

## Joshua 18:1-28 “Business or pleasure?”

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### I. Intro

Unlike Caleb and the daughters of Zelophehad, these tribes didn't have faith and spiritual zeal. Though they had helped fight battles and defeat the enemy, they hesitated to claim their inheritance and enjoy the land God had given them. Hey saints before you see this as some isolated case take a moment to consider the fact that this plight fits the vast majority of Christians today. They fight all the battles, face the enemy on a consistent basis yet fail to ever enter into their inheritance in Christ.

Why would these folks not prefer to live in cities and houses instead choosing tents camping out instead moving in? In a word **familiarity**! They had never known anything other than dwelling in tents and now they had the opportunity to move out of a tent and make a home and they were uncertain about the change. Listen carefully to what God calls their inactivity into the appropriation of their inheritance “*neglect*”. There are a lot of like these fellows who are afraid of change even when it is a good thing. Change is inevitable the only question is whether or not you will allow the change to change you further into His image!

Someone has wisely said, “*Wherever I have a house, there God shall have an altar*”. Though the responsibility of the allocation of the inheritance lie with each tribe the burden was upon Joshua to see that each tribe got what God so wanted to bless them with. They were simply negligent and had fallen into complacency with the way things had always been. Christian there is a lesson here for us and perhaps none more important to realize than that our Joshua (Jesus) wants us to walk into what His shed blood has provided.

### II. Vs. 1-10 Wealthy beggars

Vs. 1 As Judah and Joseph's two sons had taken their lot and moved out into the land of promise there was a need to move the tabernacle to a more central location geographically, so they moved it to Shiloh. Shiloh was centrally located more convenient for all the tribes especially seeing that three tribes had moved into their inheritance. That fact alone should have caused those seven tribes to take up the challenge. Now what may not be immediately understood is that Shiloh has an important significance for the nation. You may recall the prophecy Genesis 49:10 concerning Judah where we are told that, “*The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, **until Shiloh comes**; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people.*” The word Shiloh means “*Peaceful One*” and in Isaiah's prophecy in Isaiah 9:6 the Messiah will be called “*Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, **Prince of Peace***.” The word Shiloh has such a Messianic affiliation that when it was translated into Latin the word that the Rabbis used was a word that meant “*He who is to be sent*” of the “*Sent One*”.

Allow me this observation, as we move out into the promises and blessing of the victorious Christian life we will need to move ahead and encamp around our Lord and keep Him at the center of our life. Far too often we fail to appropriate the blessings and promises of our Lord because we simply don't keep Jesus at the center of our life.

Vs. 2-7 Seven tribes were content to just float around with out a purpose or a plan. You may recall that Caleb came to Joshua in 14:12 and said “*Give me this mountain where the giants live*”. Then the families of Judah came forward in the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter to claim what God had for them. In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> chapters the two sons of Joseph Ephraim and Manasseh approach Joshua to receive their inheritance. But seven tribes had to be exhorted by Joshua as he said in verse three “*How long will you neglect to go and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers has given you?*” Complacency had set in for seven tribes who were content just to hang out instead of occupy. Now remember, we are talking about folks who had crossed over the Jordan and were (*spiritual speaking*) baptized into the Spirit. They were folks who had witnessed the power of the Lord during seven years of rooting out the enemy. They had witnessed their brethren possess the

fullness of what God had for them. And with all of this they didn't come to Joshua and say "**My turn!**"

Saint's, there are far too many of God's precious children who are content to just hang out in their Christian experience instead of coming to their Joshua and saying, "***I want it all Lord, I want every spiritual blessing in heavenly places!***" As a matter of fact, there are those who view the Church as a place where they can just remain comfortable in the state they are in. Hey gang, you ought to be comforted in the state you're in but we here at Calvary we love you far too much to allow you to be comfortable. Now as I say this I realize that in doing so I've just caused some to say, "*Hey loved the worship, enjoyed the Word, the people were friendly BUT I'm not going back to Calvary because they aren't going to allow me to just hang out and hang in. Nope they are going to continue to encourage me to get up and get going into all that God has for me.*" That's right; I believe that we are **called of God to be a comforting place but never a comfortable place!** Joshua tells them four things, sort of four New Year Resolutions:

1. Vs. 4 **Willing Hearts** "*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.*" To those who had no plans of ever departing and going forward in their faith they were given plans. Find three fellows among each of those seven tribes that Joshua could send out to survey the land and come back to Joshua reporting on what they found. What were the qualities necessary in these three men from each tribe? Well look carefully and we see that **they needed to possess three things:**
  - a. **Teachable** "*I will send*": They needed to be obedient to Joshua. No sense in sending out guys who were not willing to listen to their leader. The greatest hindrance of not possessing the blessings of our inheritance in Christ is the lack of being teachable to begin with. I have to wonder how long it took these seven tribes to find three folks each who were teachable enough to go and investigate.
  - b. **Transparent** "*They shall rise and go*": Second, these three needed to be open and honest about their lack. They couldn't be guys who made excuses and blamed others for their lack they had to be guys who would "*rise and go*". Three guys who were honest enough and willing enough to rise and go investigate, map out and describe the blessings of the land their country men were unwilling to inherit. Dear ones there will always be a lack in our inheritance when we are not transparent and honest about our need.
  - c. **Transference** "*And come back to me*": Finally, these three from each tribe having written down the descriptions of the blessings of their inheritance had to come back and share with their brethren what they had walked through. Saint's that is what it is to pass along what we see in the land of blessing with our brothers and sisters. These three from each of the seven tribes having walked the land and written down the description of it were like fellows who had just traveled to a wonderful place and taken photographs and couldn't wait to share their home movies with their brethren. I found the surest way to affect those around us is to first make sure that you are excited about your own inheritance in Christ. The truth is those believers who are on fire for the Lord are contagious and what they have will soon be caught by those around them.
2. Vs. 5 **Surround yourself with those who are doing what you want to do** "*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.*" Joshua tells them to divide the land into seven parts but look at what he tells them next, "*Judah well remain in the south, Joseph shall remain in the north*". So? Well that is a great word for these seven tribes, "*Hey fellows you can do this!! All you need to do is look up to the sons of Joseph, or look down at Judah and you will see three brothers who are living out the victorious Christian life.*" The saying goes, "*It's hard to soar with the eagles when you are living amongst turkeys*". **Get with those that constantly motivate you and encourage you to be a better believer, those that are living out a life that continually is going deeper and further in their faith!** Nothing perpetuates a lukewarm Christian life more than surrounding yourself with those who also are lukewarm and nothing will cause you to want more from your Christian life than being around those who are walking in the inheritance ahead of you especially when they want to take you into your inheritance as

inheritance ahead of you especially when they want to take you into your inheritance as well. Those three tribes were living in the midst of their inheritance and their mere continual presence ought to have been enough for those seven tribes to say, “*When do I get my promises?*”

3. Vs. 6-7 **Evaluate the possibilities** “*You shall therefore survey the land in seven parts and bring the survey here to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the Lord our God. But the Levites have no part among you, for the priesthood of the Lord is their inheritance. And Gad, Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance beyond the Jordan on the east, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave them.*” Again the word “survey” entails a written description of the land (verse 9 says that wrote that in a book in seven parts by the cities in the land) but I also find something interesting in Joshua’s words as he tells them to bring back that description that he may cast lots before the Lord. You see in verse 7 Joshua reminds them of two groups that did not gain their inheritance as the others did. Why those two examples? I suggest that they are on either side of the inheritance.
- A. The first group was the Levites we were told in 13:33 that they had been given no inheritance of land because “*the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance*”. Simply put they didn’t need the physical blessings because they had been given all the spiritual blessings.
  - B. Ah but to the 2 ½ tribes that settled east of the Jordan who made their decision according Number 32:1 based upon worldly benefits they opted out of their inheritance based upon living in the here and now. These 2 ½ tribes didn’t want the inheritance because they were convinced that what they wanted was better than what God could give them.

So the Levites are blessed as their focus is on the “**HERE AFTER**” where as the 2 ½ tribes are not blessed because their focus was upon the “**HERE AND NOW**”. I believe that the Lord not only wanted these seven tribes to hear from the three witness of the bountiful blessings of the land of inheritance but He also wanted them to evaluate the consequences of their choices and what was behind that choice. Hey saints, this is how this works, “*Is what is holding you back based upon your living for the **HERE AND NOW** or is what is holding you back based upon your living for the **HERE AFTER**?*” Not going after the inheritance is fine if you are hanging out with the Lord and what He has for you is all of Himself. Ah but if what is holding you back from going into your inheritance in Christ worldly motivated then you need to consider the consequences of your decisions.

4. Vs. 8-10 **Get Walking**: As the 21 appointed men “*arose to go away*” Joshua called after them with the same charge “*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.*” The question this should raise in our hearts is, “*Why did Joshua say this if these fellows were on their way?*” I can only assume it was that **their departure with not completely whole hearted**. They were going but their hearts weren’t into it, they were in the “*I got too*” mode instead of the “*I get too*” mode. Now Joshua new that if they went out with the wrong attitude that they would never venture out into the blessings of their inheritance because their focus would have been on their **obstacles** instead of their **opportunities**. Joshua wanted them to go on **VACATION** and explore all of the possibilities that awaited them not look at this as if it was a **JOB**. I can’t help but see this as God wanting these 21 appointed men to get excited about what God had in store for them instead of seeing it as a task. He wanted them to see it as it was a **a blessing of unimaginable proportions** that they were losing out on. Based upon what is written in verses 9-10 upon their return to Joshua the book they had written became a “**Vacation Guide**” into the blessings of their inheritance instead of a “**To Do**” list of tasks to work on. It is this change that caused the rest of those seven tribes to say, “*Count me in, divide up the land and want my vacation home too!*” I’m convinced that more Christians are content to “**hang out**” as they are instead of “**venture out**” simply because they have a wrong view of their inheritance in Christ. Here what Paul calls our inheritance in Ephes. 1:3 “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in*

*Christ*". They are "*Spiritual Blessings*" not "physical curses", my friends. You see most Christians see the "Spiritual Blessings" as far less value than they see the things of this world but that is a lie of Satan designed to keep away from what has already been given you in Christ. Satan wants to keep you caught up in the world, away from what God had already given you in His Son. Oh don't miss understand me Satan can't take your salvation but he can keep you from ever exploring and enjoying your inheritance. He would be perfectly satisfied to see us children of the King of King's living as paupers ineffective and clutching the things of this world at the expense of the thing of Christ.

### **III. Vs. 11-28 No small places**

Vs. 11-28 Since Benjamin was the full brother to Joseph, his territory was assigned adjacent to Ephraim and Manasseh. Simeon shared his inheritance with Judah according to 19:1-9 and Gen. 49:7 but eventually inhabited the cities assigned in Joshua according to 15:21. How ironic that the children of Joseph wanted more territory, but weren't willing to fight for it by faith; but the people of Judah had so much land that they shared it with Simeon.

So sandwich between Judah to the South and Ephraim on the North was the little tribe of Benjamin. Now those two tribes didn't always see eye to eye and oft times Benjamin's role in this was a peace maker between the two. Of further interest is that within the small borders of Benjamin were some historical significance "*Shiloh, Jericho, Hebron and part of Jerusalem.*" Now my point in saying this is at times we make think that our part in Christ's inheritance is insignificant, just a small place. Hey saints there is no small place in His body, no insignificant part in Christ's kingdom. You may have a small partial of land but some mighty big cities so never under estimate the portion of land God had given you as an inheritance.