

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

This morning, we are going to continue our study through the book of Joshua –

We are actually going to do four chapters this morning – however, most of it is comprised of names and places – I will highlight some of the significant places mentioned in the sections however, I will expect you guys to attempt to read all the names and places on your own.

We have two more weeks in the book of Joshua and then we will move onto the book of Galatians.

So we are going back to the New Testament.

Let's pray...

For the past two weeks, we have started to see the Promised Land divided among a few of the tribes.

Two weeks ago, we saw the land on the east side of the Jordan divided among the two and a half tribes.

And then, last week, we saw Caleb get his portion as well as Judah, Ephraim and the half tribe of Manasseh.

And I pointed out how each of the tribes compromised the Word of God by not finishing the work that the LORD had sent them out to do – they failed to drive out the inhabitants from the land.

In these five chapters, we will see the rest of the Promised Land divided among the remaining tribes.

[Jos 18:1-11 NKJV] 1 Now the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at **Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of meeting there. And the land was subdued before them.**

Back in chapter three of the book of Joshua, when Joshua led the Children of Israel across the Jordan River – the city of Gilgal was where they pretty much set up as their base camp.

As they conquered city after city, we always saw them return to Gilgal.

However, now that they have conquered the land, they set up the tabernacle of meetings or the tabernacle in the centrally located city of Shiloh.

Show map – Shiloh location.

This tabernacle of meetings or tabernacle – is the place where God would meet His people.

Remember that the 1st temple is not built until much, much later in the times of Solomon.

And if we read Exodus 25-27, God gave Moses specific instructions on how to build this tent – this tabernacle – this place of worship.

God gives Moses quantities

God gives Moses exact measurements

He tells Moses what type of animal skins to use

He tells Moses what colors to use as well.

So this tabernacle is assembled together in Shiloh – and it will remain there until the times of Samuel and King David.

You might recall that when the Israelites took the Ark of the Covenant into battle against the Philistines and they lose it – they had brought the Ark from its resting place in Shiloh.

2 But there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes which had not yet received their inheritance. 3

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?"

So out of the 12 tribes, only five tribes have come forward to get their inheritance. The other seven tribes are sitting there twiddling their thumbs.

They are doing absolutely nothing.

And the problem with that is that God didn't call them to twiddle their thumbs.

He wants all the tribes to go into the land of their inheritance.

Why would the remaining tribes not step forward to get their inheritance???

- Fear – the individual tribes of this generation had never been on their own. They wandered the wilderness together for 40 years and fought along each other as they conquered the Promised Land. They don't know what to expect when they go on their own.
- Complacency – they thought that the job was done. In their eyes, the Promised Land was already conquered and they probably saw how the other tribes struggled to eliminate the "ites" from their land – so they were not in a hurry to claim their inheritance.

The bottom line church is that – it doesn't matter what their reason was for not stepping forward to receive their inheritance. It is still neglect – as these tribes chose to not fulfill what God had called them to do.

The same thing can be said about the believer.

We tend to become spiritually lazy – we become complacent instead of continuing to press on and allow ourselves to be used by God in amazing ways.

In ways that we can't even imagine.

We are told to go out and take those necessary steps of faith and place our trust in Him.

He will do all the rest.

Turn with me to the book of Ephesians 3,

[Eph 3:20-21 NKJV] 20 Now to **Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly** above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21 to Him [be] glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Many times we don't even bother to ask God, but even when we do, God is able to do way beyond what we could ever imagine.

Church, we have such a great wealth of awesome resources at our hand, through Jesus Christ.

Yet we take such little advantage of it.

Much like these seven tribes here.

So, Joshua here is trying to encourage the remaining tribes to move forward in claiming their inheritance.

As we read verses 4-10, I want you to make a note every time the word survey is used.

4 "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. 5 "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. 6 "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. 7 "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 the Jordan on the east, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave them." 8 Then 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." 9 So 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. 10 Then Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD, and there Joshua divided the land to the children of Israel according to their divisions.

Joshua commanded each tribe to send 3 men into the land to survey it.

The word survey is used 6 times in these 10 verses. It is a key word in the chapter. The word survey means to describe or to map out the details of something.

And they were told to record the detail of the land in a book.

Why would Joshua have them do this???

- By causing representatives of the 7 tribes to view the land they got to see first hand just how good the land was.

They say that a picture says a thousand words.

As they surveyed the land, they would see established cities, orchards and vineyards. They would see its pasture lands and streams.

After walking through the land and surveying its details, they would desire to receive it. Joshua wanted them to see the Lord's provision.

Notice also that God mentions the five tribes that have already taken their inheritance in verse 5,7.

Judah

The sons of Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh)

And Gad and Reuben and the other half of Manasseh on the east side of the Jordan

And the reason that Joshua reminds them of this is to show them five tribes have already persevered.

That these five tribes took the necessary steps of faith and demonstrated that it can be done.

Many times in our spiritual walk, we may get these urges of wanting to give up.

That this Christian walk is simply too hard.

But church, in the same way that Joshua is encouraging these seven tribes to look toward those that have already persevered, we can look at all those who came before us and persevered as well.

Those that finished the race.

It can be done –

We can finish the race too.

That is what we are called to do church.

So these seven tribes do as Joshua commanded and they all get their inheritance.

So the first tribe we look at today is Benjamin.

11 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.

Benjamin is going to get a rather small portion of land.

Show map...

His area is only going to be about 25 miles wide, and only 15 miles across at its widest point.

But it's going to contain a very large concentration of cities, including some of the most important cities in Israel's history.

And we see that their inheritance is between the two tribal leaders: Judah and Ephraim.

All this seems to point to a fulfillment of a prophecy that Moses made over Benjamin toward the end of his life (about ten years earlier)

[Deu 33:12 NKJV] 12 Of Benjamin he said: "The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by Him, [Who] shelters him all the day long; And he shall dwell between His shoulders."

And of course,

So the rest of the chapter is the boundaries of the land that Benjamin inherited and its cities.

Now, in chapter 19, we start with the Simeon's inheritance.

Simeon was the second oldest son of Jacob.

However, he was also the one along with Levi who in his anger schemed and killed all the men of Shechem.

And Jacob as he is on his death bed and is giving his final blessing – pronounces a curse upon Simeon 600 years earlier.

[Gen 49:5-7 NKJV] 5 "Simeon and Levi [are] brothers; Instruments of cruelty [are in] their dwelling place. 6 Let not my soul enter their council; Let not my honor be united to their assembly; For in their anger they slew a

**man, And in their self-will they hamstrung an ox. 7
Cursed [be] their anger, for [it is] fierce; And their wrath,
for it is cruel! I will divide them in Jacob And scatter
them in Israel.**

Being surrounded by Judah, the identity of Simeon quickly fades away and they are scattered throughout Israel – just like Jacob prophesied.

We also have the land given to Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali (that was the region near the Sea of Galilee where most of the ministry of Jesus took place), Dan and the portion that was given to Joshua – and you guys can read all those boundaries as well as the cities that were part of their inheritance.

And that is chapter 19.

In chapter 20, we have the cities of refuge.

[Jos 20:1-9 NKJV] 1 The LORD also spoke to Joshua, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying:

'Appoint for yourselves cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses, 3 'that the slayer who kills a person accidentally [or] unintentionally may flee there; and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood.

4 'And when he flees to one of those cities, and stands at the entrance of the gate of the city, and declares his case in the hearing of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city as one of them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them. 5 'Then if the

avenger of blood pursues him, they shall not deliver the slayer into his hand, because he struck his neighbor

unintentionally, but **did not hate him beforehand.** 6 'And he shall dwell in that city until he stands before the congregation for judgment, [and] until the death of the one who is high priest in those days. Then the slayer may return and come to his own city and his own house, to the city from which he fled.' " 7 So they appointed Kedesh in Galilee, in the mountains of Naphtali, Shechem in the mountains of Ephraim, and Kirjath Arba (which [is] Hebron) in the mountains of Judah. 8 And on the other side of the Jordan, by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness on the plain, from the tribe of Reuben, Ramoth in Gilead, from the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan, from the tribe of Manasseh. 9 These were the cities appointed for all the children of

Israel and for the stranger who dwelt among them, that whoever killed a person accidentally might flee there, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood until he stood before the congregation.

So, what was the need for these cities of refuge???

We must remember that the Israelites did not have a prison system like we do here in the United States or in other parts of the world.

There was no police system in place to make sure that law and order prevailed.

In those days, it was the families responsibility to policed each other.

In those days, there were really two ways of dealing with crimes.

1. Capital crimes

Things like murder, sexual sins like rape or adultery, blasphemy, disobedience to parents, etc.

The penalty, if found guilty, was death.

2. Crimes against a person

Things like robbery or vandalism - you had to pay restitution, sometimes up to five times the value of what was stolen or damaged.

If you stole your neighbor's ox or slaughtered one of his sheep and you were found guilty, you had to make things right by paying him or her back.

And we see these examples throughout scripture. Exodus 22 and Leviticus 6 provide us with examples of these restitutions.

However, one of the crimes that is not addressed is the one of manslaughter. What happens when you accidentally kill someone?

Your ox escapes from your field and tramples to death the neighbor's wife or the neighbor's children.

What would usually happen is that the neighbor or one of the neighbor's relative would then be responsible in avenging the death of those that were trampled.

It was all about revenge and retaliation.

So the LORD set these cities up so the person accused of manslaughter can flee from his pursuer and be protected from any type of retaliation.

The person still had his day in court – in front of the elders (usually the Levites) and if he was found guilty of manslaughter, he would then have to remain in the city of refuge until the death of the high priest that presided during the time of the sentence.

Once the high priest had died, the person convicted of manslaughter was then free to leave the city of refuge without fear of retribution.

That was the purpose of these cities of refuge.

However, these cities of refuge served another purpose.

And that was to point us to Jesus Christ.

Because Jesus Christ is our refuge.

Turn with me to the book of Psalms 46

[Psa 46:1 NKJV] 1 To the Chief Musician. [A Psalm] of the sons of Korah. A Song for Alamoth. God [is] our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.

Consider the following similarities between Jesus Christ and these cities of refuge.

- There were six cities of refuge – three on each side of the Jordan River. No one had to cross a river or a mountain range in order to access one of the cities. They were within reach of anyone who was in need of refuge – anyone who needed protection. In the same way,

Jesus Christ is accessible to anyone who calls on His name.

- Both Jesus and the cities of refuge are open to all, not just the Israelite; no one needs to fear that they would be turned away from their place of refuge in their time of need.
- Both Jesus and the cities of refuge became a place where the one in need would live; you didn't come to a city of refuge in time of need just to look around.
- Both Jesus and the cities of refuge are the only alternative for the one in need; without this specific protection, they will be destroyed.

- Both Jesus and the cities of refuge provide protection only within their boundaries; to go outside the cities of refuge or Jesus Christ means certain death.
- With both Jesus and the cities of refuge, full freedom comes with the death of the High Priest. We received our freedom when Jesus Christ, our High Priest died upon the cross for you and for me.
- There is one difference between Jesus Christ and these cities of refuge. The cities of refuge were there to protect only the innocent – however, because of His amazing grace, even the guilty can find refuge in Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our last chapter this morning is 21. And chapter 21 deals with the inheritance of the tribe of Levi. Remember, they

didn't receive land, they got certain cities within the land of the other tribes.

God was supposed to be their inheritance as they served in the tabernacle and ministered throughout the land.

God still provided for them as they actually got a salary – which was a portion of the sacrifices that were brought into the tabernacle.

So the first 42 verses detail the cities that were given to them.

I want to draw your attention to verse 43.

[Jos 21:43-45 NKJV] 43 So the LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. 44 The

LORD gave them rest **all around, according to **all** that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of **all** their enemies stood against them; the LORD delivered **all** their enemies into their hand. 45 Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. **All** came to pass.**

500 years earlier, God had made a promise to Abraham that included three things.

- God told Abraham that He would give him a marvelous home land.
- He said He would make him into a great nation.
- And God also promised that He would bless all nations through him.

The promised homeland is now in their hands

The great nation is the nation of Israel

And the blessing for all nations was the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who came to set man from sin and death.

And that threefold promise went from Abraham, to Jacob, to Jacob's 12 sons, to Moses, and finally to Joshua.

And here in the last three verses of chapter 21, God fulfills His promise.

Despite all the obstacles...

- The 400 years that the children of Israel were slaves in Egypt
- Their disobedience in the wilderness.

God overcame those obstacles and delivered upon His promises.

These three verses describe the total faithfulness of God.

God is faithful. None of His words shall fail.

Everything that He has spoken shall come to pass concerning me and you. All of it.

If God can rescue Israel and give them victory over the mighty Canaanites, He can certainly give us victory over our enemies and those circumstances that we find so troubling.

God gave them victory over all their enemies – all of them.

The only reason that we read that they failed to drive them out was because they chose not to drive them out. They chose to compromise on the word of God.

They failed to trust in All of His promises.

May we truly grasp God's faithfulness. Amen!!!

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I

believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please

forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I

accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

