

Joshua 07-09-28b

Let's resume our study now. We are in Joshua chapter 18, and we've taken a quick look at this land division process because it is a mixture of instructions from God and actions by Joshua under those more general instructions. God gave a general border and specific people to apportion out the land.

And Joshua has had to make decisions in terms of strategy and tactics for carrying out the battles. He has had to... God didn't say anything about surveying the land, did he? Joshua figured that out. If I am going to accomplish my responsibility given by God, here is something I have to do.

I cannot intelligently apportion the land if I do not have a survey. And so he... within the general guidance that God gave him and the specific commands that God gave him, he had to figure out how to best accomplish that. And this is in general, by the way, what the church is like today.

We are not like Israel. We do not have designated rituals, designated ordinances, designated feast days. Israel had a very specific calendar of sabbaths and feasts and jubilees and so forth, didn't they? The church has none of that.

There was a specific structure in Israel. 24 courses of priests, 12 tribes for them to minister to and so forth. What is the biblical structure for a church? Here is your quiz question.

You get a chance now to tell the world what the Bible says about how to structure a church. We've got how many? 27 books in the New Testament. So in those books, no doubt, there is an extensive description of how to organize and operate a church.

What does it say? Does a church have a board of elders? Or a board of deacons? Does it have a single pastor? Or can it have more than one pastor? Can Sunday school teachers be women? What if there are men in the Sunday school class? Can a class that includes men be taught by a woman? Can a woman be an assistant pastor or an associate pastor? Or can she be a youth pastor or a children's pastor? Can a woman be a deacon? Can a woman be an elder? How specific is the guidance in the New Testament on these things? Should you meet in a home or in a building? Should you have a baptistry? Should you have musical instruments? There are churches that believe it's unbiblical. The Church of Christ, I think, has no organ, no piano. Everybody sings acapella and other songs.

They sing without accompaniment. Is that right or is that wrong? Should you celebrate the Lord's table? Should you celebrate communion, the bread and the cup? Yes or no? If you say yes, how often? Once a year? Somewhere near Passover or Easter? Twice a year? Once a month? Once a quarter? Every Sunday? I've known churches that have the Lord's table every Sunday. I know churches that have it very infrequently and some

churches have it not at all.

What's the guidance? This is an example of what we see here in Joshua. God gives an outline and an objective within those borders. And it is up to Joshua and up to the elders to figure out how to accomplish that objective.

What is the objective for the church? Another potentially tricky question. I'm not saying the objective for believers. What is the objective for the church? Does scripture say what the objective is for the assembly of believers? Why do we get together? Edification.

The building up of believers. Right? What edifies? Can you have an edifying meeting without a Bible class? Does an edifying meeting necessarily include Bible class? Is that Bible class taught by the pastor or a teaching elder or can it be taught by anybody? Can people just stand up as the spirit strikes them and share a thought? You have churches that have that sort of format. Everybody gets together and they sit there until somebody decides to stand up and say something.

Your brethren churches are often in this tradition. Or at least they start out in that tradition. They don't always stay that way.

What does scripture say? Should you eat meat offered to idols or not? That was the question in Paul's day. The pagans would take some of the choicest, most prime, juicy, mouth-watering cuts of steak and lay them for a few minutes in front of an idol. Then they would take it away because the idol, for some reason, didn't eat it.

And so they would take it away and sell it in the market. Well, some Christians said that is meat offered to idols. That is tainted.

That is profane. That is godless pagan. That is a sacrifice.

That is an abomination. Get that thing out of my sight. If they came over to your house and you said, Boy, I've got a great steak for you.

Look at this. And you bring it out and they say, Oh, wow, where did you get that? Well, I got it down at the idol meat market. Whoa! Horrified.

Run out the door. Other people said, You know what? That is some of the best, tastiest steak. And an idol is nothing.

So if they laid it in front of nothing for a few minutes, no skin off my nose. Where's my knife? They didn't have forks. They ate with knives.

Hand me my knife. I'm going to eat. Which is right? Which is wrong? The perimeter, the border of objective, the border of mission, the border of what the function is and the goal is, has been drawn in Scripture.

These are specific territories, specific decisions, hills and valleys, groups of Canaanites, things to be conquered, things to be addressed. Did God stand there and tell Moses, Now tell the tribe of Naphtali that when they get to hill 347 in their territory, they're going to meet up with three really nasty giants with no teeth. He didn't say anything about that.

He said, You go in and take the land. Figure it out. And the hardest thing for believers today is to keep in mind the goal, keep in mind the hard and fast objectives.

These things must be done. Every Canaanite must die. Every monument must be destroyed.

Every idol must be cut down. Every high place must be eradicated. Every vestige of the godless, pagan, evil worship system must be eliminated.

That's the mission for Israel, going into the land. They are the scourge of God. They've got to find a way to make that happen.

They come up to a city and the city doesn't yield. They come up to Jebus and they can't take it. They get to some of these other towns and they can't take them.

They can't hold them. They get to Gath and they can't... Well, what's the problem? Has God become weak? Is His ear heavy that He cannot hear? Is His arm shortened that He cannot save? What's the problem? Why can't they take that town? Where is the problem? Falling down on procedure. Falling down on operation.

If you hit the city and you can't take it, go to God. Lord, what is the problem? Is there sin in the camp? We seem to have a precedent for this somewhere, like the second city we encountered in Canaan. We couldn't take that one either.

Maybe there's sin in the camp. If there was a proper focus on the objective and an application of what they have already learned, they would know. Why do you think Judah could not take Jebus? Why do you think these other tribes could not eradicate the Canaanites? There was sin in the camp and they didn't care enough to find it and eliminate it so that God could bless them and fulfill His promise.

Sin in the camp will limit what we can get done in terms of the objective. You can use almost any means and God will bless it. God is not interested in the details of how... Have you ever done a study? I've in the past done a study of the miracles of Jesus Christ.

There are a lot of them in scripture. And as you go through, you find that several different times He healed the blind. And He does it in different ways.

Remember one time, the most dramatic one, is when He spits in the dust and makes a paste and smears it on the... Saliva was unclean in Israel. You can think back to the days of Moses and Aaron and Miriam. And Miriam speaks badly about Moses and God judges

her and smites her with leprosy.

Moses goes to God and intercedes and says, please lift this judgment off of Miriam. And God said if her father had spit in her face, she would be unclean for seven days. Let her go sit outside the camp for seven days and she can come back in.

But even having somebody spit in your face would render you unclean for a while. Unclean until evening or whatever. Well, Jesus spits into dirt.

Is dirt clean? What's the first couple of chapters of Genesis tell you about the earth? The ground is cursed. Unclean saliva on cursed dirt. Smear it on your eyes and you can see.

Cursing turned to blessing. Because in the hands of the Lord Jesus, what is unclean becomes clean. Human beings, Levites, you go and touch something dead, you move from being clean to unclean.

You are ceremonially unclean. The Lord Jesus, if he touches something unclean, it flows the other way. Whatever he touches becomes clean.

And that's the great gift we have when we have God the Holy Spirit. If we are faithful, if we have Christ's words in our hearts and we keep them, he is dwelling in us. And what we do becomes blessed.

If we are doing things in his name and for his sake, if we are accomplishing our objectives day by day in trying to live our life to please God the Father and to reflect the glory of God the Son, the details of how you get a thing done are not that important. The church is not defined. It is not delineated.

It is not mapped out with a charter and a set of commands. Get together and have fellowship. Do it however you want.

But make sure these goals are accomplished. There should be encouragement. Each should look out not only for his own interest but also for the interest of others.

Remember there is chastisement for the church at Corinth because when they get together to share a meal, there are people hogging the food and needy people are going hungry. And Paul says, do you not know that you are profaning the body of Christ? And he is not talking about the elements of communion there. When Paul rehearses what happened on the night before Christ was crucified, and he says, I pass on to you what I also received, the Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed took the bread and took the cup and so forth, all of that is an illustration.

He is not setting up Catholicism and priests and transubstantiation and all that. He is saying, look, when you get together with fellow believers, that is the body of Christ. That is just as precious as the bread that Jesus passed out and said, this is my body which is

broken for you.

We are body of Christ. If you wrong a fellow believer, if you are not looking out for his interests, you are defiling, you are wronging Christ himself, because we are all in union with Christ. And his lesson there is we ought to think that way.

We ought to remember that we are brethren. We are co-sharers in Christ and we need to treat each other with that respect. When an assembly happens on that ground, on that basis, then we are going to be considerate.

God the Holy Spirit is going to be able to minister and to bless and to edify. Here is another math question for you. Let's say there are 15 believers who get together in a room with the objective specifically of getting together because they are believers.

How many spiritual gifts are in that room? How many spiritual gifts have been distributed among 15 believers? 15. 15 is the answer. How many of those gifts ought to bless the people who assemble? All 15.

You have a responsibility. Everybody thinks, well, it's Bible class. Sam's got to teach.

Sure, I hope he does a good job. I hope I can stay awake. I hope he can stay awake.

I hope his voice will last to the end. Listen and hear me carefully because this is what Scripture teaches. The assembly is blessed by that which every joint supplies.

The whole body fitly joined together, building itself up together in love. Read Ephesians chapter 4. The whole body. You know what that means? Anytime you get together with fellow believers, where two or three are gathered together, it can be your family, it can be friends, it can be a gathering such as this, you, fill your name in here, you have just as much responsibility to be a blessing to the assembled gathering as I do.

You are just as accountable to be a blessing. You cannot show up cranky. You cannot show up unprepared.

You cannot show up insensitive to the ministry of God's Holy Spirit and unable to be a blessing. It is a disaster if I do that. If I show up and I'm not prepared and I'm in a bad mood and I don't care if you understand Joshua 18 or not.

I understand it and that's all I care about. And I had a bad day, so hey, figure it out. You've got a Bible.

Get a commentary. That would be a horrifyingly bad and wrong attitude for me. But listen, it's just as important for you.

You are commanded as am I. The assembly is to be a time of edification and everyone present, you may not even have to say a word. Your presence is an encouragement.

Your attitude is an encouragement.

Your ear to listen can be a great blessing. Your comment here or there, a word fitly spoken, just one word, fitly spoken, the right place, the right time, the right sentiment, nudged by God's Holy Spirit, reflecting a particular point of view. A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

But we have to be ready to fulfill that mission. Joshua and the Israelites are going into the land and there's hacking and slashing. Joshua is providing plenty of leadership.

Let's go here. Let's attack this. Here's our campaigns.

I'm going to send out surveyors. We're going to cast the lots. But here's the thing.

After several of these tribes have got their apportionment, there's seven tribes kind of sitting around saying, well, so where do we go next? Joshua says, what's the matter with you? You heard Moses tell us on the other side of the Jordan what the mission is. Why aren't you on fire to accomplish the mission? Why are you waiting for me to lead you by the nose? Why are you waiting for me to hold you by the hand? You've got family leadership, clan leadership, tribe leadership. You've got designated individuals that God named by name to Moses to get in and these guys ought to be pushing.

They ought to be leaning forward saying, hey, when are you going to fill that lot? When are we going to go get ours? And these are just content. They're in the nomadic way of life. They're still traveling around.

They go to Gilgal. They go out. They come back.

They go out. They come back. Now where are they? This, by the way, is one of the first and only mentions of the tabernacle of meeting in the entire book of Joshua.

You remember later on in Samuel when you've got Eli and Hophni and Phinehas and they're going to be at Shiloh and the Philistines are going to come up and they're going to carry the Ark of the Covenant out and try to go into battle. Do you hear Joshua ever doing that? Did Joshua ever say, now at Jericho, God commanded. The priests are going to carry it.

There's a big symbolic deal. How about in all of the subsequent battles? Is any mention made of the Ark of the Covenant or setting up the tabernacle or having any big folly roll on that? Did they carry it around any of these towns before they attacked them and burned them? Jericho was really unique because it was the first. We have no record of any other towns being marched around.

No other towns having their walls fall down. No other towns having the trumpets blown and the Ark being paraded and so on. This was God's introduction.

It's sort of like when they play Hail to the Chief when the President comes in. Well, that was God's Hail to the Chief. The God of Israel has arrived on the land He promised to Abraham.

You've got circles of seven over and over and over again. Then you've got seven circles and then that place gets obliterated. So, now the whole congregation is assembled together at Shiloh.

Now this is really significant because the place, Shiloh, is going to figure prominently later on. And the tabernacle is there. And the tabernacle is mentioned here.

Why? Evidently the tabernacle has not been set up during these battle campaigns. They haven't had that four square camping arrangement that they had out in the wilderness where all of the tribes have a place and the tabernacle is in the center. They've been in an unusual mode.

They've been in battle mode. I think the most clever graphic I have ever seen is the Japanese war flag. You know what the Japanese flag normally looks like, right? You remember? What does the Japanese flag look like? It's a white rectangle with an orange or a red sun right in the middle.

What does the Japanese battle flag look like? It's the very same thing but there's rays coming out of the sun in all directions. And it's like the sun has flashed forth. Normally it's a nice little peaceful sun right in the middle of the flag.

But when they're at war, it's sun on the rampage. It's sun going to roast you and burn you down. And it's an amazingly intelligent use of a graphic.

Here's where we're at peace. Here's where we're at war. Well, when you're at war, things are different.

Israel is at war going into the land and things are different. Now it says the land is subdued before them and so they have gone to Shiloh and set up the tabernacle. Why Shiloh? Shiloh is a little bit north of Jericho and Ai.

It's not at Gilgal. Gilgal would have been a logical place. The ruins of Jericho might have been a logical place.

They could have gone up near Jebus and set it up. Why did they set the tabernacle up at Shiloh? It's a real simple answer to that question. God told them to.

God said, I will tell you where I want to put my name. And he chose Shiloh. Have we ever heard of Shiloh before? Remember there was a prophecy way back.

Till Shiloh come. So it's significant. And the name itself speaks of peace.

If you read any kind of notes on Shiloh, it was a hill in the tribal area of Ephraim. Ephraim is up north a little ways. That's eventually going to be a big part of the northern kingdom.

It's close to the borders of Benjamin. 15 miles north of Jerusalem. A little north of Bethel or Ai.

The tabernacle is set up there. Right now everything is still there. All of the pieces are still in place for the tabernacle.

It's got the curtains. It's got the candlestick and the laver and the altar. The whole thing is set up.

Their entire worship thing is set up. Apparently for the first time at Shiloh. But there are seven tribes that have not received their inheritance.

And so they get chided. So they go away to do the survey. We talked about that.

And when they come back, in verse 9, the men went, passed through the land, and wrote the survey in a book in seven parts by cities. And they came to Joshua at the camp in Shiloh. Shiloh is the new headquarters, because that is the place where God has chosen to place his name for the time being.

That's eventually why Eli and Samuel are going to end up in that vicinity. Then, verse 10, Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the Lord. Why is this important? Authority.

There is no doubt. Where are you going to go to appeal the falling of these lots? There has been some debate about how this might have been done. Did they put the land tracts in a jar and put the family names for the tribes in a jar and pull out a family name and pull out a tract and say, Ah, well, by tribe.

And just pull them out that way. I don't think so. The casting of lots is always, in my mind, the Urim and the Thummim.

And so, the representative for a clan would come up there. And the Urim and Thummim are yes, no, or I'm not saying. It's either two Alephs, two Tavs, or it's one of each.

Urim starts with Aleph. Thummim starts with Tav. It's the As and the Zs.

You get two As or you get two Zs. Or you get an A and a Z, which means God's not speaking. And so he comes up.

And they've got a tract of land. So each man comes up and turns. Who's going to get this tract? And as he files by, there's a yes.

Okay, that goes with you. And away they go. Perhaps that's how it was done.

Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the Lord. Joshua divided the land to the children of Israel according to their divisions. This is according to their clans.

Now, the lot of the tribe of the children of Benjamin came up according to their families. And the territory of their lot came out between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph. This kind of makes sense.

Judah was the protector of Benjamin in the original story. And Ephraim is a full relation. You remember Benjamin and Joseph had the same mother, Rachel.

So that sort of makes good sense. And then it talks about their border. And it talks about going up through Jericho, ending at the wilderness of Bethaven.

It goes toward Luz. You know, that's Bethel. Southward it goes to Adaroth Adar.

And you remember that Adaroth Adar was one of those names that was mentioned when God gave the boundaries, the original boundaries for the land. It goes and talks about how it extends around the west side to the south in verse 14. Bethoron ends at Kiriath Baal, which is Kiriath Yarim, the city of the children of Judah.

That was the west side. Then it talks about the south side and gives all these. And we could go through the same sort of analysis of these that we did before.

But I want to focus attention on verse 16. There's something in verse 16 that you should recognize. The border came down to the end of the mountain that lies before the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is in the valley of the Rephaim on the north, descended to the valley of Hinnom, to the side of the Jebusite city on the south, and descended to En-Rogel.

What vicinity is that? That's Jerusalem, the veil of the sons of Hinnom. That's Gehenna. That's eventually going to be the trash pit place.

It's often thought that Golgotha is not far from that and may have even overlooked that trash pit on the outskirts of Jerusalem in Jesus' day. And the border of all the things we could say, and I've used Judah as an example of the warnings that are inherent in these border descriptions. But just take that one.

The valley of the son of Hinnom. How old a name is Hinnom? This is circa 1400 B.C. It is still going to be called Gehenna in Jesus' day, 1400 years later. It is still known as the valley of Hinnom today.

It's identifiable. You can visit Jerusalem. You can walk it now instead of a horrible burning trash pit where corpses and offal and refuse are thrown.

Now it's grassy and treed. I've seen pictures of it. It's almost like a park in there.

You know why? Lots of organic fertilizer in there. That's where they used to throw everything that was dead and all of the garbage. Back then most garbage was organic.

So it's lush in there now. They have to mow the thing with industrial strength mowers. It looks beautiful.

To the side of the Jebusite city. This Jebusite city is going to be one of those places that as a reminder, God said, if you do not cast these people out, they will be irritant in your eyes and a thorn in your side. Now we immediately think, well I can think of some people that are an irritant in my eyes and a thorn in my side and I'd sure like to get rid of them.

When we do our observation interpretation application, that is not the direction in which this points. What is the territory that you and I are taking by way of analogy, by way of metaphor here? Our territory, our land of Canaan is within. The place where we need sin driven out is our own soul.

We want the dwelling place of God, the tabernacle to be set up in our midst. We want Christ at home in our hearts. When the Lord knocks on the door wanting to come in, we want to have a nice clean swept room to come in for him to sup with us and vice versa.

Our land of Canaan is our life. It's our thought patterns. It's our decision patterns.

It's our attitudes. It's our reactions. This is the most difficult thing.

Many of us have the experience of the tribe of Judah where a lot of things are straightened out, but there's that Jebusite city sitting right on the border full of Canaanites and we just can't drive them out. Well, the Benjamites get a crack at it. Here's their border.

Unbeknownst to them, they do not know how important that city of Jebus is going to be in the later history. That this is the place where God's temple is going to stand. Nobody knows that.

So think about it. Some of these hard-to-defeat Canaanite cities in our promised land, we don't know. We think, well, you know, I'm just going to have to wait until I get to glory to get over this problem, and I'll probably never get over my problem X or problem Y or problem Z. It seems like if it was going to yield, it would have yielded by now.

Now, this is a fatally bad attitude for us to have. Look at what it does to Israel. They get complacent.

They get tolerant. They say, well, I got most of them out. We'll just live with the rest.

God told them at the beginning, you have got to drive them out. Don't quit. Don't give up.

If oldest man in Israel can go uphill and drive out giants, what excuse does the entire tribe of Judah have for letting Jebus stand? And the tribe of Benjamin? They share it. It's right on the border. Neither one of them can take it and hold it.

Well, it's a reminder to us. You do not know what the future holds. We think, well, the future I'm talking about is just until I die.

Jesus will come back. We'll go be with Him, and everything's going to be glory. There's a song they used to sing, Oh, it will be glory for me When by His grace I shall look on His face That will be glory, glory for me And we say, glory, glory, glory It's going to be all glorious And my trials will be o'er, and so on.

No. This is kindergarten. This is boot camp.

This is our little preliminary orientation for life with God. And the battles that we fight, mental battles, invisible battles, unseen battles, trying to get the Canaanites out of these little towns in our soul, are critically important, because sometime in the future, it might be during the Millennial Kingdom, it might be during the Kingdom of the Father, one of these areas is going to be critically important so that we can serve, so that we can function. That is going to be important.

Jebus is going to be an important city. Every city in Israel is important, and every one they don't take is like a cancer that got missed. It's like a malignancy that was overlooked.

And it is going to grow and grow, and God's prophecy is going to be fulfilled. God is going to do to Israel exactly what He had intended to do to the Canaanites. He is going to eradicate them out of the land, tear down all of their monuments.

How many landmarks are left? How many altars? How many stones stand one on top of the other of the temple in Jerusalem? Not a one. That's what Israel was supposed to do to the Canaanites. That's what the pagans and the Gentiles had ended up doing to God's temple in Jerusalem.

And until 1948, they didn't even have claim to any of that territory. And today, they have a very tenuous grip because they are not yet in a position to be given that land by God. They are not yet in a position to be ruled by God's King.

So, the encouragement, as you look at these borders, and as you look at the tribal assignments, just remember, we each have one of these. We need to recognize it for what it is. If we've got issues in our family, if we've got issues in school, if we've got issues in our job, if we've got issues in interpersonal relationships, that's a place to read the mission.

What does God say? Is what I'm doing fulfilling God's purpose? Am I shining as a light in

the world, or am I blending in with the world? Do I look like everybody else? Do I function like everybody else? Do I think and act and talk and decide like everybody else? Or am I functioning on what God told Moses? When you get into the land, take it, clean it, possess it, and I will establish my presence among you and name a place for my dwelling. That's what God wants to do in our souls, but we have got to remember not to fade. These seven tribes are just complacent.

Joshua says, Hey, did you forget the mission? You're supposed to get the land and take it. So Benjamin is the first one to kind of get the prod. Come on, Benjamin.

Here's you some land. Here's a city that the tribe of Judah has not been able to take. It's right on your border.

Why don't you do something with it? Here's an opportunity. You know how it is in God's plan. The younger son often gets a shot at things that the older brother has not laid hold of.

Judah couldn't do it? Well, Benjamin gets a chance. And just think what glory would belong to the tribe of Benjamin if Jerusalem was in their tribal area. But it is not to be, because they pass it by.

Going down to verse 20, the Jordan is their border on the east side. This is the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their boundaries all around, according to their families. Now remember, the line for Benjamin goes through Jericho and goes over to the Jordan.

If you look at a good detailed map of the tribal assignments in the land, look and see where John the Baptist was baptizing just before Jesus started his public ministry. Check and see whose territory that is. Now, the cities of the tribe of the children of Benjamin according to their families were Jericho, Bet-Hoglah, Ammok, Kaziz, Bet-Arabah, Zamarraim, Bethel, Avim, Parah, Ophrah, Kephah, Ha-Ammoni, Othni, and Gabbah, twelve cities with their villages.

Gibeon, Ramah, Beirut, Mizpah, Kephira, Mozah, Rekem, Irpel, Taralah, Zilah, Elif, Jebus, which is Jerusalem, in their tribal assignment. Gibeon and Kirioth, fourteen cities with their villages. This was the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their families.

Now, each of these got assigned by lot. The reason these are detailed out, that's twenty-six clans in the tribe of Benjamin. So, here's what happened.

God told Joshua, apportion the areas by tribal size. Joshua's got a pretty good idea of how many, what tribes are large and which ones are small. So, when the survey came back, and they wrote it up into seven sections, some sections are smaller, the tribe of Benjamin is somewhat smaller, so they get this section, and the lot is cast to assign

within that section.

And this is God's will. God decides within there what they're going to get. Some of the Benjamites got Jebus as their designated territory.

Some of them got Jericho. You think, well, boy, there's a piece of cake. Why didn't I get Jericho? Things are already knocked down.

Just walk in. I hope I win that lot drawing there. Jebus, that's the one nobody can take.

Just think about those two cities. Within the tribe of Benjamin, you get the easiest city in the land, and the hardest. Do you think that the clan that got assigned Jebus is looking at the people who got Jericho, and the guys at Jericho are looking over at the guys who got Jebus and saying, sure, sorry about that.

And yet, there is opportunity. There is a great lesson to be learned. There is progress to be made.

There is a battle to be won. If that clan had taken Jebus, which they could have done under God's promise, which clan do you think would be recorded in the Bible? The ones who walked in unopposed into Jericho? Shoo away a few jackals? Or the ones who by valor, by faith, and by trusting in God took the toughest city in the land? Well, we don't know the name of either clan because the people who walked into Jericho were pansies apparently, and the ones who tried to take Jebus didn't take it and had to live on the outskirts. And it is a record of failure.

Well, that brings us now to chapter 19 and the second lot. The second lot came out for Simeon, for the tribe of the children of Simeon, according to their families. What do you know about Simeon? What's the birth order? Reuben, Simeon.

Second born. Could have easily gotten everything when Reuben messed up, slept with his father's concubine. But Simeon and Levi were the Dinah incident perpetrators and he got negated.

So now he is like the 7th or 8th tribe down before he gets a portion of his inheritance. Our decisions. There are certain things, if you look at the mix of factors, certain things are decreed by God.

There are structures, there are authorities that are assigned by God. The lot falls in accordance with God's will. This is basically a way to acknowledge that God is going to decide who gets what in these tribal territories.

But what happens with what you get assigned? That is completely up to that Israelite clan or family or tribe. What happens in that area of the promised land? Yes, it is divine fiat, divine decree, divine sovereignty that assigns that land to those people. But why do

you think God would assign it to them? Does He assign it to them hoping they will fail? Hoping they won't drive the Canaanites out? Hoping that they will be destroyed and have thorns in their sides and irritants in their eyes? God only gives us things that He knows we can do.

And there might be a really tough clan and He gives them a really tough city. And when they take it, it's going to show what those people are made of and how strong their faith is. Like Caleb and like his son-in-law.

Others, even a walkover is going to be their downfall. So it's an encouragement to us. We have the opportunity to take a land that is far greater and far more eternal than anything the Israelites had access to in this day.

But we have to remember the mission. We can't get caught up in our pattern and lose sight of the mission and the goal and the objective that is God-given and we only have a limited amount of time to accomplish it. So this section of Joshua is very emphatic on that point and it gives us something to chew on.

When we return next week, we'll start at chapter 19 and we're going to take a look at the assignment for the remaining six tribes and we're going to see a few things in these next few chapters that are pertinent even for the time in which we live. But let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word.

Thank You for the graphic way that these events from so long ago illustrate current truths and current opportunities for us as believers. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress these on our hearts. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.