelophehad, the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons. He's a clan leader, but there's nobody to carry on the clan. You're going to drop out a whole clan in the tribe of Manasseh.

But he had five daughters, Malah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. Notice their names all end in A-H. It's kind of euphonious, and A-H is the feminine ending.

These names are all very interesting in terms of their meanings. Malah means forgiveness or pardon. It means that a weakness has been remedied.

Some translations even say that Malah means a disease or an infirmity. But it's really taking care of a disease or an infirmity. It is a restoration.

Malah has the idea of restoration. Noah, just like the guy with the ark, the name means to move around, to wander, to be unstable or unsettled, to be in motion. Hoglah is a bird, a partridge.

Milcah is a word later used for queen. It's related to Melech, as king. But Milcah is the feminine.

So, princess or queen or a wise woman of leadership. A woman in a position sort of like Deborah, perhaps. And then Tirzah.

Tirzah is a really sweet word in Hebrew. You find a lot of girls in Israel today named Tirzah. It's like pleasantness or delight or sweetness.

You get the idea that she was really attractive and charismatic and so on. A woman of beauty. So, these are the five daughters.

Well, back in the days of Moses, the daughters of Zelophehad, it says, look, our fathers

died and we've got no brothers. And so, we're going to have no inheritance. We want to be treated like sons.

And Moses said, actually God through Moses said, okay, in the same way that God through Moses said, Caleb, you get this patch of ground. God said to the daughters of Zelophehad through Moses, you will inherit along with your brethren. So, they come up to Joshua and they remind him.

They say, according to the commandment of the Lord, the Lord commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brothers. So, Joshua does so. Ten shares fell to Manasseh besides the land of Gilead.

Bashan, which were on the other side of the Jordan, because the daughters of Manasseh, those five, received an inheritance among his sons. The rest of Manasseh's sons had the land of Gilead. So, this is another inclusion.

Now, so what? Why is this here? Why did the whole daughters of Zelophehad thing happen? Why didn't God make sure that Mrs. Zelophehad had a couple of boys? Think about it. Once again, we see a demonstration. There are two or three important lessons here.

One of them is, if you think you got a bad deal, if you think circumstances are unfair, who can fix that? Who has the divine prerogative and the divine authority to make right what started out wrong? They didn't say, Joshua, you know, we got no brothers, but how about we give you 500 talents of silver and 400 shekels and three or four of these great robes that we got from one of our battles over here, and then you can let us have some land. Or, we'll all go marry guys in Israel and take their land and make it our own. Or, you know, we'll be like black widows.

We'll marry them and then do them in and then we'll get their land. They didn't try a human solution, did they? Caleb's exception came because of his faith and his valor, and God spontaneously awarded it to him. And it was the desire of his heart.

Trust in the Lord, He shall give you the desires of your heart. That's what Caleb did. The daughters of Zelophehad made an appeal.

They said, hey, wait a minute, this is not fair. We got a bad deal. It's beyond our control, but our father had no sons, and we're going to be shortchanged.

We don't want our father's name to die out in Israel. And God made an exception. It wasn't in the law.

It wasn't something that they could appeal to statute, thus and so, ordinance thus and so, chapter and line and verse. They made an appeal and God said, you're right, that's not fair, I'll fix it. And sometimes God puts us in a position where He wants us to come

and ask.

You have not because ye ask not. Or you have not because you ask amiss to consume it upon your own desires. You're praying for the wrong reasons.

You're wanting something for the wrong reason, and God's not going to grant it. That's one reason prayer is not answered. Another reason is you never asked.

The prayer is not answered because it was never sent. And sometimes God will withhold, or God will allow a circumstance or a situation, and He is waiting for us to exercise the privilege of our priesthood. If God anticipated every need, fulfilled every desire, dotted every I and crossed every T in the plan and provision for us, we'd never need to pray.

We'd just say, well, you know, any minute now, the truck ought to be arriving and dumping off my groceries and here's... God wants us to exercise our priestly privileges. He wants us to exercise our thinking and put together a case and come before Him and say, I've got to explain to my daughters. There are times when I don't immediately grant a request because I want them to make a case.

I want them to assemble an argument and bring me some good reasons and not just say, oh, dad, please, and bat their eyes and I just say, oh, of course. No, tell me why I should. And not that I'm not going to eventually anyway, but I want to hear you reason.

I want to hear you persuade. I want to hear you do some thinking so that an occasion where I'm in a position to grant something isn't just an occasion for me to grant something. It's an occasion for them to learn something.

God does that with us. He will withhold. He will tell the angel, wait a minute, don't leave with that truck full of provision.

I want to see if my child down there will come to me and ask and apply all of those verses. Ask and it shall be given. Seek and you will find.

God doesn't say stand still and I'll drop it on you. He says knock and the door will be opened, right? So that's what the daughters of Zelophehad represent here. Can you see that? They come and make an appeal and God has Mount Sinai, lightning and thunder, smoke, Moses glowing in the dark, the golden calf and everything else.

Nothing in the law about what if a guy has no sons? So they come and make a case. Hey, there's nothing in the law about this. Our father had no sons and this is not fair.

God says, you know, you're right. I'm going to give you an inheritance right along with your brothers. Five whole sections of this area of Manasseh go to these women.

You and I can go to God and say, Lord, here are the reasons why I would like you to please fill this need. Answer this request. Hear my prayer.

I base it on the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. I ask it in Jesus name. If you can fulfill this request, this will enable me to live a life that is pleasing in your sight.

It will allow me to be of benefit and blessing to others. Here are the reasons. We don't just say, oh, Lord, I'd sure like a shiny red bicycle.

We need to build a case that's persuasive to him. That appeals to his plan and purpose. That's what the daughters of Zelopheh did.

They said, look, you want these lines in Israel to persist? Well, this one's going to get cut off. That wasn't the divine intention. Look at God's intention in setting up these rules.

And they got it. So you have that exception there in verses three and four. And then you have the summary of the assignment of the land to Manasseh.

And this is the least of the tribes. It doesn't matter if it's the biggest, fanciest, glorious tribe of Judah, or if it's the least lowliest, got the left hand tribe of Manasseh. It doesn't matter what tribe you're in.

You can be Judah with the grapes and the calf tied to the vine and the white teeth, shining, gleaming in the sun and flashing that smile and saying, oh, Lord, give me the thing. Or you can be in Manasseh, which never does achieve much as a tribe. But it isn't for lack of the daughters of Zelophehad.

And you have to wonder, you know, some of the first three daughters in Zelophehad, their names can be construed kind of negatively. But the last two, you've got a queenly gal and you've got a very pleasant and personable gal. And then you've got Noach, who's agitated.

And you've got Hoglah, who's a flighty bird. And you've got Malah, they translate that disease and infirmity. I really have to think that we've missed that somehow.

I don't think someone would look down at their daughter in the cradle and say, whew, let's call her typhoid or something. I just don't think that was the case. But I think it has the idea of here is remedy.

There is a view toward a loss or an infirmity, but there's remedy. And it also does mean pardon. Well, this brings me to the meaning before we leave this section of Zelophehad.

What does Zelophehad mean? And I'm probably going to have to go ahead and pause here and take our break. When we come back, we'll see why this section that is very specifically and repeatedly associated with Zelophehad is so important by looking at his name. But let's pause here and take our break.