

Joshua 07-10-12a

This is Friday, the 12th of October, 2007. We're in the book of Joshua. We're in the section of chapter 18 and 19 dealing with the allotment of land to the seven tribes that remain to receive their inheritance.

Let's take a moment at the outset to exercise our privilege as believer priests and go to the Lord in prayer. Father, we thank you for another opportunity to refresh our souls and be edified and built up through the learning and meditation upon the truth of your word. We thank you for the ministry of God, the Holy Spirit.

We thank you most of all for the Lord Jesus who died for us and made it possible for us to enter into eternal things and into the righteousness that qualifies us to stand in your presence and to receive your blessings and your benefits. We pray that our study will be productive, that each of us will find in your word those truths that will build us up in the faith, that will lead us and guide us and give us the strength to fulfill your plan and purpose as it lies before each one of us. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.

This is an interesting section of Joshua. It's easy to kind of get bogged down in the details of borders and allocations for the various tribes. But if you think about the big picture, you remember that there were some tribes on the east side of the Jordan and then we had tribes who came and said, we want our land.

And so Judah and Reuben and Benjamin received their allocations, so to speak. But there's actually I've kind of anticipated myself with Benjamin, but the whole congregation in verse 18 set up at Shiloh. Everything that had happened previously in terms of their base of operations and the allocation of land for the tribe of Judah and so on took place from what headquarters? Where were they when the final disposition for Ephraim and for Judah and so forth all took place? What was their headquarters? They were at Gilgal, right? That's their headquarters.

They've been headquartered. They always return after their campaigns and so on. Joshua's headquarters has been at Gilgal.

But with the beginning of chapter 18, we find Joshua establishing the sort of temporary capital. It kind of reminds me of Philadelphia, where the early capital of the United States was before it moved to Washington, D.C. And you still can go there and see the building where Congress met and so on before they relocated to the final capital. Well, Gilgal was sort of that way as the first place where the government sort of met, where their initial base of operations was.

But beginning in chapter 18, you have Joshua moving up to another place and setting up the tabernacle. And it seems that from this point, the tabernacle no longer wanders, no longer follows the armies around. It's sort of a semi-permanent setup here.

And this is at Shiloh. Now, Shiloh is an interesting name, first of all, and it's an interesting choice of location for the new capital. This is about 30 miles north of Jerusalem or Jebus at this time.

But it's 30 miles north. So this is north even of where, you remember the big billboard? Remember when they went up there and they e-balled and Gerazim and so forth? Well, Shiloh is 30 miles up north and the tabernacle is erected there. It functions more so since the campaigns are complete.

It's really their religious capital now. Joshua's not running a centralized military campaign from there. That was Gilgal, but that phase is over and it is signaled by the change of location.

If you remember what Gilgal means, it's an onomopoetic word. Gilgal, Gilgal, Gilgal, Gilgal. I used to have a hubcap that did that on my Volkswagen when a piece of gravel would get inside.

You know, you've seen those almost babymoon hubcaps on the old Volkswagens. You get a rock inside there and it goes ching, ching, ching, ching, ching. Well, Gilgal, Gilgal, it means to roll, means something circular, has the idea of something round, something cyclical.

Shiloh is a bit different. There is an etymology here that gives us a completely different suggestion. It is derived from a verb, shalah, S-H-A-L-A-H, which means to draw out, to bring forth, to extract.

If Dr. Godbold was practicing in Israel, he might use this verb for getting a molar out of the way or digging in there and, you know, getting a bad tooth out. It means to draw out or extract, shalah. Now, there are actually two root forms of shalah, and there's another one that is spelled exactly the same way, and it is the basis for a form called shalev, which means to be quiet or to be at ease.

And I think it is this other root, shalah, in the sense of quietness or ease, that is the basis for the town name, Shiloh, to be at rest, to prosper with the idea of quiet, privacy. This was used, for example, in Job 3, 26, where Job says, I am not at ease, nor am I quiet. I have no rest, for trouble comes.

Goes without saying in the Job story. The word is also found in the Psalms when it says, pray for the peace of Jerusalem. This is how, what's his name, closes each one of his programs.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Who's the guy that has his program? He's a Messianic Jewish guy. He has these things.

Yes, from Dallas. Well, it'll come to me when I'm not trying to think of it. But he closes

each of his programs with this scripture quote.

Many times you will see Jewish publications, Jewish get togethers and meetings, pray for the peace of Jerusalem. They will recite this. Well, that incorporates this word, Shalom and so on.

Jeremiah chapter 12 and verse 1 also uses this. Zola Levitt. Yeah, that's the guy.

Righteous are you, O Lord. Jeremiah 12, 1. When I plead with you, you let me talk with you about your judgments. Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why are those happy, peaceful, contented who deal so treacherously? You know, there's a gospel song that talks about, you know, all the wicked seem to be doing well, you know, farther along.

You listen to the verse portion of the farther along song, those who are contended though in the wrong type of thing. So this is the idea. So Shiloh, and it kind of makes sense when, and at the risk of sounding a little bit flippant here, when they're headquartered at Gilgal, they are rolling through the country.

They are on a roll. They are moving right through. There's a lot of activity in terms of let's get in there and get this occupation and conquest accomplished.

Once that strategic victory is won, they are to abide. They are to rest. And there's that idea in the name of the capital.

There's a lot of places where Joshua could have established his capital. But I think as this word spread throughout the tribes of Israel, well, Joshua has set up the tabernacle at Contentment City, at Peace Town, or however you want to look at it. This sends a message.

And there are these seven tribes who have not yet received their inheritance. What's the holdup? Why aren't they pressing for this? The people of Judah are ready. Caleb says, hey, where's my inheritance? I was promised it 40 years ago.

Let me go in there. And Ephraim and so on. You've got Manasseh.

They're saying, hey, we've got this issue on both sides of the river in one thing and another. But these seven tribes are just sort of apathetic. And I think you see that reflected when they come at Joshua's call.

In verse 3 of chapter 18, Joshua said to the children of Israel, how long will you neglect to go and possess the land? We talked about this when we went through chapter 18, but I want to point out something that we didn't really talk about. He says, what does he say there? How long will you neglect to go and possess what land? What does it say? The land which the Lord God of your fathers has given you. The land which your father's God

has given you.

How come he doesn't say which your God has given you? This reminds us a little bit of the argument that we're looking at in the New Testament in John chapter 8, where who is your father? Well, our father is Abraham. Jesus says, you don't do the deeds of your father Abraham. You're doing the deeds of some other father.

We're not children of fornication. Jesus says, look, I'm here representing the father. I'm doing his will.

If you were of the father, you would listen to me. You would appreciate me. You would believe in me.

But you're not. You don't. You don't match the faith of your fathers.

We've got that great old hymn, faith of our fathers. Well, that same idea is here. Joshua, this is a little bit of a, of a backhand to these guys.

You know, if your fathers were here instead of you, they would have been pounding on the door saying, where's mine. What's the matter with you? Seven tribes that you're just laying back. I have to call you here.

I have to chide you and say, why are you neglecting to go and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers has given you? Pick out three men. I will send them, let them go through the land, survey it according to their inheritance, come back to me. They'll divide it into seven parts.

Judah will remain in their territory. House of Joseph, always you got theirs. Survey the land, seven parts, bring the survey.

I will cast lots for you here before the Lord, our God, we will be able to call him our God when we're back on track. Once you've gone out and done your part, I'm not going to sit here and do your work for you. I'm not going to survey the land.

I'm not going to divvy it up. You'll come back and say, oh, Joshua's division was unfair. You all survey it.

You come back and do your own work and then we will come before the Lord, our God, because we will have done what we were supposed to do. And now he's not, we will come back before the God of our fathers. We'll come back before our God.

There's a, there's a shift there and it's very significant. The emphasis in this section of Joshua is on what obedience can accomplish. In the face of whatever circumstance may be allowed, it doesn't matter how big or how strong or how numerous the opposition is.

It doesn't matter whether your particular tribe is large or small. It doesn't matter if you're

a daughter or a son. It doesn't matter if you're an old guy or a young guy.

It doesn't matter if you are in the grip of what unbelievers would call fate. Your faith, your seizing, laying hold of the promises of God puts you in the place of blessing, puts you in the place of opportunity, and it's repeated over and over, it's turned every different way in the sunlight to reveal the facets of God's grace and the facets of the opportunity. We have freedom.

It's just that I see so many connections to what Jesus says in John chapter eight. If you abide, if my word abides in you, you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. If this becomes a reality, God's promise to drive out the enemies, if you really take this to the bank, as it were, there's no limit to what God will do.

But you remember that thing when Jesus goes up to Nazareth and goes around, he could do no great work because there was so little faith. That's why we memorize that verse. The Lord's arm is not shortened that he cannot save.

It's not that he's gone deaf and he can't hear. Your iniquities have separated between you and your God. Your sins have hidden his face from you so that he will not hear.

God will not bless. He will not sustain. He will not orchestrate and smooth the path and fulfill those promises, which are overcomer promises.

To be an overcomer, we have to seize by faith. We have to have an active faith, a proactive faith. What a shame that Joshua has to go poke these seven tribes with a sharp stick and say, Hey, what about you? But that's what's going on here.

And so he has set up the tabernacle at Shiloh and he says, I will cast lots. And it seems to me like this is a good time for us to actually talk about this idea of casting lots. The word for lots here, uh, comes from a word that originally is related to, uh, little stones.

There's a, an Arabic equivalent. This, this is the word Goral, G-O-R-A-L, Goral. And it occurs interestingly in the old Testament exactly 77 times.

There are exactly, precisely 77 occurrences of the word Goral. It's always translated either lot or lots. Technically it is a, uh, it is a, uh, common singular.

It's like the word fruit. I would like fruit. If you're laying in your hospital bed, fruit.

Are you saying one fruit or a bowl of mixed fruit? Well, you can't tell from the word. It can sort of be used either way, but it's construed as a singular word. It's construed grammatically as a singular, uh, but you'll find it translated both ways in English.

And so when it says they cast lots, well, it's Goral and it's, it's a common singular word. Um, and because of this, we, it has come over that the usage in English is very similar. The word lot, uh, we say, well, that's his lot in life or, uh, I've got a lot of trouble.

You know, we talk about a lot and we've kind of lost the, you know how it is. We, we don't think about the etymology and the origin and the, the original freight that a word carried. And we say, well, uh, I have a lot of cares.

I have a lot of worries, or I have a lot of money. Well, a lot means an allotment. It means this is what has fallen to me.

This is my portion, or this is what fate, kismet, God, providence, whatever your particular belief system is. But originally I've gotten, you know, if you say, well, lots of luck, what are you saying? Well, I hope as the dice roll, you end up lucky kind of a thing. Well, Goral, that's, that's the essence of this word in Hebrew.

So, uh, in Greek, you had the same thing. There's a word called, uh, sephos, P-S-E-P-H-O-S, and it's the same idea. It was used for a pebble, but of course in the, in the Senate and so on, a lot of times they would, would turn in, you know, this is the whole origin of the, the black marble idea where, you know, they put the votes in and it's white if it's a yes and black, if it's a no, and you hand things out and if you get the black marble, that means thumbs down kind of a thing.

Um, so it originally referred to the casting of some sort of physical object, generally made of stone that would settle a, an issue, would, would make a choice in somewhat of a random fashion or as the gods determine it. You would put it in the hands of the gods or in the hands of forces beyond yourself, whether it's the God of Israel or whoever in the, in the mind of the person casting the lot. Um, and so it comes to be, uh, symbolic for the result.

You say, well, this is my lot. Well, it doesn't mean this is my dice or this is my spinner, or this is my, my random choice determined. It, it, it's what they call a metonymy.

Metonymy means something moves into place of another thing. So, uh, you have a metonymy here for, uh, the determination or the decision or the outcome of the lot is called the lot. And so we say, well, here's your allotment, here's your allotment check.

You think, well, did you roll a dice to determine, you know, that or not? But, uh, you have this, for example, in Judges chapter one, verse three, where the tribes are personified. Judah says to Simeon, his brother, come up with me to my allotted territory that we may fight against the Canaanites. And I will likewise go with you to your lot, your allotted territory.

We call pieces of real estate lots, and it all goes back to this same idea. Originally, this is the apportionment and many times in the past, it was determined by the fall of some arbitrary, uh, decision-making device. Uh, so in Psalm 16, five, you have David saying, Oh Lord, you are the portion of my inheritance and my cup.

You maintain my lot. I don't think that I'm in the grip of random forces beyond my

control. I'm not subject to the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.

You are the portion or portioner of my inheritance and my cup. You're the one that decides whether my cup is going to run over or not, as in Psalm 23, you are the one who maintains or establishes my lot. And this is a critically, you know, by this time, my voice is mellifluously rolling along and you know, there's the glaze factors setting in.

But think about this one thing. You don't remember anything else from, from this evening. It's important.

It is a crucial distinctive for overcomer believers versus non-overcomers for those are going to be great versus those released for those who are well done. My good and faithful servant versus wide road, broad gate, weeping and wailing. What was I thinking? Believers at the judgment.

Here's the key. What do you really think about your circumstances? Do you really honestly believe that by your own might and main, you can make stuff happen that is of intrinsic value? Or do you acknowledge at the fundamental level of all decisions and actions and contemplations that this thing is really up to God? I must do my due diligence. I must get out there and survey.

I must write it down in the supper. You know, it says they, they wrote that survey down in a book. We saw that turn to town name, Kiryat supper.

I kept thinking they wrote it in a book. Books weren't even invented. They weren't lugging around something that looked like a big web search and writing down this.

It was a scroll. It's a supper. It's a, it's a document could have even been a soft clay tablet.

It's, it just means a, an account, a record supper means to, to count or to account. They wrote an accounting of the, of the survey and brought it back to Joshua. So this apportionment now, what if you get apportioned some trouble? What if you run a business and you've got an irate customer? What if you have a family, you've got an irate family member, your child and your parents, irate your parent, your child's irate.

You're a child and your fellow sibling is irate. You're, you thought you did well at work and your boss is irate. Your boss and your employee didn't do well.

And you are irate, whatever it may be that there is, there are circumstances that, that enter in and we have to cope. We have to decide, well, now, how am I going to deal with this thing that just showed up on my screen? Well, that fundamental assumption, do you understand, do we understand that this is our lot and our portion and God either instigated or allowed this thing as a part of his plan? It really shifts your perspective. It has to, if you say, well, God would not have put this in my path if I didn't have the

where withal to address it.

Maybe I can solve this all by myself. Maybe I have to recognize that this is a time for prayer, or this is a time for consultation with others. This is a time for meditation.

This isn't something I can solve. You know how math problems are. You know, your times tables, you can do a certain amount of math in your head, but the problem becomes sufficiently complex.

And you say, wait a minute, let me get my calculator. Used to say, let me get my slide rule. We don't say that anymore unless we're really wanting to give away how old we are.

Oh, wait a second. I've got a slip stick in the drawer here. Just, just a minute.

We don't say that. I used to be able to work a slide rule like an extension of my brain. I found my old slide rule from however many 30 odd years ago.

The other day was issued to me at the Naval Academy. I pulled that thing out and I looked at it and I thought, I think you can multiply with the C and D scale. And after that, I forget, I don't even know anymore.

I used to pull logarithms and sines and cosines and tangents and secants and cosecants and all other, and be able to mentally figure the decimal points and work calculus and physics and all kinds of gross mathematic problems on there. The thing is like a foreign, it's like an abacus to me now. I look at it and think, but we are given problems and we recognize that there's certain things we can solve in our head.

And there's certain things we need some sort of a tool. A lot of Oriental people at abacus will put up any calculator in the shade. There are people who, I had a friend sharing a mathematical formula with me that really simplifies a lot of mental math that I'd never heard of before.

And I won't go into the details, but you can do amazing feats of math in your head if you know this little trick and a couple of others, but here's the point. If God puts something in our path, one of two things takes place. We can either solve it in our head or we've got to go get the tools that enable us to solve it.

And there are two different kinds of problems. It's silly to sit there trying to work mental math that you do not have a calculator brain to solve. It is also silly in my mind, if you know your times tables and you've got a simple calculation of four times 12 or something, why are you running around saying, where's my calculator? And you're digging all through the house saying, oh, the batteries are dead.

And you spend half hour trying to get the calculator fixed. Hey, four times 12, come on,

you should know this. You don't need the tool.

Why are you wasting time and energy and running yourself in a little, in a little hamster wheel when you've already got the answer, just stop and use what you already know. Well, that's, it's a two part process, isn't it? Look at these tribes. There's a two part process here.

God put a challenge in front of them, go in the land and take it and seize your inheritance. And these seven tribes just kind of stopped. They went into the land.

And as long as Joshua was leading around saying, charge here, occupy there, recon here, uh, you know, hold the line there. They were fine. But as soon as the military orders quit flowing, they're just kind of standing around, you know, scratching their left shoulder and gazing off into space.

And Joshua says, what's the matter with you? You know, this, I should not have to tell you that it's time to lay hold of your inheritance. What are you waiting for? What's the matter with you? The God of your fathers has promised you this land. Why are you not like your fathers in laying hold? So it's important for us to recognize that God determines the fall of the lot.

But we have to be there. We have to make sure that we're paying attention, that we are looking for his guidance and his allotment to us. But we recognize it when it comes as from him.

And then we deal with it accordingly. Sometimes we can deal with it out of our resident knowledge. Other times we've got to use some of our priestly prerogatives.

We've got to do a little bit of meditation. We've got to do some consultation. It's a great thing about fellowship.

You can, you know, iron sharpens iron. Man sharpens the countenance of his friend. This is why husbands and wives make a great team.

Because one of you will think of one thing, somebody else will think of another, that believers who are partners, believers who are close in fellowship and can kind of talk about their concerns and their challenges with one another, you get a fresh idea. You get a little bit of a perspective. Truth spoken in love goes a long way.

And it's a wonderful thing. It's a benefit of fellowship. It's a blessing.

It's why we are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. It's not just for worship, but it's for fellowship. It's for edification.

It's to avail ourselves of the pool of truth that the Lord Jesus has given us. So these tribes are standing here and they can't have the casting of the lot until they do something.

Joshua doesn't say, well, I'm glad y'all came.

Now, if you'll stand still, I'm going to cast the lot and I'll tell you where your territory is. He says, what's the matter with you? Get out there and survey the land, write it down, come back. Then we'll cast the lot.

These lots are cast at Shiloh in peace, in relative calm. There's no consideration of, well, you know, there's a real hotbed. I mean, how would you like to be trying to divide up the country of Iraq right now amongst the various factions and say, okay, well, clan of Abid, you get Fallujah.

And, you know, clan of Habib, well, you get, you know, downtown Baghdad. I mean, wait a minute, you're giving me a thing that's all full of warfare and bloodshed and hotheaded people trying to kill one another. Well, that's not the case.

They, all they have to do is go, there's no ongoing warfare. There's no real hotspots and trouble here. And so they go and survey, notice they don't have to take a big war party with them while they survey the land.

The land is subdued. Nobody's attacking these guys. It's a very small survey party.

This is kind of like Lewis and Clark drawing maps and stuff. They're not in the midst of a big vanguard of armed troops. They go around, they draw their maps, they list their cities, they get their border markers and so on, and they come back.

Now that they have done their due diligence, God controls the fall of the lot. Not before. The passive view of Christianity that, well, as long as I'm not being sinful, God is just going to pour blessing out of giant buckets on me is wrong.

We have an obligation. We have a responsibility. We have been called.

We have been equipped. We have been given the full armor of God. We have the indwelling and filling of the Holy Spirit.

If you have any substantial amount of the word of God, you've got the indwelling of the Father and the Son as well. You've got the Trinity. You've got the tabernacle set up in your soul.

What are we waiting for is the idea. You don't want to be one of these seven tribes. So they finally get this done and the lots are cast.

What's interesting to me is when you look around in the Old Testament on this idea of lots, there are six different Hebrew verbs that are used to talk about the lots. Sometimes they are cast. Sometimes they fall.

That's particularly interesting because to fall or to cause to fall, which is translated to

cast, this is from the Hebrew verb naphal, N-A-P-H-A-L. This is a significant word for anybody who's taken even a semester of Hebrew because this is the word that is used to illustrate the forms of Hebrew verbs. It's a first letter N word, which is weak, and so that weak letter will drop off.

So, for example, we talk about the Kal stem. Well, Kal isn't related to naphal at all, but as soon as you talk about the passive voice, I don't want to lose you here, but this is just my area of enthusiasm, so you're going to have to suffer through it. The passive voice of a Hebrew verb is called the Kal stem, which is a word that is called the niph'al.

Naphal would be the ordinary form of the verb, N-A-P-H-A-L, A-A, but the sign of the passive is when the first syllable changes to I, niph'al. Niph'al means I receive the action of falling instead of causing it. Instead of I make a thing or I cast a thing, I am cast.

You know, it's passive. You have P-A-L, which is the intensive stem. Now, P-A-L comes from naphal, but you notice the weak N drops off and you have the I-E infix, and that's the sign of the intensive stem.

The P-A-L is the intensive stem. So if I was going to say this thing was cast or thrown or it fell intensively, it was slammed, it was hurled, you would use the P-A-L form. It's the intensive.

It underscores and puts in boldface whatever the action of the verb is. You have the hyph'il, hyph'il. This is still from naphal, but the N disappears and instead you have an H in front, and you have I-I, hyph'il, hyph'il, and that's the cause of the stem.

I cause a thing to happen. The emphasis is on what agency caused this action to take place. You have the hyph-P-A-L, hyph-P-A-L means I threw myself.

I made myself fall. It's the reflexive stem, but all of these come from naphal. So I just give you that for free.

No, it's for charge, but naphal. And this is one of the main words that's used with lots, but notice there's a lot of different ways lots can fall. Niph'al, hyph'il, hyph-P-A-L, and so on.

There's lots of different ways in these 77 usages of lots that the verb naphal is used, and you've got five other verbs that are used for it as well. So you've got Leviticus 16.8, Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats. Remember the scapegoat thing? There's a casting of lots there.

Which goat is going to be slain as a sacrifice? Which goat is going to be brushed with his blood and let loose in the wilderness? Aaron will cast lots. The high priest will cast lots. You have Joshua 18.6, survey the land in seven parts.

Bring the survey that I may cast lots for you here. You don't cast your own lot. Joshua, who is not the high priest.

Is there a high priest in Joshua's day? Absolutely. But he is not it, but he is the guy that cast the lot. Different kind of a lot here.

You have Proverbs 16.33, a very famous verse in this regard. The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord. The lot is cast, it tells us a little insight.

Nobody knows exactly how the lots worked, but it says the lot is cast into the lap, but God determines its fall. Now, what's interesting to me is if this is a lot that's cast into the lap, guess what kind of lot it is not. It is not the Urim and the Thummim.

There's nothing, you know, there is a special national lot for Israel that's used for national questions like who sinned at Jericho, bringing up the tribes and so on. It may well be that Joshua here, when he says, I will cast lots, that he is actually accompanied by the high priest who is throwing Urim and Thummim here. We don't know that the priest is not mentioned, but it would seem kind of strange not to.

National questions, things of a religious nature, things that were of the tabernacle and so on, you would expect the high priest to cast those, but there are many other lots that are not the Urim and Thummim. Lot cast into the lap, God still determines its fall. Now, you might think, well, what kind of a point is that? It's critically important because you don't have to go to God's one oracle.

You know, Catholics say, well, God's got an oracle here on earth, it's the Pope, and when the Pope speaks ex-cathedra, that's just the same as God. That's equal authority with Scripture, which just makes me shiver every time I even mention it. You know, we used to have that record, that dramatization of the story of Job, and they have Satan down there talking to his minions and he says, someday I shall rule on a twin throne with God.

You know, as a paraphrase of what is said in the early chapters of Job, and you think about the man who has decided that he sits on a twin throne with God in Rome, I would want to be well away at the judgment, assuming that person is a believer. I'll have enough to answer for myself, but man, I would not want to be that guy. You know, what happened to Satan when he decided he would sit on a twin throne with God? It didn't turn out well.

Well, the lot is cast into the lap, every decision is from the Lord. God not only is at work in and among his people, but God controls the fall of other seemingly random forces and choices. How about the economy? Does the economy just go its own way and God just has to deal with it? How about the rise and fall of nations? How about the vagaries of chance and mischance that we experience as families and as individuals? Is God just having to kind of make provision as these random slings and arrows come our way? No,

God controls the fall of those seemingly random events, and they're seemingly random for the same reason that it's so difficult to find any tangible evidence for biblical events.

I don't think they're going to find Noah's Ark and parade it around. I don't think they're going to find the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. They're not going to go take a gander at the Cherub with his swinging sword.

They're not going to find hard and fast, ironclad, irrefutable evidence of the Bible in the same way that God doesn't rend the fabric of space and time and poke his face through and say, here I am, believe in me or else. He's already done that. The evidence is sufficient.

If someone wants to believe the other way, it can't be a matter of faith if it is so bleeding obvious that you could make no other choice. So God leaves the scenario sufficiently vague that if you want to believe, you will easily see the abundant evidence of his power and Godhead. What may be known of God, he doesn't say what must be known of God, what you can't help knowing of God, there's no possible reasonable person who could deny the existence of God.

No, God may be known through creation, through his handiwork, his eternal Godhead and his deity and power are manifest in what has been created. But if you want to believe another way, God leaves it sufficiently open that you can construct your own alternate explanation. And it will always be that way.

This is why, and I don't fault people who go into this field, but apologetics as a field of theology, as a major in seminary and that sort of thing. Apologetics doesn't mean I'm going to learn how to make great apologies. Apologia means to put a word upon something.

Apa is upon or from and logia is logos, word, matter, subject. You're going to make a debate. You're going to put forth an argument.

Well, to me, God, the Holy Spirit makes a much better argument than any human being. I don't see any point in spending a lot of time trying to construct evidence that demands a verdict and so on. I mean, I'm nothing against Josh McDowell, but I personally would not do that because what may be known of God is already manifest.

And if people are not going to accept the testimony of God himself and God's Holy Spirit in their heart, I don't have any serious expectation that the brilliance of my observations and so on is going to make a dent. But the fall of the lot is going to appear random. Our lives are going to be easily explainable to unbelievers.

Well, you were just lucky or I could have done that in your situation. It isn't going to convince them. Testimonies from believers.

Here's how God got me over my dependency or my addiction or my phobia or my mental problem or my horrible financial situation. To us, it is convincing evidence because we knew where we were. We prayed.

We saw God's supernatural handiwork in delivering us. And we are convinced. Somebody else says, well, you're just delusional.

You're just attributing things to God that would have happened to any hapless villager. And of course, they're going to see it that way. God determines the lot and determines how it falls.

And that's a matter of faith. Somebody else would say, I don't think there's a God at all. And that's just happenstance.

You were just lucky. You know, whether you know they've done these scientific studies and whether or not prayer works, they tried. I mean, I cannot think of anything more ironic than trying to do a scientific study of prayer.

OK, here's our control group that's going to pray about nothing. Well, they had three groups of patients. They had one group of patients and they said, OK, now we want you people to pray intensively for these patients and we're going to tell them that they're being prayed for.

OK, group B, you're going to pray for these patients, but we're not going to tell them that you're praying for them. And group C, you're not going to pray for anybody, but we're going to tell these people that you're praying for them, but you're really not. And then we're going to collate the results and figure out if prayer makes any difference.

Well, OK. God determines the fall of the lot. That's a fact.

Now, whether people accept it or whether they explain it away is up to them. But this is the testimony of scripture, Isaiah 34, 17. He has cast the lot for them and his hand, God's hand, has divided it among them with a measuring line.

They shall possess it forever from generation to generation. They shall dwell in it. This harks back in the physical sense to the days of Joshua.

When the inheritance was determined by lot. But ultimately it is talking about the allotment that God has made for his people that is going to be eternal and that they will possess forever. Joel chapter four and verse three, they have cast lots for my people.

They have given a boy as payment for a harlot and sold a girl for wine that they may drink. And this is talking about the enemies, the enemies of God, the enemies of the faithful people of God and so forth. So depending on how it's expressed in scripture, the verb will mean that the lot has fallen, that the lot has been cast, that the lot has

come up, that the lot has come out, that the lot has come upon or the lot has turned out on behalf of or for someone.

All of these different things. Why so many different ways of expression? This is the bottom line. Because God doesn't work in one single way.

God doesn't grab the heart of a person in charge and wrench them in a different direction. Sometimes he does. God hardened Pharaoh's heart because Pharaoh had already rejected God.

And if you reject God, you're just like any rock or tree or fault line or anything else on the earth. You're just simply something that God will use for his own purposes. Nothing is unfair.

If you've rejected God, how can you say it's unfair for God to use you to either deliver or chastise his people? You have abdicated any responsibility or opportunity to receive the grace of God. You're just a chisel or a screwdriver or a mallet or a ruler or whatever else in his hand. And you got no complaint.

You rejected him. So if he hardens your heart so you don't let the people go, if he softens your heart and you do let the people go, what's your beef? You're not saved and you're going to the lake of fire anyway. It's not a salvation issue.

That's my point. The Old Testament never explains what a lot is, never describes it, doesn't say it's a six-sided die, doesn't say that it's a two-sided alpha and omega, if you were using Greek, or aleph and atav if you're talking about Hebrew. That doesn't describe it.

We just have to infer from the way it is alluded to that it was something probably made of stone that when it fell had some sort of indicator. And I've given you my theory, which is just that. Fairly small.

If it's going to fall in your lap, it wouldn't be giant tablets of stone like you see Moses carrying off the mountain. If it fell in your lap, you wouldn't cast it more than once. Micah also, sort of cryptically in Micah 2.5, speaks of casting a cord by lot.

And that's kind of hard to figure out, Micah 2.5. So we don't really have a clue as to the specific way that it falls. And I think that's by design, because we don't have necessarily an understanding of how God causes our lot to fall circumstantially, day by day. It can come in a variety of ways.

All we know for sure is that he determines it. It's an important thing to remember. Well, let's pause here and take a break.

When we come back, we'll finish up our study of lots, and then we'll move forward to

look at what this means in our passage.