

Joshua 07-09-28a

This is Friday the 28th of September 2007. We continue our study in the book of Joshua. We are in chapter 18.

Let's take a moment to focus our attention and remember that it is through God's grace that our lives have meaning beyond the ordinary, beyond the mundane, and beyond the rudimentary and elementary principles of this life. It is important that when we look at the Word of God it's not just an academic exercise. It isn't just something to get through.

This is an opportunity for God to transfer to us His power to live a life that has eternal consequences and bears eternal fruit. But to do that we have to be susceptible to the ministry of God's Spirit, both at the point of teaching and at the point of meditation and at the point of application. God's Spirit infuses that process from beginning to end, which is why we reap the benefits, but we don't take the credit.

It is all of grace. It is all of God. It is up to us to avail ourselves of God's grace, to recognize where that grace is found, to know how to access God's power and God's grace, and to receive it as a gift from Him.

There is no more important time to recognize those principles and apply them than when we gather to spend time in fellowship and in the study of God's Word. Shall we pray? Father, what a privilege it is to live this life, to be here as a believer, sustained by Your grace, empowered by Your Spirit, informed by Your Word. We thank You for the Lord Jesus Christ, the example that He left for us, the training manual in Your Word that He has given us to exercise us, to teach us, to stretch us, and to enable us to grow in grace and knowledge.

We pray that as we study these things in the book of Joshua, even though they come from a time long ago, we know that the principles and the truths that are contained in this passage are timeless and that they have direct applicability for each one of us. May each of us find those truths as we study together. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, Israel has gone into the land, haven't they? Joshua has led them across the Jordan. They've gone in.

They've been hacking and slashing. Hail has fallen. All kinds of catastrophes have taken place to eliminate many of the Canaanites.

We had the southern campaign. We had the northern campaign. A couple of tribes decided to take an inheritance on the other side of the Jordan.

And most recently we have seen two and a half tribes get their inheritance. So, let's start off the evening with a little bit of a math problem. How many tribes still need to claim their specific inheritance? This requires both memory and math.

You have 20 seconds. How many tribes are left to receive their inheritance? Think about it. Who got their inheritance on the far side of the Jordan, on the east side? Reuben, Gad, half tribe of Manasseh.

So, that's how many tribes? Two and a half. Well, we're going to count halves because otherwise you have to say there's 13 tribes in Israel. Okay.

On the other side of the Jordan, the good side, the inside, the west side, the west bank. Coming across. How many tribes have gotten their inheritance? Judah, Ephraim.

And Ephraim is what kind of tribe? Another half tribe. Anybody else? Son of my right hand? Benjamin. We talked about them.

So, two and a half on one side. Two and a half on another. Okay.

So, how many tribes are left? Trick question. Be careful. How many tribes are left to receive their allotted inheritance in the land? There you go.

Why is that? Tribe of Levi doesn't get land. Now, they're going to get some towns. They're going to have some allocations.

We're going to see some things about them. But they do not get land by lot. So, we've got some remaining tribes to deal with.

Beginning here in chapter 18, we're going to see that. And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh and set up the tabernacle of meeting there. That's Joshua 18.1. And the land was subdued before them.

It's because the southern campaign and the northern campaign and Judah and these guys have already started going in and conquering. So, they're subdued. They're not eliminated, but they're subdued.

But there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes which had not received their inheritance. Now, how many did we derive after we did our math? Okay. So, there's a disparity there of some sort.

We'll read forward and see what it is. Then Joshua said to the children of Israel, How long will you neglect to go and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers has given you? Pick out from among you three men for each tribe, and I will send them. They shall rise and go through the land, survey it according to their inheritance, and come back to me.

And they shall divide it into seven parts. Judah shall remain in their territory on the south, and the house of Joseph shall remain in their territory on the north. You shall therefore survey the land in seven parts, and bring the survey here to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the Lord our God.

But the Levites have no part among you, for the priesthood of the Lord is their inheritance. And Gad, Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance beyond Jordan on the east, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave them. Now, the tricky part is, I gave you Benjamin and you took it.

We talked about Benjamin, but Benjamin is in this chapter. But we jumped ahead because we were talking about Jerusalem. But you bought it, hook, line, and sinker.

That's the very next thing. All you had to do was look at the heading in your Bible, if your Bible is open. But seven tribes left to receive their inheritance.

This is the point at which Benjamin is going to formally receive theirs. As the youngest member of the twelve, the sons of Jacob, Benjamin is the last, the least, but he's going to be first of these remaining tribes. Now, before we get into this, there is a principle for us to see.

And this may be the only one that you remember because time will go forward as we get into the lesson, and your attention may drift. And so, before your attention drifts, I want to get this one point in. Why is this process even taking place? Why isn't it every family for themselves? They had the Oklahoma land run, and they lined up everybody at the border, and they fired off the gun, and all the wagons you saw, they've got archival footage of this.

They actually had some moving pictures back in those days. There's been movies made about it. I think old Tom Cruise and his ex-wife, didn't they make a movie about that? Was it Jerry Maguire, one of those, where they actually depicted the Oklahoma land run going in? What was it? Far and Away.

It was Far and Away. I never saw it, Jerry, but I don't know what that movie is about. Yeah, it was Far and Away.

He was an Irishman. What's her name? Kidman from Australia was his girlfriend or something. At any rate, the only reason I remember that at all, is they had a really great depiction of the Oklahoma land run.

If you go to high school in Oklahoma, you take Oklahoma history, it's all about the land run. Why is it that the football team for Oklahoma University is called the Sooners? It's the Sooner State. That's the nickname for Oklahoma.

Why? Because the day before, and they showed this in that movie, was it her parents that went in the day before and hid? And as soon as the gun went off, they popped up and staked out their claim that they had already previewed? Well, they got there sooner than the official time. They sneaked in and staked out prime real estate. Well, why didn't they do that in Israel? This is my real question.

Why didn't Joshua line everybody up at Gilgal and say, you know what? We've done the northern and the southern thing, so on your mark, get set, go! And everybody just flares out there to take whatever they can get first come first serve. Why didn't they do that? Did Joshua think up this, let's cast the lots and apportion the land? Where did this actually come from? Turn with me back to Numbers chapter 34. Numbers chapter... Actually, the end of 33.

We'll go up to 3350. Chapter 33 is a very interesting chapter because it is the travel itinerary. Many times people go on a trip, they take slides, and then they make you sit down and watch all their slides.

Not so much anymore. Now it's like a digital thing. Let me put my MMC card in and show you my trip, or whatever.

And I can't remember if anybody here has done that, but I'm not talking about you. But in the old days, the technology was slides. And so it was kind of a running joke that somebody said, let me show you my slides, and you're in for a two and a half hour endurance match.

Here we are in Walla Walla, Washington, going down the road, and here's a mailbox, and here's the tree we parked by and had a picnic, and on and on. Well, it's an itinerary. You go stop by stop by stop by stop through the whole thing.

Well, chapter 33 of Numbers takes you from Egypt and the three different stops that they made in Egypt. Remember, they had to swing down and get the bones of Joseph and come back up and camp, and then they went across the Red Sea, and they parked in the Wilderness of Sin, Sinai, Rafidim, all of these places. And from there, if you look up, and we're not doing Numbers, if we were, this would be a fascinating, fascinating section.

Verse 10 of Numbers 33, they moved from Elim and camped by the Red Sea. They moved from the Red Sea and camped in the Wilderness of Sin. They journeyed from the Wilderness of Sin, camped at Dofka.

From Dofka, they went to Alush. From Alush, they went to Rafidim. No water for the people to drink.

Remember the whole Meribah thing, and they went from Rafidim, the Wilderness of Sinai, Sinai to Kibro, Hatta, Ava, and on and on. Well, if you count these up, from the time they got across the Red Sea until they get to the place where they're going to go across, there's approximately 40, no, no, no, 30. There's 30 moves.

30 moves in 40 years. They moved 30 times in 40 years. I sat down and did my English major math, and if I did it right, that's an average of moving every 16 months.

I think that's right. 30, yeah, I think that's right. So, because it's 480 months.

So, do the math, and you'll probably find that I didn't do it right. But I think it's less than two years in any one spot on average. 30 times in 40 years they moved.

Now, I've been in a military family. Many of you have been in a military family. You move from place to place, three year tour maximum usually, and you just bump around, jump around.

You're here, you're there. You get yanked out of one school and into another. Well, think about the fact that these people made this circuit.

People say, well, they just kind of wandered. Well, there's an itinerary. They went to all of these places, and they wound up, and the reason I'm emphasizing that is the passage we're looking at is after this.

After they have gone to all 30 of these places, and I think there's like 33 if you count, or 34 if you count the places before they crossed the Red Sea. So, you get down in the latter part of chapter 33, then Aaron the priest, in verse 38, went up to Mount Hor at the command of the Lord, and he died there. The Lord said, go up on the mountain.

He went up there. He died. In the 40th year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, on the first day of the fifth month.

First day of the fifth month, Aaron is no more. He has gone to that burn from which there is no return. He is not operating in this life anymore.

He was 123 years old when he died on Mount Hor. Then they had to move a bunch more times. The king of Arad, the Canaanite, heard that the children of Israel were there.

Apparently, he started rustling up troops and rattling spears and shields, so they departed. They went to Zalmonah, Zalmonah to Punan, Punan to Oboth, Oboth to Eavavim, on the border of Moab, etc. All the way down, so they are moving.

This is all in the 40th year. They make a bunch of these moves right at the last. Kind of like they did at the beginning.

In the first year, they had a whole bunch of moves. In the last year, they have a whole bunch of moves. They end up in the plains of Moab.

Now, here is where we pick up. Verse 50. Numbers 33.

The Lord spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, across from Jericho, saying, Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, When you have crossed the Jordan into the land of Canaan, then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, destroy all their engraved stones, destroy all their molded images, demolish all their

high places. You shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land and dwell in it, for I have given you the land to possess. You shall divide the land by lot as an inheritance among your families.

To the larger you shall give a larger inheritance, and to the smaller you shall give a smaller inheritance. There everyone's inheritance shall be whatever falls to him by lot. You shall inherit according to the tribes of your fathers.

But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall be that those whom you let remain shall be irritants in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall harass you in the land where you dwell. Moreover, it shall be that I will do to you as I thought to do to them." God told them this before Moses ever died, before Joshua ever took over, before they marched up to the water and it parted with all that raging spring tide seventeen miles upstream, before they went in, before Jericho, before Ai, before the southern campaign, before the northern campaign. God told them, this is how the land is going to be divided.

I have driven out the inhabitants from before you. You have got to utterly destroy everything. All of their idolatry and the accouterments thereof, wipe it out.

Otherwise, they are going to be thorns in your sides. They are going to be sand in your eyes. And ultimately, I am going to end up doing to you what I judged them and sentenced them with.

So, you keep going. And we saw last time, didn't we? Did Judah drive all the Canaanite inhabitants out of their territory? They did not. Did Ephraim drive all the inhabitants out? They did not.

Did Manasseh drive the inhabitants out? They did not. Did the people on the far side of the Jordan, on the east side, that stayed back there, Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh that is over there, did they drive out the inhabitants? They did not. So far, we are 0 for 5 on driving out inhabitants.

So, the Lord spoke to Moses saying, command, this is chapter 34 now of Numbers, the Lord spoke to Moses saying, command the children of Israel and say to them, when you come into the land of Canaan, this is the land that shall fall to you as an inheritance, the land of Canaan to its boundaries. Your southern border shall be from the wilderness of Zin along the border of Edom. Your southern border shall extend eastward to the end of the salt sea, the dead sea.

Your border shall turn from the southern side of the ascent of Aqrabim, continue to Zin and be on the south side of Kadesh Barnea. It shall go on to Hazar Adar, continue to Asman, Asman to the brook of Egypt, and it shall end at the sea. What we are getting here is the big outside perimeter.

So, Moses, in verse 13, commanded the children of Israel saying, this is the land which you shall inherit by lot, which the Lord has commanded to give to the nine tribes and to the half-tribe. Why does he say that? The nine tribes and to the half-tribe? Because Reuven and Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh, at least part of Manasseh, has already gotten inheritance on the west side. This is after Sihon and Heshbon and that whole thing has taken place.

Gilead and that has already been assigned. So there are nine and a half tribes left. After you take away Judah and Ephraim and the rest of the half-tribe of Manasseh, you are going to end up with the seven tribes that are left to receive their inheritance.

The tribe of the children of Reuven, the tribe of the children of Gad, have received their inheritance. The half-tribe of Manasseh has received its inheritance. The two tribes and the half-tribe have received their inheritance.

The two and a half tribes have received their inheritance on this side of the Jordan, across from Jericho, eastward toward the sunrise. It cannot be any more emphatic. It cannot be any more dogmatic.

They have their reward. This kind of reminds you of what Jesus said about the Pharisees. They stand on the street corners to be seen by men.

They make long demonstrations out of their prayers. They parade their money before they drop it in the... Well, they have their reward. And it's not in the kingdom.

It's not in the eternal future. It's not in the promises of God. They have it.

So, verse 16, The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, These are the names of the men who shall divide the land among you. Now, here's the point so far. And this is the point I wanted to stress in case anybody fades out on me.

Notice, They do not do the specific apportionment of the land before they cross the Jordan. There's just a big circle on the map, basically, and God says, This is the promised land. When you get there, you'll do the refinement.

But this is the big objective. Here's the main thing. Get into this circle on the map.

When you get there, then you will apportion it by lot. We're not going to apportion it now. And if you think about it, this is the way life works.

You see things at a distance. You don't know the specific details. You just see the big objective.

God says, look, Go for the big objective. He doesn't say, Now, what's going to happen is, you're going to go to Jericho first, and I'm going to knock the walls down after you march around for a week, and then you're going to have a little flub up at Ai, but then later on

I'll give you victory, and then later on you're going to have the southern campaign, and here's all the places you're going to... He doesn't give any of that. He says, look, Go in the land, and I'll handle it.

Go to the land. I will drive the enemies out. You will possess it.

That's the big picture. And that's all they need to know for now. March forward with the large objective in view.

Once they are there, there are designated individuals who are going to be responsible for the fine details. This is given to Moses on the other side of the Jordan. Look at it.

These are the names of the men who shall divide the land among you as inheritance, Eliezer the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun. No further dispute. Nobody is going to take anybody to court and say, I don't think Joshua had the legal authority to decide where the tribe of Judah is going to get their... None of that.

God says, It's Joshua and it's Eliezer, so hush up. Now, I'll tell you a thing here. I suspect that one of the reasons Joshua was such a bold general is because of this passage right here.

God said Joshua would divide the land. The land isn't divided until it's conquered. Joshua can't die.

Joshua is nine feet tall and bulletproof. God said nobody divides the land but Joshua and Eliezer. Joshua takes that to the bank.

Man, let's go. I cannot be killed. I am immortal for the immediate future.

Right? Did God not say Eliezer and Joshua are the two who will divide the land? The land is not divided until it is conquered. Joshua can't die. What a great promise.

And look how intrepid Joshua is. Let's march all night. Let's take these guys.

Let's chase them. Let's track them down. Son, stand still.

I need more time because they can't kill me and I can kill them. You know, this happens sometimes. I know people who can get into a video game and make themselves impervious to attack.

And, you know, then they just have a field day. Because, hey, well, think about it. It's faith.

Joshua takes this word from God, I think, and applies it. You and I should do the same thing. I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.

My God shall supply all your needs. You will run and not be wary. You will walk and not

faint.

On and on and on. All of these promises from God. We ought to take them to the bank.

We ought to treat them as realities just as tangible, just as real to us at the visceral level as what we touch and what we sense and what we experience in the material world. These are promises of God. They are inviolable.

The creator of the universe that put the atoms and molecules together has said, if you endure, if you have faith and patience, you are going to have an eternal, incorruptible, undefiled inheritance. What a promise. Live your life to please God.

Hang in there in the face of the inevitable challenges and the discouragements and the depressing developments that are going to take place. Keep driving to the tape. Keep pushing for the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus because the God of the universe has promised.

We are nine feet tall and bulletproof. When we live our life to please God, we cannot fail, we cannot falter, we cannot end up at a deficit. You cannot end up at a loss if you live your life to please God.

It is impossible. You will suffer. Jesus said, it's a promise.

Just like all those other promises, inheritance, never leaving, energy, strength, also tribulation is a promise. Trouble is guaranteed to you. If you are a faithful believer, you will have trouble.

And if you don't have trouble, you better check yourself to see if you are in the faith. Because Jesus Christ said to his disciples, in this world ye shall have tribulation. And you ought to be happy because I have overcome this world.

Be happy. Trouble is a good thing. It's a hard thing, but it's a good thing.

So, I'm just pointing that out here. Eliezer the priest and Joshua the son of Nun shall divide the land among you. It's a statement declarative from God.

Inviolable. Cannot be changed. It's as good as the decree that makes the sun go around the Milky Way and makes the earth go around the sun, makes the earth go at the center of the moon's orbit, and so forth.

Same level of solidity. You shall take one liter of every tribe. Here are the names.

From the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh. Guess what Caleb now knows? I am nine feet tall and bulletproof. I can go take the giants.

Let me go because the land's not been divided yet. Remember, he goes in and gets his.

Shemuel the son of Amihud from the tribe of Benjamin.

Eliedad the son of Kislou, a leader from the tribe of the children of Dan. Buki the son of Jogli. Sounds like, you know, fiction.

But these are real. You know, people, I come from a family that loves to give biblical names to kids. It goes back to the dark generations of the past, long lost, nobody knows, but Moses and Samuel and Benjamin, all these names go back in our family a long ways.

But nobody names their kid Jogli or Buki. They're good biblical names. And I think somebody ought to pick these names up and run with them.

Of course, I didn't do that myself. Didn't name Elizabeth and Rebecca. I mean, they're good biblical names, but I didn't go with, you know.

From the sons of Joseph, a leader from the tribe of the children of Manasseh. Haniel the son of Ephod and a leader from the tribe of the children of Ephraim. Shemuel the son of Shiphdan.

Zebulun. Now, I don't mean to gloss over these names. I'm going to tell you something.

These men are the cream of the crop. They are the elders. They are the spiritual leaders of their tribes.

Their names are in the eternal word of God for a reason. These men are going to lead their tribes in battle. They're going to be the generals overseeing the company size units and platoon size units.

They're going to go in under Joshua. These are going to be the judicial officials. They're going to adjudicate disputes.

They wear many hats. They are civic leaders. They are legal leaders.

They are law enforcement. They are military. They do all of the leadership for their tribe.

They are the supreme court of that portion of Israel. And their names are here because they are great, great men. These are the men in the second generation who go in and accomplish those victories in the southern campaign and the northern campaign and go in and will drive out vast portions of the Canaanites who dwell in their territory.

They are also on the hook for any failure of their tribe to completely fulfill the commission of God from those to whom much is given. The ladies are saying, why does God give everything to the men? Well, guess what? No ladies are going to be standing in front of God trying to explain why their clan or their family or their tribe did not fulfill the divine commission. God says, I have wiped out the enemies.

What are you waiting for? If God says, I've driven them out and you don't go in and kick them out, who's accountable? Who's responsible? Well, that would be Buki the son of Jogli and Kemuel the son of Shiptan and so forth. Any of these tribal areas that do not get completely cleaned out of Canaanites, the monuments are not knocked down and so forth, these guys will answer. Authority is great, but authority is hand in hand with responsibility.

Anything that does not get done, you had the authority and you didn't make it happen. This is why being the father and being the husband in a household is kind of a sobering position. Yes, wives submit to your husbands, that's all great, but the wife is not accountable to God for the way the household runs.

That's going to be the husband. That's going to be the father. And the children, the minor children in a home, it's the dad, it's the husband that's going to be standing before God giving an account.

This is what I did, this is what they did, and there's going to be an evaluation. There is going to be debit and credit in the books because from those to whom much is given, much is required. So these men, yes they are leaders, yes they are great men in their tribes, but they are also going to take it in terms of judgment when the tribe fails.

So all of their names are given. These, verse 29, are the ones the Lord commanded to divide the inheritance among the children of Israel in the land of Canaan. They are pre-designated.

Now think about this in terms of our functionality. Why is it so important? There is a big debate going on, well, why don't Fruit Loops be able to marry each other? Why does marriage have to be between a man and a woman? We have so many single-parent homes. The whole marriage thing just ought to be abolished.

We ought to just have sort of civil partnerships and little mini-incorporations and so on. Listen, from the standpoint of a believer, it isn't about who gets a tax break, and it isn't about who gets to tell the hospital what can and cannot be done to this person laying in room 126 with a machine hooked up. Here's the deal.

The designated authority as you go in to accomplish your large objectives is given beforehand. God says, look, if you're a young person and you're not married yet, be aware. Your life, in terms of your future and what you're going to do before the Lord, you have large objectives.

You don't know where you're going to live. You don't know where you're going to work. You probably don't know who you're going to marry.

You don't know if or how many kids are going to be involved. Vast areas of your territory are uncharted, unsurveyed, unmapped, unknown. But before you ever go in to that land,

God draws lines around it.

There are certain things you know that you will not do. You are not going to go in to some unethical, shady, criminal line of work. You are not going to marry an unfaithful person.

And by that, I'm not just saying, gee, do they have a ticket to heaven or not? Or do they have a ticket out of the lake of fire or not? If you are a believer trying to live your life before God, do not yoke yourself. The Bible is very clear. Do not yoke yourself unequally with someone who is faithless.

Now, you may end up in a situation like that, and that's a different kettle of fish. But do not knowingly enter into union with someone. If you are a believer trying to live your life to please God, at the point that you marry, you are directly disobedient, and you are going to be judged, and judged severely, if you yoke yourself to someone who is faithless.

It's spiritual suicide to do that. God maps out the boundaries. This is my point.

There are certain things that you know. You're not going to go to a place where there is no spiritual food or no means of obtaining any. You are not going to go in a place where you cannot fulfill your responsibilities.

Let's say you're the oldest son in a family, or you're the only responsible son. All the rest of them are unavailable to take care of parents. And that responsibility has devolved on you.

Let's say you're a daughter, and either there are no sons or whatever situation, you are the go-to person for the well-being of your parents. You cannot go move off a continent away. You can't.

If you are going to honor the scripture that says, take care of your father and mother, that's your responsibility before the Lord, and that's part of your boundary. This is the boundary of the land in which you will live. And there are certain boundaries that you do not cross.

You do not become a drug addict. You do not become a criminal. You do not put yourself in a position where you knowingly, with malice of forethought, cannot fulfill the mandates of scripture.

And there are certain things that are mandated. Many things we don't know. But there are certain things we do know.

Right? We have to live our life in a way that is pleasing to the Lord, and we have certain opportunities and certain responsibilities. Those are the borders of the land of Canaan.

God gave those to Israel before they ever went in.

He also designated those who would have authority once you get in there, and you do have to start making specific decisions, and living in specific places, and driving out specific groups of Canaanites. These are the guys with authority. You know that going in.

Do not think, as a woman, well, I will find a guy that I can push around like a shopping cart, and I'll basically wear the trousers in the marriage. It is suicide to do so. God has designated the husband.

So, you better pick carefully if you are a girl. Choose carefully, because He is the guy, and you have got to live with it. Don't be second-guessing God.

God has set up... People could say, Elizabethan, the son of Parnak, that guy can barely lace his own sandals, and he is going to be the... Look, God designated him. He is the guy. God names the men in these tribes who are going to be the dividers.

And there is no argument. There is no appeal. There are certain things in the plan and purpose of God for us that we know.

We need to strive for fellowship with believers of like mind. It may end up just being in our own family, and that's fine. But you cannot be the lone ranger.

It is a body, and you don't find a hand from a body. Well, only in fiction do you find a hand living all by itself, or a foot living all by itself, or an ear laying on a shelf somewhere saying, well, you know, I just couldn't really get with the rest of the body. We are the body of Christ.

We are an organism, and we are commanded. It's not an option. You are commanded to fellowship.

Now, we have lots of options in the modern day, and I'm not saying, gee, if you're not face-to-face with somebody, you've got to pack up and move. You can achieve fellowship, but you need to be sure that you are honoring those commands. Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is.

We have commands to encourage one another to love and good works, to encourage one another with songs and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord. You can't do that over the phone. Well, hello, I just thought I'd give you my daily psalm.

If you'll stand a little away from the phone, I'll sing it for you. You can't do that. It's contact.

You can't do it texting over your cell phone. It is contact. The Holy Spirit, to my knowledge, does not indwell technology.

He indwells human hearts and human souls. My laptop, as much as I love it, and as much great resources as I have here, the Holy Spirit is not in this laptop. He's in me, and He's in you.

When two or three are teleconferenced together in my name, that's not what it says. Now, don't get me wrong. Again, we've got people on a link, and that's great.

But there is a goal. Joshua didn't conquer the land in a day, but he conquered it. These tribes didn't take possession in a week or two, but they took possession, and they were commanded to take complete possession.

Keep pushing until your objective is complete. And there are designated boundaries within which that is going to take place, and there are designated authorities who are responsible to carry it out. That's the message that you have here.

So now, when you go back to Joshua 18, you find that this is the five-paragraph order that Joshua is working off of. And when he says in verse 3, how long will you neglect to go and possess the land which the God of your fathers has given to you? Here's what happened. Remember that itinerary I showed you up in Numbers 33? They moved 30-something times in 40 years.

They got used to the nomadic way of life. It's comfortable. This is the way we've always done it.

I grew up packing the tent and moving every year and a half. That's the lifestyle that we know. We get used to a thing.

Those of us that have been in the military, you get used to the military way of life. If you've been in a particular community, you kind of get used to the culture of that community. If you are in a family, and many times there are kind of family traditions and family businesses, family things that are just kind of unique and perpetuated from father to son and generation to generation, whatever it may be.

That is not definitive for us. That is not authoritative for us. The Word of God supersedes and surpasses experience.

These people have spent four decades. A lot of us can't even remember four decades. Even some of us old enough who ought to remember four decades can't remember them.

But that's a long, long time. And if you have lived a certain lifestyle and it is a transient, nomadic, not in one place too long, don't dig your fence posts very deep, don't drive your tent pegs too far into the ground, you're going to be pulling these things up and moving. Well look, when you get to the land, God says you have got to settle down.

You're going to get an allotment and you can't be a nomad in a country where all of your other clan members and family members are also dwelling. You're all going to get in there, you're going to possess cities, you're going to plant crops, and you're going to be responsible for those fields year after year after year. You're going to work that field six years and let it lay fallow on the seventh.

Well, they've never been in a place more than a year and a half on average to plant anything and reap it and not have to leave. Why would they bother? It's a complete change. But it's the command.

Well, as they get in, and even when they cross the Jordan, they're traveling, aren't they? They go down in the south and they do these campaigns. They go up in the north and they do these campaigns. It's kind of like, well, this is sort of like the nomadic life plus hacking and slashing.

So it's just a modified nomad life. Joshua says, look, we've been in here five, six years now. How long is it going to be before you do what God said back in Numbers 33 and 34? You are supposed to go get a patch of ground and quit dwelling in tents.

Build yourself a house, start yourself a farm, and settle down. Pick out three men, go. Judah will remain in their territory.

The house of Joseph will remain in theirs. You shall therefore survey the land in seven parts and bring the survey to me that I may cast lots for you here before the Lord our God. The Levites have no part among you, for the priesthood of the Lord is their inheritance.

Gad, Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance beyond the Jordan on the east, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave them. So the men arose to go away, and Joshua charged those who went to survey the land, saying, go, walk through the land, survey it, and come back to me that I may cast lots for you here before the Lord in Shiloh. Now, didn't we just hear that? Why is this emphasized? Why is it repeated? Anytime, I don't care what kind of passage it is, anytime there's repetition, it's important.

God doesn't waste words. If he repeats himself, it's important. God told them what they were going to do.

Joshua tells them what they're going to do. Then he tells these men again what they're going to do. It's important.

Now they have moved in. Now they are inside those delineated borders that were given to Moses. These designated individuals of the tribe are going to divide the land.

Divide what land? Oh, well, Joshua and Elisha the priest have got to assign those

designated men from each tribe the patch to apportion to their group. So Joshua is doing his job. He's letting people do the survey, and not just anybody, but people who are from those tribes that are going to help and advise the designated man.

Buki, the son of Jogli, is going to get some advice from the surveyor's team for his tribe. One of the reasons we had such great success in the First War for Independence is because George Washington had been a surveyor. These grounds that he walked over and fought these battles, he had surveyed a lot of that.

He knew the area. That's what these men are going to do and give the advantage. So there is a time to press ahead into the unknown within the general boundaries of what God gives.

You operate in that case, this is the principle, based on authority. The authority makes the decisions. The authority is going to be accountable.

You go into that unknown that's within general boundaries. As you get in there, and as you find out more details, it is our responsibility to inform ourselves, to get information, and to subdivide those responsibilities and carry out the specifics that were in view. It's just good business.

It's good strategy. In anything that you do, you work from the general to the specific under a structure with authority and accountability. That's why we have a military.

That's why we have a free country today. And that is the foundation for the nation of Israel. That's how their nation got started.

This is what they would have taught in their Israel history class. We'll pause here and take our break, and when we come back, we'll pick up with the land of Benjamin in Joshua 18 verse 11.