

EVANGELICAL BIBLE COLLEGE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



LIFE OF JOSHUA

**(Administration and Follow
Through to the End)**

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter opens at the end of Joshua's life. Many years have passed since the initial invasion and the two campaigns against the Canaanite kings of the land. From the place names in chapter twelve we apparently have the actual route march of the Israelite Army and the order in which they captured the walled cities of the Canaanites. Many remained untaken when the land was divided up amongst the twelve tribes and the individual tribes were left to destroy the remnants of the enemy themselves.

While nearly all the major cities were taken in the hill country (Shephelah) a large number of significant cities remained in the coastal strip which Joshua apparently never tried to attack while the army was still together. The Assyrians and later the Babylonians would take all these cities in campaigns that lasted from one to two years in length, and they had significant siege engines to assist them. It may be this apparently seriously hard siege warfare that hindered Joshua from advancing in faith into full obedience to seize the entire land. He needed to use deception more, draw the enemy out of their defended strongholds and seize the cities once the armies were defeated in the fields, but this is daily tough faith!

The writer has recorded the story so far as if Joshua took all the land of promise, right up until this chapter, and then we discover just how much remained in enemy hands, or was wrestled back in subsequent months. Joshua 10:40-43, 11:15-23, compared with the words before us here in chapter thirteen. The list of 31 kings in chapter twelve gave us the first clue as to the patchy victories the Israelites had obtained, for the writer makes no comment about how many kings remained in their cities, nor does he note that Jerusalem held out with a new king.

The writer loved Joshua and admired him, and was clearly not wanting to indicate he failed to follow through until the end. The impression given in chapters 10-11, that the victory was complete, was not totally wrong, for the enemy fled from before the face of Israel, but the victory was not fully and completely followed through on. This remains the greatest danger in leadership of churches – where we have great victory through the Holy Spirit in evangelism but the follow up is lacking. The result was spoken of by the Lord when he identified that a man from whom demons were cast was even more vulnerable to their counter attack if he was not Holy Spirit filled afterwards. **Matthew 12:40-45.**

The land literally emptied of the enemy in the areas the Israelite army marched, but the remnant of the Canaanites fled to other walled towns and neighbouring countries, and the failure to destroy every stronghold of the enemy meant these pockets could send back out their people in later months and rebuild the towns the Israelites had seized, but had not settled in strongly. Spiritually this is a message that flows down to our own day with significant importance to understand and apply. Local churches must combine in prayer meetings and all Holy Spirit filled believers work together in prayer for community and for the driving back of demonic forces.

In all areas of the Angelic Conflict we must totally destroy the power of the demonic enemy forces that are in the way of the plan of the Lord, and any false brethren must be totally exposed and led to Christ or eliminated from the fellowship. Any mercy shown to evil men and women allows them to re-emerge later and create carnage within the plan of God. All demonic forces must be prayed out of the area and the prayer "barrage" must continue to stop their counter-attack in the months to come. In most places where great revival has occurred there is no lasting sign of it within twelve months, because the churches under-estimate the consistency of the malice of the enemy in his counter attack.

I have seen believers show mercy to evil false brethren who then seduced and sexually misled young believers, and the result was that these evil men simply moved on and continued to seduce and destroy young lives. I have seen Christian organizations destroyed by false doctrines because good men didn't see the malice of the liberal theologians in their midst. Firm action against them was required, with all the churches warned against their evil. We must not be polite with evil, but firm and decisive in our actions, thoroughly exposing all the enemy's forces so the church is warned against them. Consistent and powerful Holy Spirit filled prayer meetings are the key to consistent victory.

Joshua was a great man, but perhaps he was weary of war, and maybe his army was simply not prepared to undertake the difficult sieges that they thought were demanded in the coastal strip. They had seen at Ai that deception could expose a strong point, and through prayer the Lord would have exposed the weakness of every fortress, but sadly they increasingly failed to follow through. This is called "faith application drag" – the longer the faith challenge goes on the less spiritual energy people have, unless they walk prayerfully very closely with the Lord.

Maybe they simply just ran out of faith in the power of God to deliver these cities into their hands. We can also feel that we "have done enough today", when the battle is not won, and so the enemy regroup. We can feel that its not "the right time" to fight a battle but it is just that we are tired and need refreshing prayer power to revive us. It may also be a result of their casualty rate, and the fears of the surviving men, that there would be none of them left alive if they fought many more major battles, especially in open and flat land which favoured the chariot forces.

We are not told how many died amongst the Israelites, but the fierceness of the battles would indicate that many may have. Whatever the reason for the failure, it was finally a crisis of faith that led to it. They failed to believe God could deliver the great coastal cities into their hands as He had Jericho and Hazor. This crisis of faith would lead to great problems for their descendents over the next four hundred years. The window of opportunity to seize all the land without Egyptian interference only lasted for around fifty years; then the Egyptian armies surged back into the land and punished the Israelites for their failure. While this is true, God's purposes were worked out, and Ezra gets this book into its final form as an encouragement to all future generations – "Follow through to victory believers!"

CHAPTER 13**JOSHUA 13:1-33**

13:1 Now Joshua was old and stricken in years; and the LORD said unto him, Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed. 2 This is the land that yet remaineth: all the borders of the Philistines, and all Geshuri, 3 From Sihor, which is before Egypt, even unto the borders of Ekron northward, which is counted to the Canaanite: five lords of the Philistines; the Gazathites, and the Ashdothites, the Eshkalonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites; also the Avites: 4 From the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that is beside the Sidonians unto Aphek, to the borders of the Amorites: 5 And the land of the Giblites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrising, from Baalgad under mount Hermon unto the entering into Hamath. 6 All the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon unto Misrephothmaim, and all the Sidonians, them will I drive out from before the children of Israel: only divide thou it by lot unto the Israelites for an inheritance, as I have commanded thee. 7 Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance unto the nine tribes, and the half tribe of Manasseh, 8 With whom the Reubenites and the Gadites have received their inheritance, which Moses gave them, beyond Jordan eastward, even as Moses the servant of the LORD gave them; 9 From Aroer, that is upon the bank of the river Arnon, and the city that is in the midst of the river, and all the plain of Medeba unto Dibon; 10 And all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, which reigned in Heshbon, unto the border of the children of Ammon; 11 And Gilead, and the border of the Geshurites and Maachathites, and all mount Hermon, and all Bashan unto Salcah; 12 All the kingdom of Og in Bashan, which reigned in Ashtaroth and in Edrei, who remained of the remnant of the giants: for these did Moses smite, and cast them out. 13 Nevertheless the children of Israel expelled not the Geshurites, nor the Maachathites: but the Geshurites and the Maachathites dwell among the Israelites until this day. 14 Only unto the tribes of Levi he gave none inheritance; the sacrifices of the LORD God of Israel made by fire are their inheritance, as he said unto them. 15 And Moses gave unto the tribe of the children of Reuben inheritance according to their families. 16 And their coast was from Aroer, that is on the bank of the river Arnon, and the city that is in the midst of the river, and all the plain by Medeba; 17 Heshbon, and all her cities that are in the plain; Dibon, and Bamothbaal, and Bethbaalmeon, 18 And Jahaza, and Kedemoth, and Mephaath, 19 And Kirjathaim, and Sibmah, and Zarethshahar in the mount of the valley, 20 And Bethpeor, and Ashdodhpisgah, and Bethjeshimoth, 21 And all the cities of the plain, and all the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, which reigned in Heshbon, whom Moses smote with the princes of Midian, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, which were dukes of Sihon, dwelling in the country. 22 Balaam also the son of Beor, the soothsayer, did the children of Israel slay with the sword among them that were slain by them. 23 And the border of the children of Reuben was Jordan, and the border thereof. This was the inheritance of the children of Reuben after their families, the cities and the villages thereof. 24 And Moses gave inheritance unto the tribe of Gad, even unto the children of Gad according to their families. 25 And their coast was Jazer, and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the children of Ammon, unto Aroer that is before Rabbah; 26 And from Heshbon unto Ramathizpeh, and Betonim; and from Mahanaim unto the border of Debir; 27 And in the valley, Betharam, and Bethnimrah, and Succoth, and Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon, Jordan and his border, even unto the edge of the sea of Chinnereth on the other side Jordan eastward. 28 This is the inheritance of the children of Gad after their families, the cities, and their villages. 29 And Moses gave inheritance unto the half tribe of Manasseh: and this was the possession of the half tribe of the children of Manasseh by their families. 30 And their coast was from Mahanaim, all Bashan, all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and all the towns of Jair, which are in Bashan, threescore cities: 31 And half Gilead, and Ashtaroth, and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan, were pertaining unto the children of Machir the son of Manasseh, even to the one half of the children of Machir by their families. 32 These are the countries which Moses did distribute for inheritance in the plains of Moab, on the other side Jordan, by Jericho, eastward. 33 But unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not any inheritance: the LORD God of Israel was their inheritance, as he said unto them.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 7. The words of the Lord to Joshua here indicate that he is around the age of 110 years, as this is the age of his death. Joshua 24:29-31. This chapter neatly divided the book in half and the phrase used to describe his health at this time is used again in chapter 23 to introduce his actual time of death. It may be the writer was going to lead into the final speech of Joshua here, and then was advised or directed by the Holy Spirit to add in the division of the land before he did this. It may also be that we simply have here the Hebrew way of writing that takes us to the end of the story first, and then goes back to the last point of the narrative to describe the things that lead to it.

At least twenty eight years have passed since the northern campaign finished and the people were given their allotments in the land and settled therein. There has been "peace" in the land for some time, but it was a dangerous peace, for the enemy had crept back. **Isaiah 26:3, 48:22, Jeremiah 6:14, 8:11, Ezekiel 13:10-16.** Many places are back under Canaanite control, or have never been wrestled fully from them. The Israelites are living amongst the Canaanites and their enemies are growing stronger by the year, and by the days of Deborah will challenge them strongly. Judges 1-4.

Joshua has given the people rest from actual war, for the Canaanite remnant are in no mood to fight these intruders, and so they sneak back in, and re-settle amongst them and keep their heads down for a generation at least. This was the way things normally worked in the ancient world, but it was not God's plan for Israel. When an invader settled a new land, they killed everyone they could initially, but normally allowed the survivors to resettle the fallow lands away from

their own dwellings, and as long as they didn't threaten them they would intermix with them over subsequent generations.

This is what occurred after the Norman conquest of England and Wales in the years 1066-1200. Within a few hundred years the general population is fairly mixed and a new national identity emerges. Only the ruling classes stay "pure" invader type in their blood lines, and often that is only for the first two or three generations. This very thing was the great threat to the spiritual and national integrity of Israel, and was why the Lord had declared total war on the Canaanites. There is a natural desire of mankind for peace and quiet, but it is a dangerous desire if it leads to compromise with evil, because it opens the door to disaster when the enemy has rebuilt his strength. Satan doesn't give up his plans.

The land that remained unconquered is listed in verses two and following. The reference to the Philistines dates the last writer's work, as they were in the land only between 1200-700 BC. There are no true Philistines before 1200 BC, and few are left alive after the days of the Babylonian conquest of the land in 586 BC. The last editor must be writing, or revising, this manuscript in the days of Isaiah or Jeremiah at the latest. The Philistines as a people group were yet to arrive in the days of Joshua, but the league of Canaanite kings on the coastal strip from Gaza in the south to Ekron in the north, were allied together, just as the southern and northern groups that Israel defeated. This powerful chariot armed group was never totally defeated, although Judah would try and have temporary success against some, but would not have the numbers of people to hold the ground. Joshua 15:47, Judges 1:17-19.

These city states although powerful will experience some defeats by the Israelites, and the pharaoh's use of them as a buffer against Israel in the hills will become tenuous. The real people (the so called "Sea Peoples") who are rightly called the Philistines arrive around 1200 BC and fight against Ramses III in Egypt. The battle there is a stalemate and the Egyptian pharaoh apparently gives them permission to settle the cities of the five Canaanite kings. Literally Egypt buys off the Philistines by giving the territory of their old allies to them. The Philistines attack these coastal cities and kill the local Canaanites and seize their territory. The destruction layer of the Philistine invasion is evidence of total genocide.

Each of these land areas is described as "circles (Giloth) of the Philistines". This refers well to the City State nature of their government at this time of Joshua and later under the Sea Peoples. Both the Canaanites and the Proto-Greek Sea Peoples had a city state form of government and formed coalitions between themselves to deal with enemies. They controlled the "circle of land" around their cities and were fierce warriors. Egypt would sell out the Canaanite cities, and thereby obtain the Philistines as their unpredictable allies against Israel. The Philistines throughout their history nearly always are allies of Egypt, in return for their being given the land they seize from the previous Canaanites.

The group referred to as the "Avites" lived a pastoral lifestyle between Gaza and the River of Egypt (Wadi El Arish). Joshua 15:4, 47. This river was the southern border of the "Promised Land". The Gittites are not just the people of the city of Gath, Joshua 11:22, but were another Canaanite group who possibly later would settle amongst Israel after the Philistine invasion, and some may even take the faith of Israel. A group of warriors with this name would be very loyal to King David, but this name may later be used to describe the Philistines of Gath also. 2 Samuel 6:9-14, 15:13-23.

The actual identity of the city of **Gath** was the cause of great debate amongst archaeologists until the excavations of recent years. The name "Gath" means "winepress" and so it was a common hill country name and occurs in combination with other names often. Refer to the website of the Biblical Archaeological Review to get the latest material on this important, but until recently hidden city of the Canaanites and after their genocide, by the Philistines.

Ashdod (later called Azotus) was the centre of the pagan worship of Dagon under the later Philistines, and will be the place the captured Ark is taken. 1 Samuel 5:1ff. While given to Judah they will never seize it and hold it until the reign of Uzziah. 2 Chronicles 26:6. Until those days David and his descendents will receive tribute from the inhabitants and they will serve the kings of Judah from David's day onwards. The Assyrians will destroy it with the conquest of the other Philistine cities. Isaiah 20:1.

There are two main destruction layers in the archaeological record of Ashdod. The first is around 1200-1250 BC and would be the Philistine invasion. It is an ash layer nearly a metre deep in places indicating a serious fire burning the entire city to ashes. The second is around 700 BC when the Assyrians finally destroy the rebuilt place completely again. Before the first destruction layer the city is the prosperous centre of Canaanite cloth production, especially of the purple dyed cloth. It regains this trade under the Philistines. Archaeology would indicate Judah didn't destroy the city even in the days of Uzziah, but probably continued David's policy of taking tribute and soldiers from there to fight in Israel's Army.

Ashkelon will be briefly taken by Judah, Judges 1:17-19, but possibly lost again shortly afterwards. This city was strongly allied to Egypt and during the later days of Joshua's life, and early days of the Judges they were writing to Egypt asking for help to fight the Israelites. The Amarna letters between 1370-1350 contain a number of letters from Ashkelon. The people here, having resisted Israel, turned on their ally Egypt and Pharaoh Ramses II responded by defeating them in 1280 BC, and the record of this is on the wall of his Temple in Karnak. The days of Samson are about forty years after the Philistine invasion of the coastal strip (circa 1160 BC) and the Philistines are firmly in control of all the four coastal cities and have rebuilt Gath further inland as their fifth city state. Judges 14:19.

The rebellions against Egyptian power through 1300-1200 meant that when Pharaoh had the chance he "replaced" the Canaanites with the Philistines who would be more vigorous in controlling the Israelites. They may have simply "walked in" to this town. The data from the years 1400 – 1000 is simply not good enough to draw full conclusions, as the later

crusader fortress obliterates much of the earlier layers of the city. It would be an important city in Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman times, and would be the birth place of Herod the Great.

Ekron is taken by Judah also, but not held strongly. From the biblical and archaeological data I suspect, like Ashkelon, it was defeated in open battle, but not settled by Judah, and the Philistines simply rebuilt it strongly as their own 150 years later and returned it to being a centre of satanic worship. By the days of Samuel it is the centre of the worship of Baal, and one of the places the captured Ark is taken to. 1 Samuel 5:1ff. It becomes the centre of worship for the pagan god Baal-Zebub (The Lord of the Flies). 2 Kings 1:2ff. It is defeated by the Assyrians as the prophet stated it would be because of its paganism, but is rebuilt and becomes a strong city again in the Persian period and through into the Roman period. Amos 1:6-8.

Other territories that were not completely pacified let alone settled with Israelites are now listed in verses four and following. The coastal strip including the Plain of Sharon, right through to the city of Sidon remained firmly under Canaanite, Amorite, or Phoenician control. The mountains from Mt Hermon across the Lebanon mountains to the coast also remained firmly under Amorite and other Canaanite control. The Lord's instruction is for Joshua to divide this land amongst the Israelites, and there is a promise attached; that the Lord will drive their enemies from this difficult country and deliver it to Israel.

This promise is conditional upon their obedience, and sadly this will not be followed through on in Joshua's day. Sidon will remain a foreign port and the hills of the Lebanon and Syria will remain in enemy hands until the days of David and Solomon. In their days (consult the back of your Bible and look at a map of the days of Solomon) the land controlled will go from Kadesh Barnea and Ezion Geber in the south, through to Riblah in the north, and possibly even extending to the Euphrates port of Tiphseh/Thapsacus. Lebanon will be an allied kingdom.

Verses 8 – 14. The two and half tribes that stayed on the Eastern bank of Jordan have their land now, but the nine and half tribes will have this land divided up now for them to settle upon and rebuild the houses and towns of the previous inhabitants. The effort to rebuild the houses and get the land back into full production takes all their energy and while they are distracted by this the surviving Canaanites creep back in amongst them.

The borders of the land on the eastern shore of Jordan are repeated here, but the enemy left alive are now also reported. The eastern tribes have the challenge of the remnants of the kingdoms of Og and Sihon to deal with in subsequent centuries. The people of Geshur and Maachath remained alive and active and were tolerated to the point that they remained active and separate peoples until the days of the final writer/editor of this book. If this person is writing in the 600s BC that means the pagan peoples are left there for another 800 years after Joshua's day. It is this tolerance of paganism that opens the door to the later spiritual perversion of the Israelites into evil ways and religious sins.

Verses 15 – 33. The boundaries and main towns of the tribe of Reuben are given here. Numbers 32:33ff. The list of towns is more extensive than that given earlier and indicates the towns rebuilt and held by the tribe over the years before Joshua writes, and possibly also around the time of the editor in the 5th or 6th century. These towns can be looked up in a biblical encyclopaedia or on line and some data is available for some. Most are now in the modern kingdom of Jordan or Syria, although the northern Golan heights area has come back under Israel's control. The tribe of Levi is mentioned in both passages referring to both east and west of Jordan. Levi had no inheritance with the other tribes, but towns and their surrounding fields were to be provided for them, and that occurred in all the tribal areas on both sides of the river Jordan. Numbers 18:20ff, 35:1-15, Deuteronomy 4:39-49.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. The Israelites did not fully believe that the promises of the Lord could be fully attained, and so they did not fully inherit all that the Lord had for them. They did not get all the land, and the places they left undefeated provided centres of evil in the midst for the next 800 years. When the Lord urges us forward to seize an objective, let us advance to do so and believe that the Lord will provide the resources to hold such places.
2. No stronghold of the Devil is to be left undefeated. If evil exists close by it is to be targeted by prayer and all spiritual warfare is to be loosed against it. We are not to rest until the strongholds of evil are brought down. The Lord alone will defeat all evil at His Second Coming, but we are to attack all strong points of the enemy that are opposing our work.
3. No work of the Lord is to be associated with any evil group, nor are we to receive funds from any evil organization. Anything associated with the Devil is to be shunned. We are to have no compromise with evil in any form.

REFLECTION UPON THE TRUTH ABOUT THE VARIETIES OF WHAT IS CALLED "PEACE"

Three types of peace are referred to in the Bible.

1. **Peace on Earth**:- The unlimited peace when Jesus Christ establishes his millennial reign on the earth. (Isaiah 9:6, 7, Isaiah 11:1-12, Luke 2:14)

2. **Peace with God:-** Which comes when a believer is born again as a result of justification by faith (2 Peter 1:1,2, Ephesians 2:14-17, Philippians 4:9) - Reconciliation.
3. **Peace of God:-** Which is the peace of believers in their soul and spirit who have cast all their cares on the Lord (1 Peter 5:7, Philippians 4:6,7) - The Spirit filled life.

REFLECTION UPON THE REALITY OF WAR IN THE DAYS BEFORE THE LORD RETURNS

1. Wars and rumours of war will occur until the Second Advent. Matthew 24:6.
2. Christ is the Prince of Peace – world peace will only exist in the Millennium. Isaiah 2:2,4
3. The role of a government is to judge evil. (Genesis 9, Romans 13). This includes the right to wage war to oppose evil forces that will otherwise destroy the innocent. (Numbers 35:33, Jeremiah 34:7)
4. All wars are not in the will of God. Eg the Crusaders attempted to restore Jerusalem before God's appointed time, which led to great evils done in Jesus name that still create problems in the Middle East.
5. Eight basic principles of war:-
 - a) The concept of fighting for your country is Biblical.
 - b) In Israel, those 20 years old and above were to train for war. Numbers 1:3.
 - c) You need trained people and good weapons. Numbers 31:3-5, Luke 14:31-32, 11:21
 - d) Only those with a courageous, positive attitude should fight. (Deuteronomy 20:1-8)
 - e) If war is to eliminate evil, then eliminate it fully. Joshua 11:23.
 - f) War is to be based on selective destruction - those responsible for evil. (Deuteronomy 20:10-15). It is not wholesale destruction (Deuteronomy 20:19-20)
 - g) Peace is a viable option if there is repentance/change.
 - h) You need good military leadership (Proverbs 24:6)
 - i) If the Christian finds a particular war unjust in relation to the Word/will of God, he has two alternatives.
 - i) he leaves the country if he can.
 - ii) he may have grounds to disobey the authorities (Acts 5:29)
6. A walk of faith is not contradictory to warfare. Nehemiah 2:9, 4:9-20.
7. God's face is set against the malicious war monger and against the unthinking pacifist. Psalms 68:30, 55:20, 21, 120:6, 7, Jeremiah 6:14, 8:11, 15, 14:19, Ezekiel 13:10, 16, Micah 3:5 -7.
8. Mankind will never totally destroy himself, either by war or pollution. God has a purpose for Christ to reign and He will reign at his Second Advent - nothing will stop Jesus reign. (Revelation 20:1-6)

NOTES

CHAPTER 14**INTRODUCTION**

The boundaries to the land that the Lord promised to Israel were given clearly to Moses and recorded in Numbers 34:1-15. The borders described in this passage are indeed seized by Israel and held by them, but only in the reigns of David and Solomon. Some have argued that the borders here are drawn up and added into the scriptures, only after the days of Solomon, and that Joshua did not have such specific instructions. They argue that the spies had not gone as far north as the places noted here and no Israelite would see them until the days of David. This viewpoint is the standard liberal theological, anti-supernatural one. It ignores the fact that Abraham was the one promised the land and he was promised all he trod upon, and he certainly knew the lands from Hamath to Kadesh Barnea. Genesis 12:4-9, 13:14-17, 15:1-16, 17:1-8.

There is no reason for a believer to doubt that the Lord gave Abraham, Moses, and then Joshua, the larger area as the full inheritance of Israel, for that is the area still allotted to Israel in the Millennial Kingdom in Ezekiel 47. From that basis, and the actual holding of most of this area under Solomon, we can deduce that the land was potentially Joshua's if he had been able to instill that level of faith in the people. The land area includes much of what are now Syria, Jordan and the Lebanon. These extended borders are repeated in Ezekiel 47:13 – 48:35. These will yet be the borders of future Israel during the Millennial Kingdom. The issue for Joshua's day and our own remains the same – the extent of our faith and obedience. **Hebrews 3:17 – 4:12.**

JOSHUA 14:1-15

14:1 And these are the countries which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, distributed for inheritance to them. **2** By lot was their inheritance, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes, and for the half tribe. **3** For Moses had given the inheritance of two tribes and an half tribe on the other side Jordan: but unto the Levites he gave none inheritance among them. **4** For the children of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim: therefore they gave no part unto the Levites in the land, save cities to dwell in, with their suburbs for their cattle and for their substance. **5** As the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did, and they divided the land. **6** Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the LORD said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadeshbarnea. **7** Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadeshbarnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart. **8** Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God. **9** And Moses swore on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God. **10** And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. **11** As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in. **12** Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said. **13** And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance. **14** Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel. **15** And the name of Hebron before was Kirjatharba; which Arba was a great man among the Anakims. And the land had rest from war.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 5. This is clearly a formal and later statement than of the times of Joshua. The writer is recording this detail quite formally and the way he writes indicates Joshua and Eleazar have been dead many centuries before this is written. I still believe that the writer-editor of this book is working on material that Joshua and/or Eleazar have recorded, but as we have seen many times from the repeated phrase “until this day”, the final form of the book is arrived at many centuries after the events described.

This does not mean the details are myth in any way however. Those who argue that the details here are myth, are the same people who reject the historicity of the virgin birth, the miracles of Jesus, His resurrection, and the expectation of His second advent. I believe this book before us is the divinely inspired recording and revision of truthful historical data with the same certainty that I hold to the fundamentals of the Christian faith. The editor is most likely a great biblical figure who is Holy Spirit inspired. I suspect it may be Samuel or Nathan, or possibly Jeremiah, or later even Ezra.

The point about the Levites having no inheritance is repeated again from the previous chapter. The Levites portion was within the borders of all the tribes and each tribal group was to provide cities for them to dwell in and land around them (suburbs) to work and graze their animals upon, but the land was still seen as belonging to the other tribes. The tribe of Levi was not considered one of the twelve any longer, as the two sons of Joseph form two tribes to make the twelve.

Levi is set apart for the Lord's possession for all time, and they were to accept that their service was to the Lord and they would have ownership of no earthly land. They were to see all land they dwelt upon as simply leasehold. The tribe of Levi is the illustration of the modern believer's attitude to all physical possessions. In this world we have "no continuing city". **Hebrews 13:13-15, Matthew 6:24-34, James 4:4, 5:1-8, 1 John 2:15-17, 25.**

Verses 6 – 9. Caleb comes to Joshua specifically to ask for a portion of the land for his own inheritance. The entire land is divided by lot, and I suspect that this interaction here occurs only after the actual division of the land into the nine and a half portions. To divide by lot means to cast lots for each portion in some way. Commentators are divided on how this was done, but the Lord's hand was in this and each tribal group get the area that was to be their own before the Lord. The future history of the tribes flows from this land division and the Lord directs every step of the way. Casting lots is no longer the way for believers to do things today, but it was at this time. Things change!

Caleb reminds Joshua of their expedition as spies over forty years before this time. From his words here I take it that he went through this very area of southern Judah, and this area around Hebron was the area that Caleb even then identified as the place he wanted for his family's inheritance. He had obviously at that time spoken of this to Moses, and Moses had a word from the Lord about it. Moses had promised that Caleb would inherit the portion of the land that he had thoroughly explored. This passage sheds more light upon the spying expedition and how it was run. Numbers 13:1ff, Deuteronomy 1:19-36. From the three passages together it would appear the spies went as a group, but may have split up into pairs or even as single spies at a certain point, or for specific tasks, but it appears the majority of time was spent together.

From these passages together I deduce that Caleb was the main positive spokesman, and was the key man of great faith, even ahead of Joshua himself. Joshua had the leadership ability and led the people, but this man Caleb is the mightiest man of faith amongst the people, and he gets what he asks for in prayer. This man saw with the eyes of faith, and he asked for the blessing of the Lord. Hebrews 11:1ff. Caleb is a great mentor for us all as a prayer and faith warrior. The inheritance of Hebron and its surrounding area is Caleb's descendents until time ends. This means that his family will yet rule over Hebron and be the guardians of the empty tombs of their forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob during the Millennial Kingdom. What a testimony of faith these tombs will be – with the men raised and ruling over their descendants, and with Caleb telling all of the faith of those buried there in times past.

Verses 10 – 15. This passage gives us the approximate time frame for the battles to seize the land. Caleb and Joshua were around forty when they spied the land from Kadesh Barnea. Forty five years have now gone by to this meeting in Gilgal. The land has not been fully settled yet by the people. It may have been upwards of four years of battles in the southern and northern campaigns to this point before the people leave Gilgal and settle in their areas and "mop up" the remaining Canaanite forces in their fields. Caleb is now eighty five years old when he seeks the area of Hebron where the remnant of the giants (the Anakim) still live, that so terrified the other spies. Numbers 13:27-33.

Caleb is as strong at eighty five for war as he was at forty when he went out as a spy. As he had faith in the days of rebellion at Kadesh Barnea so he maintains his faith to this day. He believes the Lord will deliver the enemy into his hands, even though their cities have high walls and the men are giants in size. He expresses faith, and knows that in the power of God he will "drive them out, just as the Lord said". The love and admiration of Joshua for Caleb comes out in these verses. He blesses this man before the entire tribal gathering that day and gives him the portion around Hebron as his inheritance.

The writer records that Caleb's family still live there "until this day". If he writes in the 6th century, then the descendents of Caleb have been there for 800 years at that point. When Caleb destroyed these giants, the land "has rest from war" in that area. There is peace only when the enemy have been beaten to the point where they cannot rise up again. The race of these people was destroyed and so they did not trouble Caleb or Israel again. In most other places they came back!

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Caleb is a man of faith. He sees the promises of God as more real than the size of the enemy. God's Word is more real than the difficulties he faces and he lives to see the fulfilment of the promises of God. This is the example for us all to follow. Let us be like Caleb and claim the reality of the promises of God into the fabric of our daily life, so that we are walking in faith, not by human sight.

2. Levi is the tribe that mentors the correct biblical attitude toward physical things for us today. They had no inheritance in the land, but simply leasehold tenure of their properties. All of this present world will disappear one day. 2 Peter 3:10-14. With the sure knowledge of the end of all visible things, let us be like the Levites were meant to be. Let us see all things we possess as simply on loan from God to be used for the kingdom of God, and let us have a loose grip on the possessions we hold.

3. Let us have the attitude as believer-priests as the tribe of Levi had as the priests of the Old Covenant. They owned no land but had a leasehold agreement only with the separate tribes amongst whom they lived – and that is all we ever have here. All physical things we have are but for a moment, but the gift of eternal life is forever. Let us live with eternity at the centre of our thoughts, and our heart fixed upon eternal rewards, not earthly prosperity.

REFLECTION UPON THE REALITY OF THE PROMISED MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

1. "Thy will be done on earth, " will be fulfilled in the Millennium. (Matthew 6:10)
2. The Kingdom is the Millennium, the first 1,000 years of Jesus' eternal reign. It will be after the second advent, on the old earth. (Revelation 20:4-6)
 - a) Promised (2 Samuel 7:8-17, Psalm 89:20-33)
 - b) Prophesied (Isaiah 2:1-5, 2:11, 12, 35, 55, 56, 62:11)
 - c) Presented (Matthew, Mark, Luke) Israel, not the church)
 - d) Postponed Epistles of New Testament (for church age)
 - e) Proclaimed (Revelation 10) (Angelic herald) (Revelation 11:1-1 4) (Human heralds)
 - f) Plagiarized (Revelation 13)
 - g) Perfected (Revelation 11:15-19)
3. Issues relating to the Kingdom
 - a) The Character of God - will He keep His word to Israel? Yes. Jesus Christ will reign.
 - b) Unconditional Covenant - will He keep Covenant? Yes. Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic, New - all fulfilled in the Millennium.
 - c) Dispersion of Israel - will He recover them again? Yes. At the second advent.
 - d) Advent - will He return to earth at the worst period in history? Yes. At the end of the Tribulation.
 - e) Millennial - The Kingdom of Jesus Christ is eternal, why the emphasis on the first 1,000 years? Jesus will do what Satan has been trying to do for 6,000 years; He will create perfect environment in an instant, as a demonstration to prove that perfect environment is not the answer; regeneration is.
4. Principles from Micah 4:1-8
 - a) The Kingdom will be supreme. (Micah 4:1)
 - b) The Kingdom will be universal. (Micah 4:2)
 - c) The Kingdom will be peaceful. (Micah 4:3)
 - d) The Kingdom will secure universal prosperity.(Micah 4:4-5)
 - e) The nation of Israel ruled by the Lord for the Kingdom. (Micah 4:6-8)

REFLECTION UPON OUR LORD'S FIRST AND SECOND ADVENTS

1. Old Testament saints had difficulty in distinguishing between the two advents of Christ. (1 Peter 1:10,11)
2. Old Testament prophecy has Christ coming as a gentle lamb led to the slaughter. (Isaiah 53:7)
3. Old Testament prophecy also has Christ coming as the conquering King and Lion of the tribe of Judah. (Isaiah 11:1-12)
4. Jesus commenced his ministry announcing the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. (Matthew 4:17) This connects the first and second advents in the person of the King, but he came to suffer first, and he will rule only when he returns.
5. Old Testament Prophecy showed that the Messiah would:-
 - a) be born of a virgin. (Isaiah 7:14)
 - b) be of the tribe of Judah. (Genesis 49:10)
 - c) be of the house of David. (Isaiah 11:1, Jeremiah 33:21)
 - d) die as a sacrifice. (Isaiah 53:1-12)
 - e) be crucified. (Psalm 22:1-21)
 - f) be resurrected from the dead. (Psalm 16:8-11)
 - g) return to earth at his second advent. (Zechariah 8:3)
 - h) be seated at the right hand of God. (Psalm 110:1)
6. It should be noted that the return of Christ for the Church (the Rapture) as given in 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18, was not revealed in the Old Testament - it is a mystery doctrine of the Church (Colossians 3:4-6)
7. The day of the Second Advent is characterised by supernatural darkness.
 - a) When Christ returns every eye shall see him (Matthew 24:29-30) Christ is the light of the world and he will return to a world covered in darkness (symbolic of sin).
 - b) The darkness is similar to the darkness of the day of our Lord's crucifixion which hid the Lord Jesus Christ from man's sight whilst he was bearing our sins. (Mark 15:33)

- c) The Second Advent delivers the Jewish believers besieged in Jerusalem by the King of the North. (Daniel 11, Zechariah 12:1-3, 14:1-4)
- d) Other passages indicating that the day of the Second Advent is a day of total darkness on the earth. (Isaiah 13:9-10, Ezekiel 32:7-8, Joel 2:10-11, Joel 3:14-15, Amos 5:18, Zechariah 14:6, Matthew 24:29-30, Luke 21:25-27, Revelation 6:12-17)

8. Heralds of the Two Advents of Christ

A herald is a person who preceded a King in ancient times to announce his arrival. The King that we study is the Lord Jesus Christ.

- a) First Advent
 - i) Human herald - John the Baptist (Matthew 3)
 - ii) Angelic heralds - Angels (Luke 2:1-15)
- b) Second Advent
 - i) Human heralds - Moses, Elijah (Revelation 11)
 - ii) Angelic herald - The mighty angel (Revelation 10)

PRAYER

1. We may know the provision of God but we must communicate with Him in order to obtain this provision.

- a) Prayer is the believer's means of communicating with God.
- b) The Bible is God's way of communicating with man.

2. Promises Involving Prayer

- a) Matthew 21:22 We should ask believing.
- b) Matthew 18:19 The power of corporate prayer.
- c) Psalm 116:1, 2 God is always available to hear our prayer.
- d) Isaiah 65:24 God will answer while we are yet praying.
- e) Matthew 7:7 We are commanded to pray.
- f) John 14:13-14 We can ask for anything in His name.
- g) Philippians 4:6 The prayer should be with thanksgiving.
- h) 1 Thessalonians 5:17 We should pray without ceasing.
- i) Hebrews 4:16 We can come boldly to the throne of Grace.

3. Prayer Divided into 4 Segments

- a) Confession of sins (1 John 1:9)
- b) Thanksgiving (1 Thessalonians 5:18)
- c) Intercession for others (Ephesians 6:18)
- d) Petitions for one's own needs (Hebrews 4:16)

4. Power of Prayer

- a) Individual - Elijah and the burnt offering (1 Kings 18:36-39)
- b) Corporate - the release of Peter from prison (Acts 12:1-18)

5. One Prayer that could not be Answered - The prayer of our Lord on the Cross. (Psalm 22:1-18)

6. To Whom are Prayers Addressed?

- a) Directed to the Father - (Matthew 6:5-9)
 - b) In the name of the Son - (Hebrews 7:25)
 - c) In the power of the Spirit - (Romans 8:26-27)
- The Son (Jesus) and Spirit are interceding for us.

7. Prayers can be Divided into Petition and Desire

- a) Petition - What you ask God for (e.g. a new car).
- b) Desire - The desire behind the petition (e.g. happiness because you have a new car).

8. Four Possible Combinations

- a) Petition answered - Desire not answered. Psalm 106:15 - The quails of the Exodus generation. 1 Samuel 8:5 - A King to reign over Israel.
- b) Petition not answered - Desire answered. Genesis 18:23 - The preservation of Sodom. 2 Corinthians 12:7 - Removal of the thorn in Paul's side.

c) Petition answered - Desire answered. 1 Kings 18:36-37 - Elijah requests fire for the offering. Luke 23:42 -The penitent thief's prayer. Type c) represents the perfect prayer.

d) Petition not answered - Desire not answered. Type d) unanswered prayer has 8 main reasons which are shown in paragraph 9.

9. Reasons for Unanswered Prayer

- a) Lack of belief (Matthew 21:22)
- b) Selfishness (James 4:3)
- c) Unconfessed sin (Psalm 66:18)
- d) Lack of compassion (Proverbs 21:13)
- e) Pride and self righteousness (Job 35:12-13)
- f) Lack of filling of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:18)
- g) Lack of obedience (1 John 3:22)
- h) Not in the Divine will (1 John 5:14)

Most of the reasons for unanswered prayer, is some form of sin in the life, which can be solved by confession of known sins as per paragraph 3 a) under the command/promise of 1John 1:9.

10. Intercessory Prayer

a) This is one of the four factors in a prayer, which are:-

- i) Confession of sins
- ii) Thanksgiving
- iii) Intercession
- iv) Own needs.

b) The power of intercessory prayer is taught in (1 Kings 18:42-46) the principle being found in (James 5:16-18)

c) The power of prevailing prayer is shown in (Acts 12)

d) The prayer for the unbeliever (Romans 10:1)

e) Prayer for an unknown believer (Colossians 1:3-11)

f) Prayer for the known believer (Ephesians 1:15-23)

NOTES

CHAPTER 15**INTRODUCTION**

Here we have listed the inheritance of the tribal group of Judah. Their place as the leader of the tribes was foretold by Jacob, and confirmed by Moses. Genesis 49:8-12, Deuteronomy 33:7. Judah would not come into this place of leadership until the days of David, and this also is a piece of evidence that the dating of the book of Joshua maybe the latter days of Samuel, after he could see that David was to be the king to replace Saul. Their cities, towns, and villages are mentioned, as are their key valleys and mountains for their value as reference points.

It will be quickly discovered that the area allocated to Judah they cannot fill, and there will be later adjustments, with Simeon taking some southern cities. Joshua 19:9. The borders are clearly drawn for those who knew the land at this time, although some of the names refer to places that are now unknown, or their precise identity is unclear (there may be two candidates for some sites).

The antiquity of the passage before us would be indicated by the place names as early rather than late. The place names after the Exile (605-535 BC) remain fairly consistent and are nearly all well known, as their identity is confirmed by Josephus and others in our own era. The old pagan names for some of the places given here indicate that the list of place names is old, and quite close to the time of the division of the land, while the Canaanites were still in possession of some of it. Their names would soon not be used at all, and would fall into the mists of history. They are still used here and that indicates only a few hundred years at most has past since they were used.

The phrase "unto this day" (verse 63) referring to the Jebusites control over Jerusalem cannot be dated later than around 1100 BC, as around 1045 BC David takes Jerusalem and kills/absorbs the remnant of the Jebusites and settles on Jerusalem as his new capital. These things above would suggest it is likely that this material before us here has an early date for it's recording and a date of around 1100 BC for it's editing.

This chapter is another reminder that the material of this book has been edited over time, but this chapter and subsequent ones lend weight to the first significant author/editor of the material being Samuel himself. He alone has the status to write this material, and lives at the time that this chapter's material brings us to, and the purpose of this book would tie in nicely to the campaigns of Saul and David, who do seize the land promised to Joshua. Having said this, the jury is still out on the authorship of this book, and only in heaven will we discover who the Holy Spirit filled men were that put all this together for us in the form we have today.

The entire division of the land amongst the nine and half tribes of the West bank of the Jordan is completed by chapter nineteen. All is done in accordance with the instructions received by Moses as recorded in Numbers 26:52-56, with each tribe receiving land in accordance with the number of extended families it had within it. The number of cities were not to exceed the number of extended families in the tribe, so that every walled dwelling place could be inhabited and defended by the family(s) allocated that place. The family list is drawn up in Numbers 26:5-51.

From this we know that there were only around six hundred extended family groups in the nation. Remember, the actual numbers involved are guess work at this distance, for the meaning of the term "thousand" (eleph) changed over time, and our Bibles follow the Greek translation the Septuagint (LXX) from the 3rd century BC, and the numbers are most likely much smaller than this interpretation. The numbers of men may be anywhere from 6000 – 10,000, and my suspicion is that the real figure remains at the lower end of this scale.

The words in Joshua 19:51 tell us that the actual full and final confirmation of the division of the land was done before the door of the tabernacle which was pitched at that time at Shiloh, which is about 18 kilometres from Shechem, and about 30 kilometres from Gilgal. Joshua 14:6 has already told us that Caleb asked for his land while the people were still encamped at Gilgal. This is not a contradiction, but simply an illustration that the division of the land between the eight and a half tribes (Levi will receive cities within the other tribes territory) may have occurred over some time and apparently in two stages.

Judges 18:1 tells us that after the division of the land for Judah and Ephraim and Manasseh, the entire congregation moved north, into the territory given to Ephraim and camped around Shiloh. Shiloh is in the tribal allocation of Ephraim and is more central for all the tribes than Gilgal and will be the site of the tabernacle for several hundred years. I suspect the tribes met there for a last Passover, or other national feasts like Tabernacles, before dividing off to settle their allocated areas. It may also be that they fought together the remnant of the Canaanites around Shiloh to give peace to the site of their national religious centre. Much detail of the events through these crucial months and years are omitted from the text that is focused on simply recording the actual boundaries of the tribes.

As we will see in chapter eighteen, the minor tribes were very reluctant to spread out and take their allocated lands and had to be forced to explore the areas closely and accept the need to move out and take the land. After forty five or more years together as twelve tribes, with the strength of numbers that gave, they found it difficult to actually move out and seize the land as separate and much smaller battle groups. Caleb alone appears to be the man of dynamic faith and courage who simply took his men and attacked the enemy head on.

JOSHUA 15:1-63

15:1 This then was the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah by their families; even to the border of Edom the wilderness of Zin southward was the uttermost part of the south coast. 2 And their south border was from the shore of the salt sea, from the bay that looketh southward: 3 And it went out to the south side to Maalehacrabbin, and passed along to Zin, and ascended up on the south side unto Kadeshbarnea, and passed along to Hezron, and went up to Adar, and fetched a compass to Karkaa: 4 From thence it passed toward Azmon, and went out unto the river of Egypt; and the goings out of that coast were at the sea: this shall be your south coast. 5 And the east border was the salt sea, even unto the end of Jordan. And their border in the north quarter was from the bay of the sea at the uttermost part of Jordan: 6 And the border went up to Beth Hogla, and passed along by the north of Beth Arabah; and the border went up to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben: 7 And the border went up toward Debir from the valley of Achor, and so northward, looking toward Gilgal, that is before the going up to Adummim, which is on the south side of the river: and the border passed toward the waters of Enshemesh, and the goings out thereof were at Enrogel: 8 And the border went up by the valley of the son of Hinnom unto the south side of the Jebusite; the same is Jerusalem: and the border went up to the top of the mountain that lieth before the valley of Hinnom westward, which is at the end of the valley of the giants northward: 9 And the border was drawn from the top of the hill unto the fountain of the water of Nephtoah, and went out to the cities of mount Ephron; and the border was drawn to Baalah, which is Kirjathearim: 10 And the border compassed from Baalah westward unto mount Seir, and passed along unto the side of mount Jearim, which is Chesalon, on the north side, and went down to Bethshemesh, and passed on to Timnah: 11 And the border went out unto the side of Ekron northward: and the border was drawn to Shicron, and passed along to mount Baalah, and went out unto Jabneel; and the goings out of the border were at the sea. 12 And the west border was to the great sea, and the coast thereof. This is the coast of the children of Judah round about according to their families. 13 And unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a part among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, even the city of Arba the father of Anak, which city is Hebron. 14 And Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmi, the children of Anak. 15 And he went up thence to the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before was Kirjathsepher. 16 And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjathsepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife. 17 And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife. 18 And it came to pass, as she came unto him, that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted off her ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wouldest thou? 19 Who answered, Give me a blessing; for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs. 20 This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families. 21 And the uttermost cities of the tribe of the children of Judah toward the coast of Edom southward were Kabzeel, and Eder, and Jagur, 22 And Kinah, and Dimonah, and Adadah, 23 And Kedesh, and Hazor, and Ithnan, 24 Ziph, and Telem, and Bealoth, 25 And Hazor, Hadattah, and Kerioth, and Hezron, which is Hazor, 26 Amam, and Shema, and Moladah, 27 And Hazargaddah, and Heshmon, and Bethpalet, 28 And Hazarshual, and Beersheba, and Bizjathjah, 29 Baalah, and Iim, and Azem, 30 And Eltolad, and Chesil, and Hormah, 31 And Ziklag, and Madmannah, and Sansannah, 32 And Lebaoth, and Shilhim, and Ain, and Rimmon: all the cities are twenty and nine, with their villages: 33 And in the valley, Eshtaol, and Zoreah, and Ashnah, 34 And Zanoah, and Engannim, Tappuah, and Enam, 35 Jarmuth, and Adullam, Socoh, and Azekah, 36 And Sharaim, and Adithaim, and Gederah, and Gederothaim; fourteen cities with their villages: 37 Zenan, and Hadashah, and Migdalgad, 38 And Dilean, and Mizpeh, and Joktheel, 39 Lachish, and Bozkath, and Eglon, 40 And Cabbon, and Lahmam, and Kithlish, 41 And Gederoth, Bethdagon, and Naamah, and Makkedah; sixteen cities with their villages: 42 Libnah, and Ether, and Ashan, 43 And Jiphtah, and Ashnah, and Nezib, 44 And Keilah, and Achzib, and Mareshah; nine cities with their villages: 45 Ekron, with her towns and her villages: 46 From Ekron even unto the sea, all that lay near Ashdod, with their villages: 47 Ashdod with her towns and her villages, Gaza with her towns and her villages, unto the river of Egypt, and the great sea, and the border thereof: 48 And in the mountains, Shamir, and Jattir, and Socoh, 49 And Dannah, and Kirjathsannah, which is Debir, 50 And Anab, and Eshtemoh, and Anim, 51 And Goshen, and Holon, and Giloh; eleven cities with their villages: 52 Arab, and Dumah, and Eshean, 53 And Janum, and Bethtappuah, and Aphekah, 54 And Humtah, and Kirjatharba, which is Hebron, and Zior; nine cities with their villages: 55 Maon, Carmel, and Ziph, and Juttah, 56 And Jezreel, and Jokdeam, and Zanoah, 57 Cain, Gibeah, and Timnah; ten cities with their villages: 58 Halhul, Bethzur, and Gedor, 59 And Maarath, and Bethanath, and Eltekon; six cities with their villages: 60 Kirjathbaal, which is Kirjathearim, and Rabbah; two cities with their villages: 61 In the wilderness, Betharabah, Middin, and Secacah, 62 And Nibshan, and the city of Salt, and Engedi; six cities with their villages. 63 As for the Jebusites the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 5. The boundaries of the tribal area of Judah are described in verses 1- 12. Caleb's portion and his actions to seize them are described in verses 13 – 20. After this the list of walled cities and towns is given, in their various areas or geographical districts. This list was probably drawn up at the time, and it will be for later kings like Saul and David a useful framework for the calling up of their troop levies, and also for the collection of the annual tithe by the priesthood.

It is likely that the priesthood kept the original version of the book of Joshua and that they were tasked with it's rewriting to reflect the days of the new united monarchy when the new sense of national identity required its revision and re-

publication. The area of Judah comprises 29 walled villages (“cities”) in the pastoral northern lands, 14 valley cities, 16 in the eastern area, 11 in the mountains, 10 in the Jezreel-Carmel area, and 14 in the southern areas, for a total of 94 walled towns, with their associated unwalled smaller settlements.

The lists of families for Judah and Simeon in Numbers 26 indicates there are 22 elephs/“thousands”, or extended families/groups of warriors in Simeon, and 76 “thousands”, or extended families/groups of warriors in Judah, for a total of 98. This brings us very close to the allocated 94 walled townships. There will be Levitical towns allocated with this number, and some of these “cities” are significant ones requiring more than one extended family group of warriors to settle and hold. Each one of these cities would require between 100 – 1000 men to man them. The Israelites will be militarily vulnerable until the days when Saul and David arrive and coordinate things. By David’s reign they are able to hold all these places and they have the numbers of armed men required to do this.

In the early days the cities must have felt very empty, except for the play of children in the many still deserted houses of the displaced or dead Canaanites. They had to walk in faith every day; believe the promises of God, seize the land, and trust in the Lord to protect them until their own families grew in size enough to fully populate the areas received and defend them against attack. Their walk of faith through the next centuries will be weak however, and their compromises with the Canaanite religion will cost many their lives before the glory days of David arrive. Compromise with Canaanite type religious paganism will finally lead to the Babylonian Captivity in 606 – 535 BC.

The southern boundary is roughly drawn from what we know of the land today, from the Arabah, 12 kilometres south of the Dead Sea, across to the south of Kadesh Barnea, then across to the Wadi el Arish (River of Egypt) on the Mediterranean. The towns of Hezron, Adar and Karkaa are unknown today. This southern Negev area was reasonably fertile in this day, with considerable settlements there and pastoral activity, with cropping possible nearly year round. Modern Israeli settlement of the area have uncovered some “lost” townships and fortresses which may be these three cities. The western boundary was the Mediterranean Sea, and the Eastern one the coastline of the Dead Sea to the point where the Jordan entered it.

Verses 6 – 12. The northern boundary is repeated again in Judges 18:19-21 as the southern boundary of the tribe of Benjamin. It runs by markers on hills, and by high towns, along the ridges of the hill country to the north or south of identified towns. Some of the markers are now gone, but the precision with which they are described here tells us they were all easily identified in this day and were the way disputes were resolved between the tribes, for the markers were clear to them. These “boundary markers” (Either walled cities or raised stone cairns) delineated fields as well as tribal boundaries. Interfering with these was a serious violation of the Mosaic Law. Deuteronomy 19:14, 27:17, Proverbs 22:28, 23:10.

Within a few hundred years the inhabited towns will form the approximate boundaries and the unity of the nation under Saul and David will eliminate the need for precise boundaries between the tribes being the centre of attention. All disputes regarding boundaries were to be referred to the priests, which is why they held these books of Moses and Joshua, to which they could refer for decisions. The actual identification of most of these towns is still possible, and if you are visiting the land and are staying long enough to walk around a great deal, then it would still be possible to walk the old borderlands between Judah and Benjamin. Many of the markers are still able to be discerned from modern derived place names, but even in this part of the land that has remained fertile through the years, great changes have occurred through the centuries and some places are simply not clear at all now.

Verses 12 – 20. Caleb personally attacks the remnants of the Anakim who lived in the vicinity of Hebron. The city was captured by the Israelite Army, but all the Canaanites were not killed and three of the original family groups/clans still held out with their forces against Israel. Caleb launched his attack with his own extended family and destroyed this last remnant of the enemy in Hebron. The word used is to “root out”, which indicates that these last Canaanites were hold up in the hills or caves and needed to be prised out of their hiding places and destroyed. Debir also was identified as being captured, yet it has been resettled by Canaanites during the time the Israelites were away fighting in the North. Joshua 10:36-43, 11:18-27.

Remember, the northern campaign may have taken a year or more; at least three years is taken to capture the cities they do seize as a nation. These earlier passages indicated total victory, with no more giants left in the land, and given the closeness of these passages in the book, no careful author or editor would leave such a contradiction unless there was an explanation. Two are possible, and I believe both are correct here. Firstly the defeat of the Anakim by Joshua is spoken of as his own, but actually it was his people’s victory through his delegated officer Caleb. It is normal to speak of a general defeating an enemy when his captain may have actually taken the city.

Secondly, the total victory described in chapter ten and the time frame between this series of battles and the final delivery of the areas to the tribes allows for remnants of the Canaanites to return and refortify some of these areas. That is my suspicion here. Some Canaanites have refortified themselves in their old towns in the south, but concerted attacks by Caleb dislodge them and he is able to kill the last of them, and the victory is lumped together with the others of the invasion and spoken of as Joshua’s, as he was the over all general in command of all the forces. He will remain the over all leader of the tribes for another twenty or more years, until his great old age.

The courage and success of Othniel is now mentioned. His actions introduce us to the first of the judges of Israel after Joshua’s death, which is still 30 years away at this point. Judges 3:9. This helps us understand the military nature of the times, and the need for strong men to stand for their families against their enemies and be ready to seize objectives

against odds by sheer courage and surprise. It also demonstrates strong and decisive actions by his new wife. The women of Israel are not frightened of speaking up for themselves and taking the lead at times also. It is a preview of the time of the Judges when the character and courage of individual men and women will deliver the nation from disaster.

Othniel appears here to be a nephew of Caleb, yet in Judges 1:13, 3:9 he appears to be his younger brother. What is the relationship of this man to Caleb? Debate rages in ancient Jewish circles about this, and it may be that Caleb's family adopted this young man into their family early in his life and so he was a nephew, but was brought up by Caleb's parents, or within his own household, through the Exodus period as if he was his brother, and that is finally how he is known. As leader of the people later he can be expected to amplify the relationship that will give him most standing amongst the people and his association with Caleb is far more important than with his natural father.

We also have the request of his new wife for a field. Why would they ask for a field outside a town that Othniel has already seized, for it was theirs by right of conquest anyway? The story is told in abbreviated form. This is another indication of antiquity for this story, which at the time was so well known and often repeated, that expansion was not needed then, as it would be appreciated now. The daughter of Caleb sprang from her animal, upon which she was riding to be presented to Othniel formally, and bows before her father and requests a blessing from him. Clearly both she and Othniel have met before, (they are relatives), and they have also clearly had time to explore the land they are to be given.

Achsah has noted that it lacks sufficient springs of water close enough to it to ensure really good agricultural production. She may have asked Othniel to raise this with her father when the formal "handing over" ceremony was to be completed. She takes the initiative, for whatever reason, and asks of her father the land upon which the springs exist. They are some distance from the allocated town and so their ownership needs to be formally recognized as their own, or later disputes will create problems in the area with the inhabitants of other places close by. Caleb grants her request and gives her titles to land away from the towns, but land within which are springs on higher and lower ground to cover the area that they will settle. Irrigation is in view here, and this woman can see that water must be brought from these springs to the land they will farm. She looks ahead with the eyes of faith, and asks for things that she realises they will need later.

Verses 21 – 63. The great list of cities here is not much help to us, as many names are now unknown, and even if we identify them, they are simply ruins today, or have been built over the top of by new settlements. These were all walled Canaanite cities that had whole populations within them and that the Jewish settlers took over and filled with their own people over the next 300 years. Some will become famous places of high drama for Israel in the next thousand years.

As was noted for the border towns above, if you are visiting the land of Israel, secure a good map with all the old and new place names upon it and go over the area given to Judah and search for the likely sites of these places. Notice as you do this the way the historian here records the place names, and go from place to place. He records these towns as you would ride from one to the next, and that is the clue that this is an actual list from the time of the conquest, when Joshua, or his agents rode around and made these lists. Ashdod is mentioned for Judah in verse 47. Refer back to chapter thirteen for a discussion of the fate of the five Canaanite cities of the coastal plain that will later be given to the Philistines.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Achsah is a woman who looks ahead to the needs of her grandchildren. She also identifies future areas of conflict with neighbours and acts decisively to solve the issue before it becomes a problem for her people later. This is a woman of fore-sight, faith, and courage. She speaks up when her future husband may not feel he can speak. She is ready to respectfully take the lead and solve problems. Let us be like this great woman. Let us look forward in faith and see the issues ahead that may be contentious and not shrink back from resolving them quickly, before ill feeling sows discord amongst brethren.

2. Caleb acts to seize objectives. He does not however try to do all things by himself, and he calls upon his men to see who it is that has the leadership potential after him. He practises the concept of what we now call "emergent leadership"; he mentors leadership qualities and gives opportunities for younger men to excel in his eyes. Great leaders do not hog the limelight. Great leaders stand back at times and let younger men and women come forward and show what level their service can reach. No church is to be a one man band. The Lord will always ensure that there is a new generation of leaders within every local church and the job of every pastor is to mentor the young ones and provide increasingly important opportunities for them to exercise their leadership gifts. They must increase; we must decrease...

NOTES

CHAPTER 16**INTRODUCTION**

As we read on through the next chapters have a good modern map of the land of Israel close by and refer to the place names that you can find in the area that is within the rough tribal boundaries. The Hebrew way of describing areas was from sunrise (East) to sunset (West), and from the southern area towards the northern areas. Also look at the map at the back of your Bible relating to the settling of the twelve tribes in the land and see if you can identify the approximate areas for the towns mentioned.

In this chapter we look at the area assigned to Ephraim, the smaller of the tribes of the sons of Joseph. This area given to the sons of Joseph will become a key border area in the history of the later kingdoms of Saul, David and his descendants. The kingdom of Israel, under the ruler ship of Jeroboam, from Ephraim, will be established after the death of Solomon. 1 Kings 11:26-40, 12:15-20.

He was a rebel against Solomon, and he led the ten northern tribes into rebellion against the sons of Judah and Benjamin and against the God of Israel also. The preview of this sad event is contained in verse 10 below, for the Israelites did not destroy all the Canaanites from amongst them, but received tribute from them as vassals. As the book of Judges will reveal, the Canaanites were poor servants of Israel and led them astray after their idols, and the north became corrupt through the centuries until it was destroyed by the Assyrians in 720 BC.

JOSHUA 16:1-10

16:1 And the lot of the children of Joseph fell from Jordan by Jericho, unto the water of Jericho on the east, to the wilderness that goeth up from Jericho throughout mount Bethel,² And goeth out from Bethel to Luz, and passeth along unto the borders of Archi to Ataroth, **3** And goeth down westward to the coast of Japhleti, unto the coast of Bethhoron the nether, and to Gezer; and the goings out thereof are at the sea. **4** So the children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance. **5** And the border of the children of Ephraim according to their families was thus: even the border of their inheritance on the east side was Atarothaddar, unto Bethhoron the upper; **6** And the border went out toward the sea to Michmethah on the north side; and the border went about eastward unto Taanathshiloh, and passed by it on the east to Janohah; **7** And it went down from Janohah to Ataroth, and to Naarath, and came to Jericho, and went out at Jordan. **8** The border went out from Tappuah westward unto the river Kanah; and the goings out thereof were at the sea. This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Ephraim by their families. **9** And the separate cities for the children of Ephraim were among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh, all the cities with their villages. **10** And they drove not out the Canaanites that dwell in Gezer: but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites unto this day, and serve under tribute.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 4. The first lot cast for the division of the land went to Judah, and the second went to Ephraim. The line to delineate their land is drawn from Jericho. This ruined pagan stronghold will be a sign of things to come for Ephraim, for they will go the same way and their later capital Samaria (in the tribal area of Manasseh) will be reduced to a ruin like Jericho by the Assyrians. Joshua (or the committee of priests and elders who do the work of division) draws the line from the waters of es Sultan, east of Jericho, and heads up the wild wilderness country towards the mountains around Bethel. Bethel, or Luz, as it was known by the Canaanites, will be assigned to Benjamin. A line is then drawn to Beth-Horon (the present village of Beit Ur Tachta).

From Beth-Horon the boundary line went towards Gezer and then followed the river Ajalon (Wadi Muzeirah). This river will form a boundary between them and the Canaanites of the Plain, and the children of Dan who are assigned this part of the land. It is land that will not be subdued for many years, and then in 1200 BC the Philistines will arrive, settle in the south, and drive the sons of Joseph further back into the hills. The Danites themselves will head further north, as their assigned area is simply too tough for them to take and hold. From the coast north of Joppa the land of the sons of Joseph stretched out to the Jezreel valley.

Verses 5 – 10. The northern boundary is described in verses 6 – 8. There is debate about the exact whereabouts of some of these places, but most can be identified clearly. The northern boundary followed the Kanah River towards Tappuah, then on towards Shechem, but headed to the south of Mt Gerizim and across to Taanath-Shiloh. The next towns mentioned, Janohah, Ataroth, and Naarath, form a line heading steadily towards the Jordan Plain. They are around five kilometres from the actual boundary line, and this is a rough guide to the area of influence of each walled city-state amongst the old Canaanites, which the Israelites continued to follow for legal purposes. The area around a city was farmed by the people of that city and any crime in that area was the responsibility of the city that was closest to it by linear measure.

Notice the editor's comment, that the Canaanites around Gezer were too strong for the Ephraimites and they were not destroyed, but a treaty was made with them and they paid tribute annually to live amongst them. This was forbidden by the Lord. Where did this tribute money or goods go? It was money that should not have been collected, and it would be a problem for the people of Ephraim. Their land will be a place of battles for centuries because of their disobedience and

lack of faith. The challenge of this land was the challenge to pray for victory and seek the Lord's way to defeat their superior enemies. They failed in prayer and so they failed in battle. Spiritually they will steadily slip through lack of prayer and faith into compromise and carnality. This remains our daily danger!

The Army of all the twelve tribes of Israel could not conquer and destroy all the people in the land while they operated as one army group, for as they approached one stronghold, the enemy could slip away from surrounding ones to others further away. Some remnant would always slip away and re-seed another part of the land. The only way to destroy the Canaanite remnants was for each tribe to attack them simultaneously in twelve places, not one, and so eliminate their escape routes. This required faith and courage on the part of each tribal army and spiritual guidance and strength on the part of the leadership, who were each called to pray their way through the obstacles to total victory.

They will not have enough godly leaders to stand in the gap and do this. Their armies were courageous, but not spiritually powerful enough, nor prayerfully guided enough, to reach their objectives. This enemy could have been beaten, but only by spirit led men who were listening to the Lord and developing strategies that flowed from God. The fall of Ai, Hazor, and Jericho could have been seen in all the walled cities of the plains, but the men in charge of the tribal armies did not follow the spiritual mentorship of Moses and Joshua. They saw things with the eyes of men, not the eyes of faith.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Let us be people of prayer, who believe in the Lord, and seek His way through each problem we face and obstacle we meet. These people trusted Joshua, but although they had been mentored by Moses and Joshua, they failed to learn the lessons of faith and have the spiritual power to seize their divinely appointed objectives. Let us pray for Holy Spirit empowered leadership, and for Bible Doctrine saturated leadership, for with this combination along we will have victory in the local areas we are called to seize for the Lord.

2. The enemy were to be destroyed, not compromised with. The Lord knew that the influence of the Canaanites would be so totally negative that they would destroy the spiritual life of the people over time. The Israelites were not strong enough to resist the wiles of the devil at this point. They needed time to strengthen themselves in the land and to stabilize themselves in their worship routines. They will do neither.

3. The pagans influenced them and the Israelites mixed truth and error. When God's way is compromised by nervous believers, only the devil can win. Only regular worship and regular spiritual feeding and fellowship will stabilize us and allow us to reach the goals the Lord has for us. It is the prayer saturated paths that bear the most fruit.

REFLECTION UPON THE CRUCIAL ASPECT OF DAILY LIFE - SPIRITUALITY

1. All Christians have the Holy Spirit indwelling them. When we allow Him to control our lives, we are said to be "filled with the Spirit" or "walking in the Spirit".

2. The filling of the Holy Spirit can be lost by

- a) Grieving the Spirit - by sin
- b) Quenching the Spirit - by not submitting to His leading
- c) This is called being carnal, or controlled by the flesh, the old sin nature.

3. The filling of the Holy Spirit can be regained by

- a) confessing sin (1 John 1:9)
- b) surrendering your life to God (Romans 12:1-2)
- c) This is called being spiritual, or controlled by the Holy Spirit.

4. Only the Holy Spirit in us can produce good works acceptable to God - anything in our own strength is unacceptable (Romans 8:8-9, 1 Corinthians 3:10-15)

5. The spiritual believer

- a) Imitates God. (Ephesians 5:1, 1 John 3:9)
- b) To glorify Christ. (John 7:39, John 16:14)
- c) Fulfills the Law. (Romans 8:2-4, Romans 13:8)

6. In the Bible the human race is divided in three Categories:-

[a] **Natural Man** - A person born physically alive, but not regenerated. He may be highly sophisticated, civilised, gentle and kind, but is completely ignorant of any spiritual phenomena. (1 Corinthians 2:14) Equivalent to the cold person in the church in Laodicea.

[b] **Carnal Man** - A person regenerated or born again but living his life under the power of his old sin nature. Prolonged activity in this area produces a Christian who is still a baby. (1 Corinthians 3:1-4). Equivalent to the lukewarm person in the church of Laodicea.

[c] **Spiritual Man** - A person regenerated and living generally in the power of the Holy Spirit. He discerns the difference between the things of God and man. (1 Corinthians 2:11-13) He has fellowship with God in his daily life. (Ephesians 5:18-20) Equivalent to the hot person in the church of Laodicea.

7. Carnality

[a] The believer possesses an Old Sin Nature after salvation (1John 1:8, Romans 7:14,15).

[b]. The Old Sin Nature is desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9).

[c]. The believer under the control of the Old Sin Nature is called carnal (1Corinthians 3:1-3, Romans 7:14).

[d]. The Old Sin Nature frustrates bona fide production in the life of the believer (Romans 7:15).

[e]. The Old Sin Nature is acquired at the point of physical birth (Psalm 51:5).

[f]. We are therefore considered spiritually dead at the point of physical birth (Romans 5:12).

[g]. The Old Sin Nature has several facets: areas of weakness produces sins, areas of strength produces human good. It has trends towards asceticism or lasciviousness. In many cases asceticism is considered to be spirituality.

[h] The Old Sin Nature is not found in the resurrection body.

BACK-SLIDING AND RECOVERY

1. Definition - falling from the standard of living that the Lord calls us to and living at a lower level of belief, behaviour, and emotion. Living in a state of embarrassment at the gospel, thinking as an unbeliever would.

2. The Lord knows who are his, we don't. 2 Timothy 2:19. A backslider is out of fellowship, and may resemble an unbeliever in every way yet still be saved. They are like the prodigal son. Luke 15:3ff. These people are different (although they appear to be the same) to religious unbelievers. 2 Peter 2:1 -22, Jude 4 -13, 18, 19, 22.

3. The Lord desires these people to be restored. Matthew 18:12 -14, Luke 15:3 -32. In the Old Testament this message is also clear. Hosea 4:14-19, 11:7, 8, 14:1-4, Jeremiah 2:19, 3:6, 8, 11, 12, 14, 22, 5:6, 8:5, 14:7,Jeremiah 31:22, 49:4.

4. Believers who are "offended" at the Word have failed to grow spiritually John 6:61 -63, Matthew 11:6, 1 Corinthians 10: 13, Matthew 13:21, Mark 4:17, John 16:1, Matthew 24:9, 10.

5. The disciples all were offended at the Lord at his death. Matthew 26:31, 33-35, cf. 67-75.

6. Falling from grace is another way of expressing backsliding. Colossians 1:23, Galatians 5:4, 2 Peter 3:17. It means to fall from a place where you stand for grace and adopt an inferior way of living the Christian way of life, like legalism.

7. God disciplines the backslider, but their eternal security is secure. Hebrews 12:5 -13, 16, 17, 1 Corinthians 3:12-15, 1 Peter 1:4, 5, 2 Timothy 2:11- 13, John 1:12, Ephesians 1:13.

8. The Lord is able to keep us from falling, although we can walk away from his provision by following our pride rather than his truth. Jude 24. 1 Corinthians 10:11 -14, 1 Timothy 3:6, 7.

9. At the end of the church age the Lord prophesied that there would be a time of almost total backsliding on the part of the organised church.2 Thessalonians 2:3, 1 Timothy 4:1- 6, 2 Timothy 4:3, 4.

10. The Lord warns all backsliders very directly in Revelation 2 : 5. No fruit for too long = sin unto death! John 15:1-5.

11. Backsliding and Recovery

Seven Steps Downwards

- a Trifling with Sin Romans 13:14
- b. Yielding to Sin Romans 6:13
- c. Habitually Serving Sin 2 Peter 2:8

- d. Abandoning Ourselves to Sin Ephesians 4:19
- e. Being Abandoned by God to Sin Romans 1:24,26,28
- f. Encouraging Others to Sin Romans 1:32
- g. Experiencing Hell on Earth James 3:6, 1 Timothy 5:6

Seven Steps Upwards

- a. Resisting Sin in our Attitudes James 4:7
- b. Overcoming Sin by Faith in Christ Galatians 5:16
- c. Habitually being Victorious over Sin Romans 6:14, 1 John 5:4-5
- d. Entering into the Secret of a Victorious Life Hid with Christ in God Romans 8:37, 2 Corinthians 2:14, Colossians 3:1-3
- e. Being Taken by God into Deeper Fellowship 1 Timothy 1:12, 1 Corinthians 4:2
- f. Delivering Others from Sin. Jude 22-23
- g. Experiencing Heaven on Earth Jude 24-25, Philippians 4:6-7

SEPARATION

- 1. Believers are instructed to be separated from habitually carnal believers. (1 Corinthians 5:10, 11)
- 2. Separation is ordered from apostate religious organisations. (2 Corinthians 6:17)
- 3. Separation is commanded from unbelievers where scripture is compromised by the relationship or marriage, business partners. (2 Corinthians 6:14 ff)
- 4. Separation is commanded from the human viewpoint. (Romans 12:2, Romans 16:17, 18)
- 5. Separation is commanded from pseudo spirituality. (Romans 16:17, 18)
- 6. Separation is commanded from those who seek pleasure in fast living - pursuit of parties, immoral situations. (1 Peter 4:4)
- 7. Separation is commanded from other believers who reject Bible doctrine. (2 Thessalonians 3:14, 15)

NOTES

CHAPTER 17**INTRODUCTION**

Half of the tribe of Manasseh had remained over the other side of Jordan. Their soldiers had joined their brethren for the southern and the northern campaigns but they will have been going to and fro through the years of fighting to ensure the crops were being brought in on their side of the river. The half of their tribe that was to settle in the land itself was not a larger group than other tribes, and so the size of their area is a surprise. Their numbers are fewer than two other tribes that will receive smaller portions of the land. It is the largest of the tribal allocations, other than that of the tribe of Judah.

These two tribes will however be the two main tribes for all of the history of Israel in the land and they will be rivals for power, although at this time both Dan and Issachar are larger in numbers. Numbers 26. The area of Manasseh will include the future capital of the northern kingdom in Samaria, and includes many places that were important to the children of Abraham. Joseph's bones will finally be given rest in a tomb in Shechem at what will be their initial capital. Joshua 24:32-33.

JOSHUA 17:1-18

17:1 There was also a lot for the tribe of Manasseh, for he was the first born of Joseph; to wit, for Machir the firstborn of Manasseh, the father of Gilead: because he was a man of war, therefore he had Gilead and Bashan. 2 There was also a lot for the rest of the children of Manasseh by their families; for the children of Abiezer, and for the children of Helek, and for the children of Asriel, and for the children of Shechem, and for the children of Hephher, and for the children of Shemida: these were the male children of Manasseh the son of Joseph by their families. 3 But Zelophehad, the son of Hephher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but daughters: and these are the names of his daughters, Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. 4 And they came near before Eleazar the priest, and before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the princes, saying, The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brethren. Therefore according to the commandment of the LORD he gave them an inheritance among the brethren of their father. 5 And there fell ten portions to Manasseh, beside the land of Gilead and Bashan, which were on the other side Jordan; 6 Because the daughters of Manasseh had an inheritance among his sons: and the rest of Manasseh's sons had the land of Gilead. 7 And the coast of Manasseh was from Asher to Michmethah, that lieth before Shechem; and the border went along on the right hand unto the inhabitants of Entappuah. 8 Now Manasseh had the land of Tappuah: but Tappuah on the border of Manasseh belonged to the children of Ephraim; 9 And the coast descended unto the river Kanah, southward of the river: these cities of Ephraim are among the cities of Manasseh: the coast of Manasseh also was on the north side of the river, and the outgoings of it were at the sea: 10 Southward it was Ephraim's, and northward it was Manasseh's, and the sea is his border; and they met together in Asher on the north, and in Issachar on the east. 11 And Manasseh had in Issachar and in Asher Bethshean and her towns, and Ibleam and her towns, and the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, and the inhabitants of Endor and her towns, and the inhabitants of Taanach and her towns, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns, even three countries. 12 Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities; but the Canaanites would dwell in that land. 13 Yet it came to pass, when the children of Israel were waxen strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, but did not utterly drive them out. 14 And the children of Joseph spake unto Joshua, saying, Why hast thou given me but one lot and one portion to inherit, seeing I am a great people, forasmuch as the LORD hath blessed me hitherto? 15 And Joshua answered them, If thou be a great people, then get thee up to the wood country, and cut down for thyself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the giants, if mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee. 16 And the children of Joseph said, The hill is not enough for us: and all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both they who are of Bethshean and her towns, and they who are of the valley of Jezreel. 17 And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, even to Ephraim and to Manasseh, saying, Thou art a great people, and hast great power: thou shalt not have one lot only: 18 But the mountain shall be thine; for it is a wood, and thou shalt cut it down: and the outgoings of it shall be thine: for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 6. The writer records details here again that are also given in the book of Numbers. This is to ensure that the relevant things are able to be publicly read aloud, without having to change manuscripts. It is a reminder of the judicial/priestly purposes of this book, as a record for the priests of the details of the settlement of the land and the assigning of the land areas, so that later disputes can be settled with reference to the written record of this book, backed by reference to the Mosaic material if required.

The sons of Machir and Jair joined with the sons of Reuben and Gad and claimed the grazing lands on the east bank of the Jordan. It appears from Numbers 32 that it was the Reubenites and Gadites that initially suggested that they settle there, but that this half tribe of Manasseh later thought that this land would suit them also. They then initiated the attack upon the area of the Amorite king Og of Bashan and seized all his lands for their herds. Numbers 27:1-11, 32:39-42.

The daughters of Zelophehad were determined women who wanted to inherit the land with their brethren and they argued for this before Moses at the time of the camp on the plains of Moab, and Moses received a word from the Lord

praising them and giving them permission to have the land that they desired. They now come before the “committee” that is in charge of dividing the land and re-assert their claim, and the decision of Moses is ratified by the elders before the door of the tabernacle. They are formally granted their land within Manasseh’s allocated area. Refer to the Commentary on Numbers 27 and read this section before advancing further here.

From the census details in Numbers 26:28-34, we discover that the extended family groups of this tribe numbered fifty two “thousands”; that is fifty two extended family groups, each numbering anywhere between 10 and 1000 fighting men. This was enough men to man at least 52 small walled “cities”/villages. The area they are allocated on the east of Jordan was pastoral and so had few cities as such, but the area on the west bank had many walled Canaanite cities, some of which were quite significant fortresses. They will man many of them but have difficulty getting control of all the area they are given.

The larger Canaanite cities have seriously effective chariot forces, which were the heavy tank forces of their day. They were wooden, and pulled by large draught horses, and the horses and chariots had metal armour and spikes protruding from them. On open ground at speed they were devastating against infantry. The only weapon against such forces was breaking up the ground with pre-dug and hidden ditches, and the use of fire in association with massed archers. They could be beaten, but spiritual superiority had to be maintained, for if God was not with them military success would not follow. Sadly, as I have noted above, this tribe will lead the others into idolatry, and this weakness would be fatal for their long term success as a tribe.

Verses 7 – 13. The southern borderlands are now described, and they form the northern border of Ephraim. Great care is noted about the ownership of Tappuah, which belonged to Ephraim. The cities of Manasseh and Ephraim interlocked with each other, some to the north and some to the south of the river Kanah. The tribes shared their common boundary and filled the walled cities they were able to hold, and the Canaanites in the land kept them focused on defending themselves and working together, rather than disputing about lands they couldn’t hold against the enemy anyway. Basically the Kanah River was the boundary with Manasseh generally to be found to the north and Ephraim to the south, but constant warfare would apparently mean that the strongest group would hold what they could against the satanically inspired Canaanite fight back.

The western border went along the coastal strip, and they technically had the Plain of Sharon, and the Valley of Jezreel, but rarely held much of this, as it was good chariot country and the Canaanites were strongest there. Their land joined to that of Asher on the coast to the north west, and to the country assigned to Zebulun in the north, and Issachar in the north east. Mount Gilboa formed the main visible northern boundary. They had several major cities within their area, with Dor on the coast, and Megiddo the major strategic fortress city in the Jezreel Valley. This very fertile area had been three city states (translated “countries” in the KJV) in Canaanite days.

The major towns listed in verse eleven appeared to hold out against the tribe of Manasseh, but when numbers built up within the tribe over the years they were able to bring them to pay tribute, but never actually destroyed their populations. The Canaanites would remain strongly entrenched in this area until the days of David and Solomon and these towns would have mixed races through most of Israel’s history. It is a woman, possibly from this area, who approaches the Lord while he is ministering in the coastal areas to the north of Dor. Matthew 15:21-28, Mark 7:24-30. From earlier cursing there is the light of later blessing from amongst these people. Deuteronomy 30:19-20, Romans 8:28.

Verses 14 – 18. The sons of Joseph complain about the area they receive initially, feeling that they need even more. It is a foretaste of the arrogance that will undo them later. Joshua rebukes them and encourages them to seize the land they are given, and if they then have enough energy and men available, then let them advance into the wooded hills to the north and then right onwards into the really heavy wooded country of the Lebanon Mountains to the north west of the country of Bashan. Joshua encourages them to spread out into this area, for the Abrahamic promise applied to this land all the way north to Hamath, which is 260 kilometres north of the Sea of Galilee.

Their request, I suspect, is for safer, and possibly unsettled lands, for they fear the Canaanite chariot forces, and feel that the land they can easily seize is not big enough. They don’t believe they can wrestle the best land from the Canaanites. Fear dominates their thinking rather than faith in the power of God to deliver their enemies into their hands.

They have already accepted defeat, and believe they will not be able to seize the fertile land they have been given. They already believe the enemy forces are too strong for them, and sadly they are indeed with the mental attitude they have here! However, if they seek the Lord’s face and His power, then they can defeat their enemies. Sadly they will never do this as a people, and no prince of this tribe will stand up and apply the spiritual lessons that they should have learned from Moses and Joshua. There are none who will be spiritual in their political or military leadership and take their relatives to the glory they could have known.

They will eventually control the areas they were given, but they will never own the cities until the days of David and Solomon, and even then they will share them with the pagan Canaanites, who they will allow to lead them astray. Their land will be the place of compromise and false religion until the Assyrian armies sweep them into the dust bin of history in 720BC. 1 Kings 18.

A remnant from all the northern tribes at this time will survive within the southern kingdom of Judah and in the days of the Lord the apostles spoke of the “Twelve Tribes”. There were never any “lost ten tribes”, for the surviving remnant was rebuilt within the nation from those terrible days. (Matthew 19:28, Luke 22:30, Acts 26:7, James 1:1, Revelation 7:5-8).

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. The daughters of Zelophehad have the courage of their convictions and are given land within the tribal allocation that would have been their father's land. They are courageous, but it is their sons who will later fight for the land in the next generation, and they will not have the strength of their mothers. Let us train our children in order that they might be stronger and more powerful in faith than us; let us teach them God's truth that they might stand in it and achieve all they are called to achieve in the Lord's name and power. We must do all we can that our children do not coast spiritually down hill on their godly heritage. These women get their requests, but their descendants lose it all through their lack of faith. Faith gains great rewards, but consistent disobedience loses all that faith has gained! Let us remember this truth and walk in faith, resting in the promises of the Lord's Holy Word.

2. The men of Manasseh believe they are entitled to easier land, and they do not see that the hard battles they are called to fight can actually lead to greater faith and greater glory if they will only pray their way to victory. They have already said to themselves that they cannot defeat the chariot using Canaanites, when in God's power they could have achieved anything He desired for them. Let us remember this and live in the power of the Holy Spirit, and the assurance of God's Word. Let us remember that we stand in the Lord's power and plan, and nothing can stand against the Lord. Let us remember Manasseh, for we walk into the same slow slide to uselessness if we fail to follow the Lord's Word and allow His power to work through us.

REFLECTIONS UPON BEING OF THE "REMNANT ACCORDING TO FAITH"

The following steps to be taken when choosing to be among the remnant.

1. Make a clear understanding of God's Word the priority - 1 Timothy 1:3-6, 4:6-16
2. Develop power in intercessory prayer which is exemplified in the ministry of Elijah - 1 Timothy 2:1-5
3. Stir up, develop and exercise your spiritual gift - 2 Timothy 1:6-7, 13,14, 2:15
4. Pursue purification and sanctification - 2 Timothy 2:19-22
5. Prepare for and expect persecution. 2 Timothy 3:10-12
6. Develop endurance, spiritually, mentally and physically - 2 Timothy 2:1-3, 4:5
7. Live expectantly in the light of eternity - 2 Timothy 4:8

OVERCOMING BY FAITH

1. By faith learn to accept conditions as God's will for life and be thankful - Romans 8:28, 1 Thessalonians 3:3; 5:18
2. By faith maintain fellowship with God, walking in the light - 1 John 1:7
3. By faith consistently day by day examine your conduct, confessing all known sins - 1 Corinthians 11:28, 31 1 John 1:9
4. By faith receive the Word of God daily as being more necessary than daily food. - Matthew 4:4; 5:6, 2 Peter 3:18
5. By faith approach the throne of grace boldly in every case of need, requesting aid, casting every care on Him. - Hebrews 4:15-16; 1 Peter 5:7
6. By faith resist the attempts of Satan and he will flee from you. - Ephesians 6:10-13, 1 Peter 5:8
7. By faith maintain the habit of thinking and meditating on spiritual values and priorities - Philippians 4:6-9
8. Walk by faith and not by sight - 2 Corinthians 5:7

CHAPTER 18**INTRODUCTION**

We must remember as we read this chapter that the account before us is an abbreviated report of proceedings, and many details that we would love to have before us are missing. When the daughters of Zelophehad came before Joshua they approached what I referred to then as a “committee” (of priests and princes) who may have been tasked with the actual recording and some of the decision making relating to the specific division of the land.

In this chapter we discover that it was Joshua himself who threw the lots to assign each tribe its portion, and from the earlier passages, it is apparent that this would have been done in the presence of the tribal leaders and the priests. The priests acted, as we have seen before, in a scribal and recording capacity. Deuteronomy 31:9-30. They kept the Mosaic Law inside the Ark, and I suspect they carried the first draft of this book, with Moses work, there also. It is no accident that the chamber where manuscripts of the Bible were later kept in synagogues is called “the ark”.

Samuel would later record other things, which become our book of Judges and the first book of Samuel, and possibly was the earliest editor of this book before us. The book of Joshua was the record of the tribal boundaries for later use. Written records at this time were very important. Remember, these Israelite people were literate, and the so called “oral traditions” spoken of in most liberal histories are inventions of the German critics. The Germanic peoples were illiterate and didn’t use writing until the Christian era, so they had oral tradition as their norm, but the Israelite peoples **did not**.

The peoples of the Middle East had written records in Akkadian cuneiform script from possibly as early as 4000 BC. Akkadian was the written and spoken language of commerce and diplomacy for nearly 3000 years. Moses certainly came from a literate tradition, and the Israelites in Egypt were brought up in this, with written records from the earliest days. The belief in the Hebrews being wild tribes without written language is one that begins in 18th century Anti-Semitic Germany; it is truly the “myth”, and the “fruit” of it until 1945 indicates its source.

JOSHUA 18:1-28

18:1 And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them. **2** And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes, which had not yet received their inheritance. **3** And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which the LORD God of your fathers hath given you? **4** Give out from among you three men for each tribe: and I will send them, and they shall rise, and go through the land, and describe it according to the inheritance of them; and they shall come again to me. **5** And they shall divide it into seven parts: Judah shall abide in their coast on the south, and the house of Joseph shall abide in their coasts on the north. **6** Ye shall therefore describe the land into seven parts, and bring the description hither 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, and Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh, have received their inheritance beyond Jordan on the east, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave them. **8** And the men arose, and went away: and Joshua charged them that went to describe the land, saying, Go and walk through the land, and describe it, and come again to me, that I may here cast lots for you before the LORD in Shiloh. **9** And the men went and passed through the land, and described it by cities into seven parts in a book, and came again to Joshua the host at Shiloh. **10** And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD: and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel according to their divisions. **11** And the lot of the tribe of the children of Benjamin came up according to their families: and the coast of their lot came forth between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph. **12** And their border on the north side was from Jordan; and the border went up to the side of Jericho on the north side, and went up through the mountains westward; and the goings out thereof were at the wilderness of Bethaven. **13** And the border went over from thence toward Luz, to the side of Luz, which is Bethel, southward; and the border descended to Atarothadar, near the hill that lieth on the south side of the nether Bethhoron. **14** And the border was drawn thence, and compassed the corner of the sea southward, from the hill that lieth before Bethhoron southward; and the goings out thereof were at Kirjathbaal, which is Kirjathjearim, a city of the children of Judah: this was the west quarter. **15** And the south quarter was from the end of Kirjathjearim, and the border went out on the west, and went out to the well of waters of Nephtoa: **16** And the border came down to the end of the mountain that lieth before the valley of the son of Hinnom, and which is in the valley of the giants on the north, and descended to the valley of Hinnom, to the side of Jebusi on the south, and descended to Enrogel, **17** And was drawn from the north, and went forth to Enshemesh, and went forth toward Geliloth, which is over against the going up of Adummim, and descended to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben, **18** And passed along toward the side over against Arabah northward, and went down unto Arabah: **19** And the border passed along to the side of Bethhoglah northward: and the outgoings of the border were at the north bay of the salt sea at the south end of Jordan: this was the south coast. **20** And Jordan was the border of it on the east side. This was the inheritance of the children of Benjamin, by the coasts thereof round about, according to their families. **21** Now the cities of the tribe of the children of Benjamin according to their families were Jericho, and Bethhoglah, and the valley of Keziz, **22** And Betharabah, and Zemaraim, and Bethel, **23** And Avim, and Pharah, and Ophrah, **24** And Chepharhaammonai, and Ophni, and Gaba; twelve cities with their villages: **25** Gibeon, and Ramah, and Beeroth, **26** And Mizpeh, and Chephirah, and Mozah, **27** And Rekem, and Irpeel, and Taralah, **28** And Zelah,

Eleph, and Jebusi, which is Jerusalem, Gibeath, and Kirjath; fourteen cities with their villages. This is the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their families.

REFLECTIONS

Verse 1. The Ark had been in the tabernacle at the camp in Gilgal until the end of the northern campaign. The camp is now moved further north to encourage and facilitate the seizure of the northern lands, and place the tabernacle in a more central and permanent location. Moses had received instructions from the Lord that this was to occur once they had secured the land. Deuteronomy 12:10-14. The place was not specifically identified to Moses, but clearly the Lord directs Joshua to Shiloh as that place, and the Ark and Tabernacle will be there until the end of the days of the Judges.

He must have received some definite revelation about Shiloh, as this was not a major settlement, and the logical place from history to set up the tabernacle would apparently have been Shechem, as it was between the two mountains where Moses had directed the cursing and blessing of the law to be read aloud. Deuteronomy 11:26-32, 27:4-14, Joshua 8:30-35. It is a reminder that what is “logical” to our minds is not to be taken as God’s will until it is verified by prayer, and we are always to be ready for correction of our “settled opinions”.

Shiloh will be the early home of Samuel the Prophet-Priest of the end of this period. 1 Samuel 1:3, 19-28. The Ark is foolishly taken from there into battle against the Philistines some years after Samuel’s boyhood there and captured by them. 1 Samuel 5:1 – 6:21. The Ark is returned by the Philistines after a series of disasters amongst them, and is taken into hiding in the town of Kirjath Jearim. 1 Samuel 7:1-2. It remains there twenty years, apparently in hiding. Samuel calls the people to repentance and worship is restored, but Shiloh remains a devastated place. Shiloh will become a byword of what happens to a holy place when the people have become and remained unholy. **Psalms 78:56-66, Jeremiah 7:12-15, 26:1-9.**

From these later words of the Lord it appears that many of the priests at Shiloh were killed by the rampaging Philistines after the Ark was captured. The tabernacle tent itself may have been ransacked and destroyed, although the sacred items within it were saved and hidden away, and used or stored later in the Temple of Solomon. It appears that the worship of Israel ground to a halt through many of these later years of the Judges, due to the Philistine attacks. It may even have been that the annual festivals and feasts stopped at times.

Only as political and military security is regained under Saul does the tabernacle begin to be active again. Even then however, at a point of psychosis King Saul commits a great sin in murdering many of the priests in revenge for them assisting David. 1 Samuel 21-22. The days of the judges and just afterwards were dark days for the spiritual life of the people, and the true worship of the Lord at the tabernacle ceased at times for many years.

The Ark is called back into more regular service as the centrepiece of worship by King Saul early in his uniting reign, and he restores it to the priests, and brings it before the Army, to encourage them against the Philistines. This time the Lord does not judge them, for they are righteous in their behaviours before Him. 1 Samuel 14:18. Saul’s later murder of the entire “course” of the priesthood halts worship again and the Ark remains out of sight until the days of King David when he brings it up to Jerusalem, but he is not careful enough in the initial process. One of his men dies, and he leaves the Ark in another house for three months until he has seriously studied the right procedure and is ready to bring the Ark into Jerusalem properly this time. 2 Samuel 6:1-19, 1 Chronicles 15:1- 16:7.

The Ark remains in a new Tabernacle that David had made for it inside the city of David (Jerusalem) until Solomon completes the new Temple, when it is carried reverently into the Holy of Holies there. 1 Kings 8:1-10, 2 Chronicles 3:1ff, 5:1-10. The last mention of the Ark is in 2 Chronicles 35:1-6. This last passage records that the priests had apparently hidden the Ark during the evil days of King Manasseh from the 690s – 640s BC. It is he who killed Isaiah and served foreign gods in the temple itself. The story of the survival of the Ark is a story of high drama from beginning to ending.

King Josiah around 620 BC begins to restore the temple and cleanses it and begins worship again. 2 Chronicles 34:7-35:3. The Ark is returned to the Holy of Holies when it is cleansed of the evils that took place there, and a great revival occurs of Israel’s traditional worship. He however did not reign long, and died in battle against Pharaoh Necho of Egypt in 609 BC at Megiddo. He fought a battle that he should not have been fighting, to try to stop Necho heading north to save the last remnant of the Assyrians at Haran from the wrath of Nebuchadnezzar. 2 Kings 33:3-30, 2 Chronicles 35:20-27. God’s hand is there however, as Josiah had done all he could; the people were determined to reject God’s path.

On his return from the Haran campaign (defeat at the battle of Carchemish), Pharaoh Necho took the next appointed Jewish king captive, appointed his own “safe” man, and left him in control of Jerusalem as a vassal. That king would then serve the Babylonians after they seize Jerusalem in 605 BC, and then rebel against them and lose his life in the siege of 597 BC. 2 Kings 23:29 – 25:30, 2 Chronicles 36. Pharaoh Necho exacted significant tribute but apparently didn’t have time to do any serious looting, and may not have even entered Jerusalem personally. After his defeat at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar he was in a hurry to return to Egypt and regroup his forces, having seriously lost the battle of Carchemish. He may have taken the Ark to Egypt, but this isn’t mentioned anywhere, and it is **neither** an Egyptian **nor** a Jewish tradition. Do not believe Hollywood’s version in the Indiana Jones movie, “Raiders of the Lost Ark”, for this is pure fiction; don’t mistake good fun to watch on the screen with truth.

I suspect that the same priests who hid the Ark from their own king Manasseh, and the Assyrian Empire, were well able to hide the Ark from this foreign Egyptian king also, and when the city finally fell twenty years later in 586 BC the Ark is not mentioned in the spoils of war taken by the Babylonians either. 2 Chronicles 36:11-20. All they took into Babylon was listed and every item was returned by Cyrus the Great, and the Ark is not mentioned anywhere. Ezra 1:7-11. The suspicion is that the Ark is still hidden under the Temple Mount somewhere, and that has been the tradition of the Jewish people since these days. They say that it will be found when it is needed again. If it is indeed there still, it will likely be "found" for the building of the Tribulational Temple that the Anti-Christ will use. Its spiritual significance is however over at this point of the 5th Cycle of Discipline upon the Nation for their great evils. It's just an empty box now, if even that.

Verses 2 – 10. Seven of the tribes had not received their inheritance, and it would appear from what is recorded here, they had not even asked for theirs to be assigned. The comment of Joshua indicates slackness on the part of these tribes to request their portion, and then to settle once they had it generally assigned. It may be that they were given basic directions of their portions, but no firm survey had been made of the areas.

Several years have passed since the invasion now and the Canaanites are back in force in some places. There was some serious fighting to be done if they were to unseat their enemies from their lands in the more remote areas from the camp at Shiloh. The first step was to get an accurate survey done of all the remaining land, so that precision could be given to the directions and borders, and an accurate assessment of the remnant strength of the Canaanites in each area.

Each of the remaining seven tribes was to appoint three surveyors each, whose role was to go through their allocated areas and produce a written report, with the landmarks recorded for reference. They would also be tasked with reports of enemy activities. It is another reminder that these people were literate and wrote down things for action later. These men are to write things down in a "book" (Hebrew sepher). It is also a reminder that the Israelites had many skilled people within their tribes, and amongst the artisan group there were those who knew mathematics from their days in Egypt and passed these skills on to their sons. These men were to provide material to fill in the map of the land that Joshua had, and then he would divide the last parts of it into the seven remaining groups.

Some of the tribal groups are quite large, but they are hesitant to move out and do anything as they lack faith that works out in their lives. James 2:14-26. Judah was to stay in their area and Ephraim and Manasseh in their own through this period and seize their own objectives there. The other two and a half tribes have not permanently returned to the East bank of Jordan after this move to Shiloh, but their departure is not far away. Joshua 22:1ff. There is possibly a last religious service at Shiloh with all the combined people before the various tribes which have their allocations head away. This isn't clear, and the way Judges 22 reads all/most of the people/army are still altogether at that point.

Joshua's instructions are clear. The surveyors are to examine the various parts of the land unassigned and report back so that the remainder can be divided more precisely into seven portions. Once they have seven portions Joshua would cast lots for them amongst the last seven tribes. The note is made again regarding the tribe of Levi, which will receive cities within each tribal area, but will have no tribal land as such. Joshua receives their reports back and casts the lots and the land is assigned. The next chapters will record the seven tribe's allocations.

Verses 11 – 20. The tribe of Benjamin is now given its land formally. I note the word "formally" as it must have been assigned before, as it fits between Judah and Ephraim and must have been generally allocated earlier, just not taken up by the Benjamites. This is the obviously easiest allocation as they fit in between Judah and Ephraim. Their lot means they are to come between the family of Judah (the third son of Leah) and Joseph (the first son of Rachel), as is appropriate given that Benjamin was the younger brother of Joseph. Genesis 49. Judah and Simeon (another son of Leah) are south and the other sons of Joseph are north of them, and Dan is on their western flank initially. Their position is strategic, with Jericho on the eastern boundary and Jerusalem in their midst, the Jebusite stronghold that they will not conquer and hold in the Judges period, even though it is initially taken by Joshua.

Verses 21 – 28. Their towns are divided into two groups. The first portion contains twelve towns in the Eastern area, verses 21-24, and the second portion in the western area of the allocation, with fourteen walled cities, verses 25-28. Amongst these place names there are some that figure greatly in future history. The modern town alongside the tell of ancient Jericho begins the list, and the places move from east to west.

The great places are Beth-el, Mizpah, and Jerusalem. Read in a bible encyclopaedia about each of these towns mentioned. Also check in your concordance for occasions when these towns are named and see their part played in the great unfolding drama of redemption. The best way to study the land is to study it portion by portion and read a concordance to identify every biblical event that occurs there, and from that point examine the archaeology and history of the place. Use Google maps to see aerial views of the ancient tells upon which the ancient cities sat.

The two great men of Benjamin are both called Saul; the first is the king who went slowly psychotic with the pressures of rulership, murdered the priests of the Lord, and many good believers in battle against David, and died the sin unto death. The second man begins killing believers, but becomes the great apostle Paul.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Lack of faith robs us of our earthly blessings and opportunities to serve the Lord in power and with impact. The seven tribes were nervous and doubted their ability to seize and hold their land. They were right to doubt their ability, for humanly speaking they could not do it. That was God's point; He wanted them to walk in faith and spiritual power, and by

divine guidance seize the lands that He would deliver to them, if they stepped out in faith. It remains the daily challenge for us today; to step out in faith and spiritual power and seize all the Lord has for us in His mighty power, not our own.

2. The Ark of the Lord probably still exists some-where under the old city of Jerusalem. Let us not get too excited about this, for its probable next appearance will be to establish the pre-tribulation temple, where the Anti-Christ will set up his image half way through the Great Tribulation. The Ark still may have a part to play, and that may be simply to ensure the temple is built to fulfil prophecy, but its spiritual significance and power is well over. It spoke of the Sacrifice of the Cross and that has occurred; the salvation and person of the Saviour it portrayed is completely fulfilled.

3. Joshua listens to the Lord and is prayerfully guided to the place to establish the worship centre for Israel. He then acts thoughtfully and systematically, in a business like manner, in the calling of the surveyors to examine the land thoroughly. He mentors to us good leadership and management technique. Let us be like Joshua in our management as pastors; careful, prayerful, thoughtful, but spiritually courageous.

He takes charge and calls the people to move out in the Lord's power and in spiritual strength, not just the strength of their military forces. He reminds them that they are there to seize the land not camp together in a safe place within it. They are called to battle their enemies, not live safely at a distance from them. Let us daily get our spiritual armour on and fight the battles the Lord wants us to fight this day and every day of our lives.

REFLECTION UPON THE "SIN UNTO DEATH"

1. There is a sin unto death (1 John 5:16, 17, 1 Corinthians 11 :31,32)
2. The sin unto death is the physical death of a believer, where ultimate discipline is administered to the Christian due to unconfessed sin of a serious nature.
3. Confession of sin under the instruction of I John 1:9 is the way to forgiveness.
4. Examples of sin unto death:-
 - (a) The Corinthian Pervert - (1 Corinthians 5)
 - (b) The Corinthians who habitually came to the Lord's table in an unworthy manner. (1 Corinthians 11:27-32)
 - (c) Moses (Deuteronomy 32:48-52)
 - (d) Achan (Joshua 7:16-26)
 - (e) Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5: 1 -1 1)
5. Whilst there is a sin unto death there is no condemnation to them in Christ Jesus - all believers (Romans 8:1, 2 Timothy 2:12-13).
6. The effect of the sin unto death is to reduce the time which a believer can spend on earth accumulating good of eternal worth. The gold, silver and precious stones of I Corinthians 3:11-15.

Notes

CHAPTER 19**INTRODUCTION**

The order so far in the casting of lots has been, Judah, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin. This reflects the prophetic priority of Judah as the spiritual leader of the combined nation, and then the sons of Rachel second, with Joseph's sons having the priority over Benjamin. The next lots come out in the following order; Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and finally to Dan. Compare this to the order of blessings listed in Genesis 49 and it is very close. Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh have already received their inheritance on the other side of the Jordan in the open cattle country there.

As noted before, it is unclear how the casting of lots occurred. From all the text so far it would appear that the surveyors reported back and divided the land into seven workable units, with productivity, water sources, and enemy activity taken into account. This hadn't been done when Judah was apportioned the southern area and most of the Negev towns will be granted to Simeon, as Judah is unable to seize and hold all that they have been given.

The inadequacy of the surveying prior to this, and the size of the area that Judah was given, created problems for all the tribes. They could all see that Judah had too much, and that they couldn't fully seize it all, let alone hold the land. It is possibly this factor, in association with the reluctance of the others to try to seize their inheritance in the face of enemy opposition that moves Joshua to get a detailed survey before apportioning any more land.

The Egyptians had maps of this entire area, as it was in their area of influence, and I suspect Moses had one of these that he had passed to Joshua, but it clearly was not good enough, without enough detail on it of agricultural productivity and strength of populations. The delay in settling the land then, is due to a variety of factors, and Joshua's caution leads to a better land division that has more sustainability in it than the initial divisions of the southern and central areas. He mentors careful administration, with logical considerations driving the final outcome, and a readiness to change course.

JOSHUA 19:1-51

19:1 And the second lot came forth to Simeon, even for the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families: and their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah. **2** And they had in their inheritance Beersheba, and Sheba, and Moladah, **3** And Hazarshual, and Balah, and Azem, **4** And Eltolad, and Bethul, and Hormah, **5** And Ziklag, and Bethmarcaboth, and Hazarsusah, **6** And Bethlebaoth, and Sharuhem; thirteen cities and their villages: **7** Ain, Remmon, and Ether, and Ashan; four cities and their villages: **8** And all the villages that were round about these cities to Baalathbeer, Ramath of the south. This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families. **9** Out of the portion of the children of Judah was the inheritance of the children of Simeon: for the part of the children of Judah was too much for them: therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of them. **10** And the third lot came up for the children of Zebulun according to their families: and the border of their inheritance was unto Sarid: **11** And their border went up toward the sea, and Maralah, and reached to Dabbasheth, and reached to the river that is before Jokneam; **12** And turned from Sarid eastward toward the sunrising unto the border of Chislothtabor, and then goeth out to Daberath, and goeth up to Japhia, **13** And from thence passeth on along on the east to Gittahhepher, to Ittahkazin, and goeth out to Remmonmethoar to Neah; **14** And the border compasseth it on the north side to Hannathon: and the outgoings thereof are in the valley of Jiphthahel: **15** And Kattath, and Nahallal, and Shimron, and Idalah, and Bethlehem: twelve cities with their villages. **16** This is the inheritance of the children of Zebulun according to their families, these cities with their villages. **17** And the fourth lot came out to Issachar, for the children of Issachar according to their families. **18** And their border was toward Jezreel, and Chesulloth, and Shunem, **19** And Haphraim, and Shihon, and Anaharath, **20** And Rabbith, and Kishion, and Abez, **21** And Remeth, and Engannim, and Enhaddah, and Bethpazzez; **22** And the coast reacheth to Tabor, and Shahazimah, and Bethshemesh; and the outgoings of their border were at Jordan: sixteen cities with their villages. **23** This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Issachar according to their families, the cities and their villages. **24** And the fifth lot came out for the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families. **25** And their border was Helkath, and Hali, and Beten, and Achshaph, **26** And Alammelech, and Amad, and Misheal; and reacheth to Carmel westward, and to Shihorlibnath; **27** And turneth toward the sunrising to Bethdagon, and reacheth to Zebulun, and to the valley of Jiphthahel toward the north side of Bethemek, and Neiel, and goeth out to Cabul on the left hand, **28** And Hebron, and Rehob, and Hammon, and Kanah, even unto great Zidon; **29** And then the coast turneth to Ramah, and to the strong city Tyre; and the coast turneth to Hosah; and the outgoings thereof are at the sea from the coast to Achzib: **30** Ummah also, and Aphek, and Rehob: twenty and two cities with their villages. **31** This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families, these cities with their villages. **32** The sixth lot came out to the children of Naphtali, even for the children of Naphtali according to their families. **33** And their coast was from Heleph, from Allon to Zaananim, and Adami, Nekeb, and Jabneel, unto Lakum; and the outgoings thereof were at Jordan: **34** And then the coast turneth westward to Aznothtabor, and goeth out from thence to Hukkok, and reacheth to Zebulun on the south side, and reacheth to Asher on the west side, and to Judah upon Jordan toward the sunrising. **35** And the fenced cities are Ziddim, Zer, and Hammath, Rakkath, and Chinnereth, **36** And Adamah, and Ramah, and Hazor, **37** And Kedesh, and Edrei, and Enhazor, **38** And Iron, and Migdalel, Horem, and Bethanath, and Bethshemesh; nineteen cities with their villages. **39** This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Naphtali according to their families, the cities and their villages. **40** And the seventh lot came out for the tribe of

the children of Dan according to their families. 41 And the coast of their inheritance was Zorah, and Eshtaol, and Irshemesh, 42 And Shaalabbin, and Ajalon, and Jethlah, 43 And Elon, and Thimnathah, and Ekron, 44 And Eltekeh, and Gibbethon, and Baalath, 45 And Jehud, and Beneberak, and Gathrimmon, 46 And Mejarkon, and Rakkon, with the border before Japho. 47 And the coast of the children of Dan went out too little for them: therefore the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and possessed it, and dwelt therein, and called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father. 48 This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families, these cities with their villages. 49 When they had made an end of dividing the land for inheritance by their coasts, the children of Israel gave an inheritance to Joshua the son of Nun among them: 50 According to the word of the LORD they gave him the city which he asked, even Timnathserah in mount Ephraim: and he built the city, and dwelt therein. 51 These are the inheritances, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, divided for an inheritance by lot in Shiloh before the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. So they made an end of dividing the country.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 9. SIMEON. In Genesis 49:5-7 Simeon came under the same judgment as Levi for their cruelty in the massacre of the inhabitants of Shechem. Genesis 34. Both tribes were to be divided and scattered amongst their brethren. Levi would find redemption through their work as priests, servants at the tabernacle, and judges, but would have no land assigned to them in the land at this time. Moses blessing of the tribes omits Simeon completely from the list. Deuteronomy 33.

In the Millennial Kingdom both Simeon and Levi's descendents have land assigned to them and dwell therein for the 1000 years. Ezekiel 48:8-25. At that time all the judgments of the past are over and they can truly inherit the land promised to Abraham in peace. Refer to the Commentary on this chapter of Ezekiel to study this. Levi is dispersed within all the families of Israel until the days of the Millennial Kingdom, and Simeon is scattered amongst the southern areas of Judah, having much of the Negev pastoral lands to as far south as Beer Sheba. Their area is desert today, but was fertile at that time, and will be again. In the Millennial Kingdom the land given to them here will be assigned to Zebulun and Gad.

Verses 10 – 16. ZEBULUN. The words of Moses and Jacob regarding Zebulun are apparently at first sight, forgotten or ignored. A reading of Jacob's blessing in Genesis 49:13, and Moses words in Deuteronomy 33:18 reveals that the obvious expectation was they would receive the coastline stretching towards Sidon. They in fact receive a land locked area jammed in between Asher (on the coastline to the west), Manasseh to the south, Issachar to the east, and Naphtali to the north. Their area was a very fertile area and will later form part of Galilee with the areas of Issachar and southern Naphtali. They will be on the trade roads and will share in the prosperity of the sea as all the trade of the Phoenicians flowed through their lands, so in a way the words of Jacob were fulfilled, for the goods of Sidon flowed through their cities and the prosperity of the Gentiles will be their lot in the days of the Lord Jesus' ministry in the area.

Verses 17 – 23. ISSACHAR. Issachar receives the fertile plain of Jezreel. Jacob's prophecy has them bearing the heavy burden of agriculture, and this was very apt for a tribe that inherited the Jezreel valley. Genesis 49:14-15. Moses prophetic words appear to refer to Mount Tabor, that will be on their western border, and the fact that they also, like Zebulun, draw upon the wealth of trade flowing through their lands. The richness of their soils is also referred to by Moses. This area will figure greatly in the entire history of the nation Israel.

Verses 24 – 31. ASHER. Asher receives the entire coastline from Mt Carmel north towards the Phoenicians at Tyre and Sidon. Moses words promised great strength and growth in numbers and power. Deuteronomy 33:24-25. The reference to "dipping his foot in Oil" does not mean they will find petroleum products beneath this land, but that the hills are perfect for Olive Oil production. Jacob's words indicate also the richness of the production of the land they inherit, to the production of the sweet foods of kings. The other oil products have been found off the coast, and in large quantities.

Verses 32 – 39. NAPHTALI. Their territory is between Asher and the Sea of Galilee, stretching into the Lebanon Mountains opposite Tyre. Jacob's words in Genesis 49:21 indicate that they will roam free as the deer in the hills and this certainly describes their countryside. Moses words in Deuteronomy 33:23 regarding direction for their land make no real sense in light of their land. Moses words would naturally be interpreted as asking for the south west of the land as their inheritance, yet their land is in the north. The southwest of their land is the hill country around Ramah. It may be that their main battles were to be focused in this area; we simply do not have this information before us in the written record.

Verses 40 – 48. DAN. The tribe of Dan receives fertile lands that stretch towards the southern Canaanite cities of the coastal plain. It was good land, but the enemy were still strong there and Joshua did not campaign fully into this area and destroy the enemy. The Amorites in this area gained the ascendancy over the Danites in subsequent years, and kept them in their hill country fortresses. They were not able to gain victory over their enemies. Further to the north the sons of Ephraim did get victory and made the enemy pay tribute, but even they didn't settle this coastal plain and hold it until the days of David. Judges 1:27-36. They went north as a tribe in the days of the Judges and entered into the lands north of the Sea of Galilee, and sadly their area became a stronghold of evil worship. Judges 18:1-31.

Verses 49 – 51. Special portion given to JOSHUA. Joshua is rewarded for his special service by a specific grant of land above and beyond any tribal portions he may have received by lot in the tribal ballot. It appears that he was promised a specific piece of land that he had seen during his spying expedition just as Caleb was. The fact that his is

widely distant from Caleb's indicates their different paths during the spying expedition and the difference in their natural desires. Caleb sought southern land and Joshua more northerly. He is given the city of Timnath-Serah for his family in the tribal area of Mount Ephraim as befits a son of Joseph. Numbers 13:8. He rebuilt this city and dwelt there and farmed the surrounding areas. Joshua 24:29-30, Judges 2:1-10. The "committee" that supported Joshua in the division of the land is mentioned again, and with this allocation of land to Joshua the job is done.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Every tribe has a place, and the previous prophetic words of Jacob and Moses are not specifically referred to in the division, but Joshua and Eleazar pray each case through and trust the Lord regarding the casting of the lots. We do not have to consciously try to fulfil prophetic words, for the Lord will do this in His way in His time. There are some baffling things in the allocation in relation to the prophetic words regarding each tribe, but we may leave them with the Lord, for all will be seen as fulfilled before the end of time. We must not rush to quick celebration of a fulfilment of a biblical prophecy, nor be quick to say, it was not fulfilled, but wait and see the fullness of history. Each tribe has a part in the plan of God and each tribe had a number of twists and turns to make on their path through history as a part of that plan. Just so it is with us. Let us pray our way through each day and seek the Lord's guidance in these things. The journey isn't over until we see the Lord face to face.

2. We all have a place to walk through this life, and it is different from every other believer. Our path is unique, and chosen by the Lord for us from eternity past. Let us not moan about the hardness of our path, nor complain about the silence of the Lord at times on the way. Let us fix our eyes upon Jesus and advance in obedience forward to the place the Lord has for us trusting in His provision to bring all things to pass for our health and welfare.

NOTES

CHAPTER 20

INTRODUCTION

The cities of refuge were an important part of the legal system within Israel. Numbers 35. Refer back to this chapter in the Commentary and study this chapter again before moving on here. These were six places set aside amongst the Levitical cities of the land, to which a manslayer could flee and await a fair trial. These were not places where they could escape justice, but where they could wait for a trial and be assured of safety and security from the vengeance of the family of the slain man until their case was heard.

Like all the Semitic peoples the Israelites had a strong tradition of “blood feud” and the relatives of any slain man would hunt out the killer of their relative and kill him. This would occur whether the death was accidental, or justified on the grounds of self defence, or protecting oneself against criminal actions. The relatives of the slain man didn’t care whether their dead relative had been killed by accident, or justifiably during the attempted committing of a crime; all they cared about was avenging his blood for family honour’s sake. This foolish tradition was to be ended amongst the Israelites, and is to be at an end for all people who value God’s Word.

The absolute destructiveness of the “blood feud” has been a bane amongst other peoples for all their history. Israel was to have a system whereby the avenger of blood was to be stopped from spilling any blood until the case was heard, and only if the death was murder, was the killer to be executed. The relatives of the dead person were to be the first to cast the stones to kill the guilty one, but the whole local population was to join them also. The judgment of the evil man was to become over time a judicial function of the state, not the function of the family of the victim. It would take several hundred years for the old habits to die away, but they would. The cities of refuge were the first step in the abolition of the concept of blood feud amongst the Israelites. God moved slowly but systematically with his people – He still does....

JOSHUA 20:1-9

20:1 The LORD also spake unto Joshua, saying, **2** Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Appoint out for you cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Moses: **3** That the slayer that killeth any person unawares and unwittingly may flee thither: and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood. **4** And when he that doth flee unto one of those cities shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city, and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them. **5** And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hand; because he smote his neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not beforetime. **6** And he shall dwell in that city, until he stand before the congregation for judgment, and until the death of the high priest that shall be in those days: then shall the slayer return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled. **7** And they appointed Kedesh in Galilee in mount Naphtali, and Shechem in mount Ephraim, and Kirjatharba, which is Hebron, in the mountain of Judah. **8** And on the other side Jordan by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh. **9** These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, that whosoever killeth any person at unawares might flee thither, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, until he stood before the congregation.

REFLECTIONS

The city of refuge was for the slayer of a person who had killed the other without any intention of murder in their hearts. The two words used above, “unawares”, and “unwittingly” are important. The two words indicate that the action was without any intention on the part of the person responsible. Their action was without full awareness of the consequences of the action at the time, or without the intention to kill or maim the other person. They acted without any malice aforethought, but without conscious thought being behind their actions. In these concepts is the modern distinction between murder and manslaughter (or justifiable homicide in the USA). This was far sighted jurisprudence, and is another piece of evidence that the Mosaic Law was indeed from the very hands of God Himself.

Notice the location of these six cities which will be described from north to south on the west bank of the Jordan and then south to north on the eastern side of the river Jordan. The first, most northerly one is Kedesh in the Galilee territory of Naphtali. Then the next is Shechem in Ephraim. The third is Hebron in Judah, the town of Caleb, which he will open up to the Levites to dwell within. On the other side of the Jordan they assigned Bezer in the southern territory of Reuben. Ramoth-Gilead was assigned in Gad, and Golan in the northerly territory of Manasseh, possibly located in what is now called the Golan Heights.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. God is the God of justice and truth. The Lord’s purpose for His people is to live righteously and justly upon the earth under the rule of godly laws. As believers we are to stand for these things and speak up for natural (godly) justice, and oppose those who speak only of “legal rights”, for these are normally associated only with the rights of criminals to exploit loop holes in man’s inadequate laws.

REFLECTION UPON THE HOLY AND DEPENDABLE CHARACTER OF GOD

1. Whilst God is three persons all three persons have exactly the same essence or character:

a) SOVEREIGNTY

The Father (Ephesians 1:11 , cf Isaiah 40:8, Matthew 6:10, Hebrews 10:7, 9)

The Son (John 5:21, Revelation 19:16)

The Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:11 , cf Hebrews 2:4)

b) RIGHTEOUSNESS

The Father (John 17:25)

The Son (Luke 1:35, Hebrews 7:26, 2 Corinthians 5:21)

The Spirit The Holy Spirit

c) JUSTICE

The Father (Job 37:23, cf 8:3)

The Son (Acts 3:14, John 5:22, Revelation 19:11)

The Spirit (Nehemiah 9:20)

d) LOVE

The Father (John 3:16)

The Son (Ephesians 5:25, 1 John 3:16)

The Spirit (John 16:7-11, 1 Corinthians 2:10)

e) ETERNAL LIFE

The Father (John 5:26)

The Son (Micah 5:2, cf John 1:1-2, 1 John 5:11)

The Spirit (Isaiah 48:16)

f) ALL-KNOWING/OMNISCIENT

The Father (Hebrews 4:13, cf Matthew 11:27, 1 Peter 1:2)

The Son (John 18:4, cf Matthew 9:4, John 2:25, 1 Corinthians 4:5)

The Spirit (Isaiah 11:2, cf 1 Corinthians 2:11)

g) EVERYWHERE/OMNIPRESENT

The Father (2 Chronicles 2:6)

The Son (Matthew 28:20, cf Ephesians 1:23)

The Spirit (Psalm 139:7)

h) ALL-POWERFUL/OMNIPOTENT

The Father (Mark 14:36, cf 1 Peter 1:5)

The Son (Hebrews 1:3, cf Matthew 24:30, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Philippians 3:21)

The Spirit (Romans 15:19)

i) UNCHANGEABLE/IMMUTABLE

The Father (Hebrews 6:17, Psalm 33:11)

The Son (Hebrews 13:8)

The Spirit (John 14:16)

j) TRUTH/VERACITY

The Father (John 7:28, John 17:3)

The Son (1 John 5:20, cf John 1:14, 14:6, Revelation 19:11)

The Spirit (1 John 5:6, cf John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13)

REFLECTION UPON THE “DIVINE DECREES”

1. This is the term in theology that refers to the plan of God coming to us from eternity past. It means that the Lord God, our heavenly Father, has had a plan from eternity past (before time and space were made) and that plan has been “decreed” to be the plan for this universe, and that this plan is as certain as there was a beginning to this universe, and that there will be an end. Though the universe will end, the plan of God, as it came from before the universe, continues on in its effect after this universe is ended and has been replaced by the new one. 2 Peter 3:10-13, Revelation 21:18.

2. The plan centres on the person and work of the second person of the Trinity; it centres round the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 1:4-6, 1 John 3:23.

3. Entrance into the Eternal Plan of God is dependent upon grace. The sovereignty of God expressed in the divine decrees he has made about the plan, meet man’s free will at the Cross. Grace + faith = salvation. By saving people by

grace, God's perfect holy character is not compromised by the transaction. No-one is saved by works, for there is nothing that a creature of space and time can do to impress the creator of space and time, nor is there anything that sin can do to impress or pressure holiness. John 3:16-36, Ephesians 2:8-9.

4. God's plan for this universe is designed in such a way that every event is "decreed"; his plan includes all causes, conditions, and outcomes, there is no real contingency that has not been foreseen and planned for from before space and time were made. All this has been achieved in accordance with the holy purposes of God, yet without violating human volition, man's free will. The universe is one of both freewill and determinism. Such a contradiction exists only in our minds, limited as they are by space and time. This plan is far greater than our minds can comprehend, for it was made by the creator of space and time, who lives and moves and has his being beyond such limitations of thoughts and realities. When we consider this doctrine of decrees, we enter a realm beyond our dimension, and far above and beyond any space travel fantasies of man. Acts 2:23, Romans 8:29, 1 Peter 1:2.

5. God's plan comes from his entire character, not just foreknowledge. It has been drawn up with no violation of man's free will choices, for which each is held responsible. The outcomes are certain because of the divine decrees that make them so, yet the people within the plan have the freedom to choose and no-one before the throne of the creator will be able to say, "I had to fall; you predestined me to!" Each will be judged by their works, freely chosen, and by their rejection of the Lord, freely done. Revelation 20:11 – 21:1.

6. Neither Calvinism nor Arminianism in their theologies capture the full magnitude of the divine decrees, for both try to explain in the human terms of, sovereignty, foreknowledge and free will, yet the reality of the Plan of God comes from beyond all such time and space limited concepts. This doctrine is bigger than our limited minds and languages, and it behoves all who discuss this to recognize their limits as they speak of such things as this. How can a thing be certain and yet also freely done? A moment's reflection gives us the answer once we think about different perspectives on an event; from time and non-time. The only reason people have difficulty with such things is because most have not been trained in philosophy of science or physics.

7. Whenever Paul discussed these things he sang of them; if we understand the truth about the greatness of the character and plan of God we will still be baffled over this, while we live in time, but we will go on our way rejoicing. Acts 8:39, Galatians 6:4, Hebrews 3:6.

NOTES

CHAPTER 21**INTRODUCTION**

The Levites were to wait until all the families of all the people had been settled in the land before they requested their cities within the tribes to live amongst and serve the people. This is a beautiful spiritual picture of the reality of servant leadership in the Lord's service. **Matthew 16:24-26, 20:25-28, John 13:1-17.**

The servant-leader of the Lord does not greedily meet their own needs, they consider others first. The Lord's leaders wait to have their needs met, and they are ready to wait until all the Lord's people are settled and stabilized before they seek their own needs. "First into action, last to eat" – motto of an 82nd US Airborne General.

This is a principal understood in some leadership training areas. In the New Zealand Armed Forces all Officers were taught to feed their troops first, and then eat themselves. This is basic officer training routine, and unless it is learned well the officer will not be a great leader, no matter how much theory they know. The Levites are there to serve the people, and they will earn their own food at all times until actually serving in the tabernacle. They will work their fields until the time they are actually serving in the tabernacle, and only then will they eat from the offerings.

All Levites, and later all Rabbis, had to have a trade, so that they didn't need to ask for any money from the poor who they may be called to serve. This is the principle of servant leadership; also of the tent-making ministry of St Paul. Beware of the men who seek to hold only positions in the church that pay good money, for they are not shepherds but shearers! It is not that paying the worthy Bible teaching pastor is wrong (it is right, and to pay him well is a blessing to a church), but the labourer must be worthy of his hire! Paul did not take wages from the church until he was in jail and in his sixties! **Luke 10:3-7, 2 Corinthians 11:7ff, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, 1 Timothy 5:17-18.**

JOSHUA 21:1-45

21:1 Then came near the heads of the fathers of the Levites unto Eleazar the priest, and unto Joshua the son of Nun, and unto the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel; **2** And they spake unto them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying, The LORD commanded by the hand of Moses to give us cities to dwell in, with the suburbs thereof for our cattle. **3** And the children of Israel gave unto the Levites out of their inheritance, at the commandment of the LORD, these cities and their suburbs. **4** And the lot came out for the families of the Kohathites: and the children of Aaron the priest, which were of the Levites, had by lot out of the tribe of Judah, and out of the tribe of Simeon, and out of the tribe of Benjamin, thirteen cities. **5** And the rest of the children of Kohath had by lot out of the families of the tribe of Ephraim, and out of the tribe of Dan, and out of the half tribe of Manasseh, ten cities. **6** And the children of Gershon had by lot out of the families of the tribe of Issachar, and out of the tribe of Asher, and out of the tribe of Naphtali, and out of the half tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, thirteen cities. **7** The children of Merari by their families had out of the tribe of Reuben, and out of the tribe of Gad, and out of the tribe of Zebulun, twelve cities. **8** And the children of Israel gave by lot unto the Levites these cities with their suburbs, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses. **9** And they gave out of the tribe of the children of Judah, and out of the tribe of the children of Simeon, these cities which are here mentioned by name. **10** Which the children of Aaron, being of the families of the Kohathites, who were of the children of Levi, had: for theirs was the first lot. **11** And they gave them the city of Arba the father of Anak, which city is Hebron, in the hill country of Judah, with the suburbs thereof round about it. **12** But the fields of the city, and the villages thereof, gave they to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for his possession. **13** Thus they gave to the children of Aaron the priest Hebron with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and Libnah with her suburbs, **14** And Jattir with her suburbs, and Eshtemoa with her suburbs, **15** And Holon with her suburbs, and Debir with her suburbs, **16** And Ain with her suburbs, and Juttah with her suburbs, and Bethshemesh with her suburbs; nine cities out of those two tribes. **17** And out of the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon with her suburbs, Geba with her suburbs, **18** Anathoth with her suburbs, and Almon with her suburbs; four cities. **19** All the cities of the children of Aaron, the priests, were thirteen cities with their suburbs. **20** And the families of the children of Kohath, the Levites which remained of the children of Kohath, even they had the cities of their lot out of the tribe of Ephraim. **21** For they gave them Shechem with her suburbs in mount Ephraim, to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and Gezer with her suburbs, **22** And Kibzaim with her suburbs, and Bethhoron with her suburbs; four cities. **23** And out of the tribe of Dan, Eltekeh with her suburbs, Gibbethon with her suburbs, **24** Aijalon with her suburbs, Gathrimmon with her suburbs; four cities. **25** And out of the half tribe of Manasseh, Tanach with her suburbs, and Gathrimmon with her suburbs; two cities. **26** All the cities were ten with their suburbs for the families of the children of Kohath that remained. **27** And unto the children of Gershon, of the families of the Levites, out of the other half tribe of Manasseh they gave Golan in Bashan with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and Beeshterah with her suburbs; two cities. **28** And out of the tribe of Issachar, Kishon with her suburbs, Dabareh with her suburbs, **29** Jarmuth with her suburbs, Engannim with her suburbs; four cities. **30** And out of the tribe of Asher, Mishal with her suburbs, Abdon with her suburbs, **31** Helkath with her suburbs, and Rehob with her suburbs; four cities. **32** And out of the tribe of Naphtali, Kedesh in Galilee with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and Hammothdor with her suburbs, and Kartan with her suburbs; three cities. **33** All the cities of the Gershonites according to their families were thirteen cities with their suburbs. **34** And unto the families of the children of Merari, the rest of the Levites, out of the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam with her suburbs, and Kartah with her suburbs, **35** Dimnah with her suburbs, Nahalal with her suburbs; four cities. **36** And out of the tribe of Reuben, Bezer with her suburbs, and

Jahazah with her suburbs, 37 Kedemoth with her suburbs, and Mephaath with her suburbs; four cities. 38 And out of the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in Gilead with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and Mahanaim with her suburbs, 39 Heshbon with her suburbs, Jazer with her suburbs; four cities in all. 40 So all the cities for the children of Merari by their families, which were remaining of the families of the Levites, were by their lot twelve cities. 41 All the cities of the Levites within the possession of the children of Israel were forty and eight cities with their suburbs. 42 These cities were every one with their suburbs round about them: thus were all these cities. 43 And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. 44 And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. 45 There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 3. The priestly and Levitical families were to be kept together in their extended family groups and were assigned cities within tribes by their family groups. We learn a little more of the casting of lots here also. Lots were cast as to which Levitical family would receive its allocation first and the family/descendants of Kohath were first. Lots were then cast for the tribal area that this specific family should receive its allocation amongst. Then it is possible that lots were cast for each city in the allocation to see which ones came up as “yes” for Levi to settle there.

The Levites would live amongst, and alongside the people of the land, being assigned fields and houses within the cities according to their numbers. Caleb’s city of Hebron will be one of the cities that the Levites are given tenure within. Such a process could make a tribe or family feel resentful of the Levites who took their property and lived amongst them, but the process of lot casting was seen by all to be fair and impartial and the results were accepted as “God’s will”.

Verses 4 – 8. The family of Kohath and Aaron (as he was of this sub-group of Levi) had a lot cast for the tribes of Judah, Simeon and Benjamin, and were allocated 13 cities from amongst these three tribes. Aaron’s family will have priority in the choice of towns as they fulfil the priestly function. There were by a later time at least twenty four (24) descendent families of Aaron, each of which formed a “course” or shift of priests for the temple of Solomon. 1 Chronicles 24. Out of Ephraim, Manasseh and Dan the extended family of Kohath had 10 cities, for a total of 23 cities within which they were settled.

From Numbers 26:62 we read that the numbers of the whole tribe of Levi were 23 “thousands” (eleph= extended groups) at this time. Remember, we have no firm idea of what the term “eleph” meant at this time, other than a basic group. At least one family of Levites is seeded into each allocated town. The family of Kohath receive 23 cities, and yet their family numbers can only be a fraction of the 23 total groups of Levi. It is the indication that the families of Levi were to be spread around the tribes as the spiritual guides of the nation. They were to have a preservative/salt like role in the nation, but as we will see in Judges, sadly they were all too often like agents of decay/leaven.

The children of Gershon received as their tribal allocation cities from the tribes of Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Manasseh. They receive 13 cities from amongst these tribes. The descendants of Merari receive their allocation from the remaining tribes; Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun. They receive 12 cities from these tribal areas. The total Levitical cities (cities where Levites were seeded in amongst the other tribe was forty eight (48), for a total of 23 extended family groups of various sizes. Numbers 26:52-65.

Verses 9 – 26. The names of the Levitical towns are now given in the text. The cities of Aaron’s descendants were firstly Hebron, which they shared with Caleb’s descendants. Eleazar is High priest and these two great men would have had great fellowship in the next years as they brought that town back to life for God. They were also the guardians of the tombs of the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They made Hebron also a city of refuge for the southern region, as the priests within it were tasked with the judgments function for all manslaughter cases.

Libnah, another great Canaanite fortress, and later Jewish stronghold, was the next city given to Aaron’s grandchildren. The other towns are less well known; Jattir, Eshtemoa, Holon, Debir, Ain(or Ashan), Juttah, Beth-shemesh, Gibeon (home of the Gibeonites), Geba, Anathoth (future home of the prophet Jeremiah), and Almon. The presence of the priests amongst the Gibeonites will have been a great benefit to them, as they will be able to be taught the Law by them, and the priests will be there on the spot to deal with any disputes about their role or their land.

The others of the family of Kohath received towns from the lands of three of the tribes. Firstly from Ephraim, they received the towns of Shechem, Gezer, Kibzaim, and Beth-horon. Also they received towns from the lands given to Dan, including Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Aijalon, and Gathrimmon. They also received towns from the lands of Manasseh, including, Tanach (Aner), and the second Gath-rimmon (Really Bileam) 1 Chronicles 6:66-71. The variations between the lists here and the later writer’s work in 1 Chronicles may be related to three possible causes; firstly copyist error, or secondly, it may be that the cities changed names over the several hundred years between the writings, or thirdly that the cities had several names (Canaanite and Hebrew). It is most likely multiple names that shifted through the centuries from the early Canaanite to the later Hebrew version, as today many have shifted to their Arabic version.

Verses 27 – 33. The family of Gershon received land on the eastern and western sides of the Jordan River. They received from the half tribe of Manasseh on the east bank the northern town of refuge Golan, and Beesh-terah. From the tribe of Issachar they received Kishon, Dabareh, Jarmuth, and Engannin. From Asher they receive the towns of

Mishal, Abdon, Helkath, and Rehob. Out of the tribe of Naphtali they received the towns of Kedesh-Galilee, Hammothdor, and Kartan. Remember the word for “suburbs” refers to the walled off fields around the walled town, beyond which were the pastoral lands where animals were grazed without fences.

Verses 34 – 40. The family of Merari received lands from amongst the tribes of Zebulun, Reuben, and Gad. They too had cities to dwell in on both sides of the Jordan River. Kohath alone was a solely West Bank branch of Levi. Out of Zebulun they received the cities of Jokneam, Kartah, Dimnah, and Nahalal. From the tribe of Reuben they received the cities of Bezer, Jahazah, Kedemoth and Mephaath.

From the tribe of Gad they received Ramoth-Gilead, Mahanaim, Heshbon, and Jazer. Most of these towns are minor ones in pastoral lands, but they all had this Levitical presence as their spiritual salt. All the land was thus covered with Levites sprinkled amongst them as their spiritual guides, judges, and directors.

Verses 41 – 45. There were forty eight Levitical cities scattered through the land. This meant that no Israelite had a journey of greater than twenty kilometres to find a Levite to ask for assistance in any matter, and most had a Levite within ten kilometres of them. All the cities had fields assigned to the Levites also, so that each family could feed themselves by their own labour when they were not serving in the tabernacle. The Lord gave them the land and they dwelt in it. Verse 43 is a sweeping statement, which has been modified by the words of the writer in Judges 1:16-36.

They dwelt in the entire land, but they failed to fully follow through on their victories and drive the last remnant of evil from amongst them. They settled down in peace with the remnant of the Canaanites amongst them. Their enemies could not stand and fight against them, but all fled before them and hid in their great walled cities.

There was rest from war, but it was a false peace for Israel, for their window of opportunity to seize and hold all the land lasted only from 1400 – 1350 BC, for after this time the Egyptians swept back into Canaan and re-asserted their sovereignty, and the Egyptian allied Canaanite nations resurged in numbers and arms and fought the Israelites back into the hill country only. Some of the towns named above were abandoned by Israel in the years 1350 – 1050 BC due to the resurgence of pagan power. The message is clear here; God gave them the victories, but they rested on these victories and didn't follow through until the last remnant of their enemies were destroyed, and so the evil came back in force for a later generation.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. God's purpose is that we might be the salt of our nation. As the Levites were living amongst the tribes to act as the spiritual salt of the people, so we are to serve this purpose in our own nations. Let us ensure we are acting and living like the salt of the Lord.
2. There is no permanent peace in this world, for evil persists, and will do so until the end. Having noted that general principle however, a nation and a people can have great periods of peace if they thoroughly declare total war on the evil in their midst. Israel could have had a golden age a lot earlier than the days of David and Solomon had they thoroughly driven out their enemies. They allowed evil to settle in amongst them and so their children were led astray by them. Let us hate evil and all its fruits, and so be preserved from corruption ourselves, and protect our children from its influence also.

REFLECTION UPON THE CONCEPT OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE

1. Our duty is to surrender our entire lives to God. (Romans 12:1)
2. Willingness is essential. (Judges 5:2, 8:25, Isaiah 1:19, 2 Corinthians 8:3)
3. Service in the big things requires by faithfulness in the small things.
4. Monotony and difficulties are transformed into the opportunities with the correct attitude (Matthew 6:33)
5. Everything we do should be "as unto the Lord" (Colossians 3:17)
6. Service to Christ is acceptable to God and approved of men (Romans 14:18)
7. Our work should be completed. (John 4:34, 17:4, Acts 20:24, 2 Timothy 4:7)
8. The example of Christ. (Matthew 20:28, Luke 22:27, Philippians 2:7)
9. Qualities of our service:-
 - a) It is demanded. (Hebrews 12:28)
 - b) It should be immediate. (Matthew 21:28)
 - c) It is abundant. (1 Corinthians 15:58)
 - d) It is according to ability. (Matthew 25:22, Luke 12:48)

- e) It is in co-operation with God. (2 Corinthians 6:1)
- f) Must be exclusive (Luke 16:13)
- g) In the power of the spirit (Romans 1:9)
- h) Undertaken in Godly fear (Hebrews 12:28)
- i) Motivated by love (Galatians 5:13)

10. It is :-

- a) Following Christ (John 12:26)
- b) For him whom all Christians serve (Colossians 3:24)
- c) Service to God (Acts 27:23).

11. It requires:-

- a) Turning from idols (1 Thessalonians 1:9)
- b) Fasting and prayer (Luke 2:37)
- c) Ministry of the Word (Acts 6:1-4).

12. Benefits of Service:-

- a) It glorifies God. (Matthew 5:16, John 15:8)
- b) It enriches life. (1 Timothy 6:18-19)
- c) It gives a pattern for imitation. (Titus 2:7)
- d) It encourages others in their tasks. (Hebrews 10:24)
- e) It shows neighbourliness. (Luke 10:36-37)
- f) It lightens life's burdens. (Galatians 6:2,16)
- g) It demonstrates love. (John 21:15-17)
- h) It demonstrates faith. (James 2:17-18, 1 Peter 2:12)
- i) It is Christ like. (John 13:12-15)

NOTES

CHAPTER 22**INTRODUCTION**

There is some dispute amongst commentators as to when the events of this chapter occur. The two events described here may be several months or even years apart, and the writer does not assist us in working this out. The two and a half tribes that had been granted land on the East bank of the Jordan had advanced with the army of Israel and fought in all the wars they fought in both the southern and northern campaigns. Numbers 32, Joshua 4:12-13, 11:18ff, 18:1ff.

When the entire people arrived at Shiloh they are still with the army. It would appear from the earlier passages that they left their families behind on the east bank with minimal protection, for their entire "active service" army had to accompany their brethren to fight the other Canaanites, as they had promised. Numbers 32:16-19. They have been fighting with their brethren for over three years now, and they have fulfilled their oath made to Moses.

They have stayed on the western side of the Jordan until all the tribes have received their own allocations of land and now it is time to permanently return home. It was common in the ancient world for armies to stop fighting at times of sowing and harvest, and it may be that the armies of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh had sent enough men home each year to ensure their crops were in and their families fed, and any enemies who had emerged were dispatched.

I suggest they probably rotated their forces through these years so that the older troops were sent home and replaced by new and young troops from home. This would also mean that the home base had some protection in addition to the older men who were too old to actively campaign in the field for the length of time required on the other side of Jordan. The children and the elderly would have cared for the flocks and herds also, as they do still in places in Africa and the Middle East today. It is not uncommon to see children as young as seven in the fields with their goats and sheep.

The armies of the two and half tribes have served well and they all return home, probably with the families of the Levites assigned to their areas, but on their return they build an altar on the Canaan side of Jordan, and this creates a great stir amongst the others. The misunderstanding is solved in this case, but only after unpleasant confrontations, and it is a foretaste of the divisions between the tribes that will open up in later centuries.

JOSHUA 22:1-34

22:1 Then Joshua called the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, **2** And said unto them, Ye have kept all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you. **3** Ye have not left your brethren these many days unto this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the LORD your God.**4** And now the LORD your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he promised them: therefore now return ye, and get you unto your tents, and unto the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side Jordan. **5** But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the LORD charged you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul. **6** So Joshua blessed them, and sent them away: and they went unto their tents. **7** Now to the one half of the tribe of Manasseh Moses had given possession in Bashan: but unto the other half thereof gave Joshua among their brethren on this side Jordan westward. And when Joshua sent them away also unto their tents, then he blessed them, **8** And he spake unto them, saying, Return with much riches unto your tents, and with very much cattle, with silver, and with gold, and with brass, and with iron, and with very much raiment: divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren. **9** And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh returned, and departed from the children of Israel out of Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan, to go unto the country of Gilead, to the land of their possession, whereof they were possessed, according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses. **10** And when they came unto the borders of Jordan, that are in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh built there an altar by Jordan, a great altar to see to. **11** And the children of Israel heard say, Behold, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh have built an altar over against the land of Canaan, in the borders of Jordan, at the passage of the children of Israel. **12** And when the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered themselves together at Shiloh, to go up to war against them. **13** And the children of Israel sent unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, **14** And with him ten princes, of each chief house a prince throughout all the tribes of Israel; and each one was an head of the house of their fathers among the thousands of Israel. **15** And they came unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, unto the land of Gilead, and they spake with them, saying, **16** Thus saith the whole congregation of the LORD, What trespass is this that ye have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the LORD, in that ye have builded you an altar, that ye might rebel this day against the LORD? **17** Is the iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleansed until this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the LORD, **18** But that ye must turn away this day from following the LORD? and it will be, seeing ye rebel to day against the LORD, that to morrow he will be wroth with the whole congregation of Israel. **19** Notwithstanding, if the land of your possession be unclean, then pass ye over unto the land of the possession of the LORD, wherein the LORD's tabernacle dwelleth, and take possession among us: but rebel not against the LORD, nor rebel against us, in building you an altar beside the altar of the LORD our God. **20** Did not Achan the son of Zerach commit a

trespass in the accursed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? and that man perished not alone in his iniquity. 21 Then the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh answered, and said unto the heads of the thousands of Israel, 22 The LORD God of gods, the LORD God of gods, he knoweth, and Israel he shall know; if it be in rebellion, or if in transgression against the LORD, (save us not this day,) 23 That we have built us an altar to turn from following the LORD, or if to offer thereon burnt offering or meat offering, or if to offer peace offerings thereon, let the LORD himself require it; 24 And if we have not rather done it for fear of this thing, saying, In time to come your children might speak unto our children, saying, What have ye to do with the LORD God of Israel? 25 For the LORD hath made Jordan a border between us and you, ye children of Reuben and children of Gad; ye have no part in the LORD: so shall your children make our children cease from fearing the LORD. 26 Therefore we said, Let us now prepare to build us an altar, not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice: 27 But that it may be a witness between us, and you, and our generations after us, that we might do the service of the LORD before him with our burnt offerings, and with our sacrifices, and with our peace offerings; that your children may not say to our children in time to come, Ye have no part in the LORD. 28 Therefore said we, that it shall be, when they should so say to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may say again, Behold the pattern of the altar of the LORD, which our fathers made, not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifices; but it is a witness between us and you. 29 God forbid that we should rebel against the LORD, and turn this day from following the LORD, to build an altar for burnt offerings, for meat offerings, or for sacrifices, beside the altar of the LORD our God that is before his tabernacle. 30 And when Phinehas the priest, and the princes of the congregation and heads of the thousands of Israel which were with him, heard the words that the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the children of Manasseh spake, it pleased them. 31 And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the children of Manasseh, This day we perceive that the LORD is among us, because ye have not committed this trespass against the LORD: now ye have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the LORD. 32 And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and the princes, returned from the children of Reuben, and from the children of Gad, out of the land of Gilead, unto the land of Canaan, to the children of Israel, and brought them word again. 33 And the thing pleased the children of Israel; and the children of Israel blessed God, and did not intend to go up against them in battle, to destroy the land wherein the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt. 34 And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar Ed: for it shall be a witness between us that the LORD is God.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 3. Moses had tasked the two and a half tribes with a solemn obligation to fulfil their oath to the other tribes to fight alongside them until they also received their land. They have fulfilled their oath and the land has been divided now. They have been with the armies of Israel until this time and away from their families through this period. Joshua's comments here indicate that for the bulk of the campaign they have not seen their new homes or their families. While troop rotations and occasional visits may have occurred between battles, these men have been in camp with the others throughout the conquest time. Numbers 32:20ff, Deuteronomy 3:12ff.

Verses 4 – 8. The "rest" from war that the other tribes had before heading out to seize their portions of the land has provided the termination of their contract to keep their armies with the others. The instruction is to "get to your tents", which was the traditional order to return to their families and their possession. The recognition is that this land was given them by Moses and is recognized as their legitimate possession. The selection of Levitical cities within their land is further acceptance by the nine and half tribes that they recognize their rights to the east of Jordan.

The main concern Joshua has, is that as they leave the camp of their brethren that they will leave off the commands of the Lord this side of Jordan. Joshua's words in verse five are strong. They are urged to hold the faith of their fathers and this means to:

1. Love the Lord with all their hearts.
2. Give diligent attention to the Law of the Lord.
3. To walk in the Law of God in all the details of their daily lives.
4. Keep the commandments of God.
5. Cleave to the Lord as to their life.
6. Serve the Lord with all their heart and soul.

Having briefed them in this manner, Joshua dismisses them to return across the river to rejoin their families and bring in their crops. They are all sent away to their various areas. The fords of Jordan would have been able to be crossed quickly after they left Shiloh, and within two days they will be on the eastern bank of Jordan and heading into their various areas. They are to take as much booty from the captured cities as they have secured, and the indication is they are to take from the common stockpile of loot if they feel they need extras.

Verses 9 – 12. As they came to the Jordan River they built an enormous altar, or pillar, on the west bank, an altar that would be visible for miles. This was not an altar upon which to offer sacrifice, but a beacon to look back to at the place of their ford across the river. This was opposite to the land of Gilead, so the ford by which this altar was erected was probably between Zaphon and Adam, before the Jabbok River joins the Jordan. The reaction of the other tribes when they hear of this is evidence of the deep divisions and distrust that existed between the otherwise apparently unified tribes. There is not unity without a man like Joshua, and even in this situation he does not act with calmness, but with emotion and immediate doubt about the motives of his brethren.

It is a massive overreaction to threaten war in a situation where you have not ascertained the significance of an action. Joshua falls into the error of many pastors before a church meeting; of jumping to a conclusion before all the facts are on the table. Now it was an “altar” (rather beacon) on the Western bank of Jordan, so it was hardly likely to be an altar of sacrifice for them, for such an altar would have been on the east bank where they lived.

The initial report of the building of this monument was clearly an emotional one rather than a descriptive one, and the result will be to build distrust and resentment. What the two and a half tribes did as a token of their commitment to their brethren on the West bank will become a reminder that their brethren are hypercritical of them and this incident will cause ill feeling that will last generations. All too often believers “jump to conclusions” and create mischief.

The separation between the tribes on the two sides of Jordan had already produced a “them and us” mentality and suspicion was present as to the motives and belief system of the two and half tribes that stayed on the east bank. Joshua’s leadership ability lets him down here. Joshua reacts without getting a full description of the altar to see whether it could be an altar for sacrifice, or had another purpose, and he does not try to stop the paranoia of the rest and stop the call to war. There is a willingness to believe the worst here which does not bode well for future trust between the tribes.

The Mosaic Law was clear; the only altar was to be at the tabernacle and every other altar was to be torn down. Certainly, no alternative altars were to be built. **Leviticus 17:8-9, Deuteronomy 12:1-7.** It was also crystal clear what was to happen if any member or group of any tribe went away from the worship of the Lord and followed after the gods of the pagans. They were to die! **Deuteronomy 13:12-18.** All this was true, but the facts were not on the table when the call to war went out. Tribes that were reluctant to fight the Canaanites are suddenly keen to fight their brethren! Joshua 18:1-6. Something is radically wrong here! Jesus words, “By their fruits you will know them”, come back to my mind. Matthew 7:13-23. This is the fruit of satanic influence, as egoism and self centred logic is always satanic in origin.

Verses 13 – 15. From the words in verse thirteen it may be that Joshua was side lined in the process that unfolds, for he is not mentioned as driving this, but the elders take the initiative, and Joshua fails to stop the action and seek a reasonable outcome. At least they do the right thing in sending Phinehas the son of Eleazar the High Priest to really ascertain what was the intention of the action of the two and half tribes, yet even he will go with a negative spirit towards his brethren. Phinehas has been a man of action and his devotion to the Lord is beyond question, so he is the right choice, especially as he will be the next high priest; the guardian of the Law. Numbers 25:6-9, 11-13. Phinehas will later lead the Israelites into action against the sons of Benjamin when they transgress in evil, so he is not a man who would pull back from confronting and eliminating evil. Judges 20:1-28.

The tribes all send a prince from amongst them also with Phinehas, and they find the two and a half tribes, or their leaders at least, still in the land of Gilead, before their final moving out to fully seize and settle their land. This is a piece of evidence which may indicate the entire population of these three tribes may have been with the others at Shiloh, and that the wives and children were not left behind on the east bank through this last three years. The writer is unclear as to this, and it may simply be that the leaders of the two and a half tribes were meeting together after their armies had departed for their towns. Whatever the reasons, the leaders of the two and a half tribes are still together in the Gilead region when the delegation arrives to meet with them.

Verses 16 – 20. Phinehas does not mix his words, and it is clear from them that he believes a trespass has occurred. He is strongly accusatory in his words and I cannot help but wonder that the leaders of the eastern tribes would have been baffled and offended at his inflammatory words. He is wrong in this case, and possibly a “hothead”, but his passion is for the Lord’s Holiness. He is accusing them of treason and rebellion against God and he has little evidence of any malice on their part at all to go on. It is always easy to jump to conclusions and think malice of others without due process to ascertain facts first. It is a warning that all of us need to heed; that facts are to guide us alone, and nothing else is to be the basis upon which the Holy Spirit guides our decisions. If we lack facts we are to do all we can to obtain them before we lay them before the Lord and pray over them, seeking a godly path to our final decision.

Phinehas is a good man, but he is disgraceful here, and many self righteous ministers have followed him in condemning the innocent before the facts are on the table. Many have been driven from the Lord by such actions, and it may be that Phinehas’ actions here contribute to the eventual rejection of the tabernacle and its worship by the tribes on the East Bank. Once things like this are said they are hard to come back from, and resentment will slowly simmer away beneath the surface and eventually break out in rebellion.

Now Phinehas’ concern is a real spiritual concern that the people do not return to the evils of Baal Peor and so bring the judgment of the Lord upon themselves again. This is the time he used the javelin, and it was used on a member of the tribe of Simeon, not of Reuben, Gad or Manasseh. Numbers 25:11-15. He is obsessed by the judgment the Lord brought upon the people due to their compromise with the evil of the Canaanites, and this concern for holiness is right, but his anger here is unwarranted and unfair. We all have weaknesses in our OSN, and his is too soon to anger.

He had personally led the punitive expedition against the Midianites so he cannot be accused of being an interfering priest, for he has served also as a general. Numbers 31:1ff. His actions though motivated by holy concerns are here however neither holy nor righteous. He has godly motives but in OSN power has accused these men of an evil that was not in their hearts. These people have not done wrong, as they will argue. We must learn from this great but flawed man, and always hear the truth before we react to whatever misconceptions we have before us.

Verses nineteen and twenty may give away Phinehas' two main concerns. Firstly he challenges the two and half tribes of the East that if they feel they need an altar to purify their land, and they feel it is still unclean, then let them join their brethren on the West Bank. He is apparently concerned that the Israelites are spread too thinly in both east and west, and that if these tribes return over the Jordan and settle the west with the others, then they will all have a better chance of holding the land there. He is right in this, but he is also wrong, for the Lord has approved their settlement there in the east, and in the Millennial Kingdom the Israelites will have both banks, for both were promised to Abraham and to Moses. Numbers 32. Both banks could be held if they had dynamic faith, but it has seeped away, and now they lack power.

His second concern is centred in the results of the sin of Achan, for one man's sin led to disaster for the entire people and the death of many soldiers. If these tribes have sinned in anything, Phinehas believes the Lord may judge them all. The actions of one are not isolated, but inter-related. In this he is correct, but the actions of these people is not sinful, and so his concerns are without foundation.

Verses 21 – 29. The leaders of the two and a half tribes are mortified at the accusations made against them by Phinehas. They call upon the Lord God above all the gods as their witness that they have been without sin in this matter. They solemnly ask the Lord not to bless or hear them if they have done any wrong at all in their actions.

They ask the Lord to judge them if they have offered any sacrifices upon this altar they built. They explain their actions as based upon the river which separates them. They did not want their children to ever leave off following the Lord God of Israel, and they didn't want the physical barrier of the river being a spiritual barrier.

They erected this pillar to remind their people forever that their spiritual heart was to be on the other side of the river at Shiloh and to there they must go every year to worship. It was erected to point the way back to Shiloh, to the place where the sacrifices had to be offered every year for their sin and sanctification. They built this great altar as a visible reminder, able to be seen from their side of the river, that the real one was over Jordan and that it was there that they were to come to worship the Lord their God.

Verses 30 – 34. Phinehas is a man with an open heart to correction at least. He has been set on accusation, but when he hears the earnest words of the people about their love for the Lord he is relieved and moved. He gladly accepts their defence and their affirmation of faith. He sees their affirmation as the deliverance from the judgment that he feared would come upon them. Let us be the same in challenging our own OSN tendencies and being holy.

All the people rejoice at the truth and accept it, but the sadness of the men who were accused of evil will fester away in years to come. The bonds that bound the people together are starting to unravel and the unravelling will gain speed through the next years and unity will be coerced by the army of David and Solomon but will unhang after those days.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. The People of the two and half tribes keep their word through the three years of fighting and stand with their brethren through these hard years. Their own families suffer privation so that the rest might be delivered their lands. When we take an oath to stand with someone we are expected to keep that promise. Let us stand with our brethren in their battles, even if it means years of hard toil. Let us persevere in the battles of the Lord and support our brethren in the Lord.
2. Phinehas jumps to the wrong conclusion with good motivation, but with a bad outcome overall. Even though the people sort this issue out it creates unpleasantness for all. A quiet visit to ascertain facts would have been the best path here. Once people have been accused of evil unjustly the bond of trust is forever broken. Phinehas is a good man but he does a bad thing here, and although it is with good motivation, the nation will slowly unravel as a result.
3. The only bond that keeps us all together "In Christ-Jesus" is the bond of love and respect, and that is not maintained by threat, but by faith, truth, love and commitment. Let us bind together as believers in the fruit of the Holy Spirit, not try to maintain discipline by means of threat or force of any sort. When a church deals with an issue like the Israelites deal with this "problem" they are on the path spiritually downhill.

REFLECTION UPON THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. The filling of the Holy Spirit produces fruit in the life (love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance). (Galatians 5:22-23) Note that "fruit" is singular - all the characters are produced at the same time in the filling of the Holy Spirit.
2. The Fruit of the Spirit is also listed as follows:-
Romans 14:17 - Righteousness, Peace, Joy
Colossians 3:12-15 - Compassion, Kindness, Humility, Gentleness, Patience, Forgiveness, Love, Peace, Thankfulness
1Thessalonians 1:3 - Faith, Love, Endurance, Hope
2. In principle, it is the imitation of God (Ephesians 5:1). The reason we are left on the earth after salvation is to produce fruit. (John 15:16, Philippians 4:17)

3. We produce fruit by hearing the word (Mark 4:20-28) and applying it to our lives. (Hebrews 4:2)
4. Failure to grow and produce fruit means divine discipline even to the point of the believer's early departure from this life. (Luke 13:6-9 John 15:2)
5. Rewards in eternity are distributed on the basis of faithful production. (1 Corinthians 3:10-15, 2 Corinthians 5:10)
6. Fruit is not to be confused with spiritual gifts. These are listed in (Romans 12:6-8; 15:18-19; 1Corinthians 12:8,10; 1Corinthians 12:28-30; Ephesians 4:1) and other places.
7. One can know Christians by their fruit (Matthew 7:16-20; Luke 6:43-45; 1John 3:10 & 11; John 15:8) especially by their love (John 13:35) but not by their gifts, as Satan can imitate them (2Thessalonians 2:9).
8. Three natural fruits represent some of the facets of the fruit of the Spirit: Apples - love, Grapes - Joy, Pomegranates - Peace.
9. In Galatians 5: 22-23 the fruit of the Spirit is divided into three sections
 - [a] Love, Joy and Peace towards God;
 - [b] Patience, Goodness and Kindness towards others;
 - [c] Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-control towards oneself.

NOTES

CHAPTER 23**INTRODUCTION**

It may be that in this chapter we have the reason why Joshua did not act to defuse the situation with the “altar” on the west bank of Jordan, or at least go himself to the tribes on the East Bank to sort it out with diplomacy. Very soon after the division of the land to the ten tribes, he had left Shiloh and settled in his land at Timnath-serah. He certainly set the example of seizing and settling the land, but his leadership function appears to have dropped away in his declining years, and he sought peace, quiet and the prosperity of the farming life for the last years of his life.

He is in his mid-to late eighties at this time and most of us would identify that he just wanted to retire and rest after forty years of slavery, forty years of leadership training under Moses, and four years of solid fighting. He is tired in all ways and seeks the rest of Canaan under his own fig and olive trees and the pleasantness of his own vineyard. He will have nearly thirty pleasant years of rest in his very well earned retirement.

He also appreciated the need for new leadership to be given the opportunity to take the reins and lead their people, without the old man there. Old leaders must step aside and let the new ones take over, even if they do not achieve a 100% mark at their first main challenge. Phinehas has been overly harsh in his judgments of the three tribes, but he has been open to their words of truth, and his anger and concern is abated by their words. He has proved himself a worthy leader to follow Joshua and unite both the priestly and leadership function.

This man Joshua has served well and been a great example in many things to his people. He exercises the rights of the dying elder statesman to call the nation together again and brief them on their on-going spiritual needs and the ever present danger of apostasy. The time frame for these words to be written and later read aloud at Shechem is some point before the year of his death, while he still has the robust energy to deliver this warning sermon with power and passion to the people he loves. The words we read here in this chapter sound like a formal letter or speech; I suspect they are both.

From the reading of this chapter and the next I conclude that he sent a formal letter to all the tribal leaders at their twelve capital cities, and laid the charge here recorded upon them to keep the Law of Moses and continue the work of conquest. They were to read this aloud to their people first and then at a later time attend the tribal convocation Joshua will call at Shechem. At a later time he calls all the tribal elders of the nation together to Shechem for his final public address, at which time he repeats the contents of what we have recorded here, and he adds the details recorded in the next chapter. Joshua dies at 110 years of age. Joshua 24:29-30, Judges 2:6-10. Joshua's final words are similar in tenor to those of Paul and Peter 1400 years later. **2 Timothy 3:1-17, 4:1-8, 2 Peter 1:12-15, 3:1-9.**

JOSHUA 23:1-16

23:1 And it came to pass a long time after that the LORD had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua waxed old and stricken in age. **2** And Joshua called for all Israel, and for their elders, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers, and said unto them, I am old and stricken in age: **3** And ye have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for the LORD your God is he that hath fought for you. **4** Behold, I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the great sea westward. **5** And the LORD your God, he shall expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess their land, as the LORD your God hath promised unto you. **6** Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left; **7** That ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them: **8** But cleave unto the LORD your God, as ye have done unto this day. **9** For the LORD hath driven out from before you great nations and strong: but as for you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day. **10** One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the LORD your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you. **11** Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God. **12** Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you: **13** Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you. **14** And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof. **15** Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which the LORD your God promised you; so shall the LORD bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you. **16** When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 2. We have moved onwards in time by at least twenty five years to the events of this and the next chapter. Joshua is getting to the point where he knows death may be near at hand. All who live to great age get to the place where they feel their strength ebbing away, and they are then aware that they have a limited time to serve the Lord and their brethren before their strength fails and they may need assistance to walk and speak. Before their strength ebbs to this point they have opportunity to serve one last time and be heard by all.

Many older ministers will give what we now call a valedictory address as their final farewell to public ministry. Joshua does not wait until right near the end, but while he has strength to speak with power and confidence he calls a special assembly of the nation to Shechem, the capital of his tribe, a few kilometres from his home, and the place where he had the tribes read aloud the blessings and cursings of the Law. **Deuteronomy 11:22-32, 27:1-14, Joshua 8:30-35.**

From this place it was barely twenty kilometres to Shiloh, and from the words recorded in the next chapter it would appear that the tabernacle was moved to Shechem for this great assembly. It may be that this final meeting called by Joshua was timed to fit in with the Feast of Unleavened Bread, or Tabernacles. This may have been in the last year of his life, or the year beforehand. The writer indicates that it is close to the end, but does not give us specifics as to the time of year or how long it is until Joshua dies. The fact that they meet in Shechem rather than twenty kilometres down the road at Shiloh, and that the tabernacle is moved to Shechem for the meeting, may mean that Joshua is not now able to travel and his death may be quite close to the time of this last speech.

They have had years of peace now from constant warfare due to the grace of the Lord. **Psalms 46:8-11.** The Lord alone has given them victory over their enemies, and none have stood to fight them in the open field since they settled and seized their tribal land. It is now around 1370 BC, and there is only another twenty years for them to totally seize the land and expand their population before the Egyptian forces arrive back into Canaan in force. They have a limited time to action the words of Joshua before they are held back in the hills of the Shephelah by Egyptian armies.

As you read the words here and in the next chapter remember, they didn't fully obey them, and so the opportunity to fully take the land was delayed for a further 300 years. The prophetic words spoken here by Joshua will be fulfilled in the days of David and Solomon; they will seize all the land in that time, but the people who say "Amen" to Joshua here do not follow up their affirmation with positive action! James 2:14-26. They will fail to follow through, and so within twenty years they will be defeated by the Egyptians and the resurgent Canaanites. These groups will then both be fought to a standstill (Canaanites wiped out) by the Philistines when they arrive in force around 1200 BC.

Verses 3 – 5. They need to daily recall the grace, mercy and deliverance of the Lord their God, and then step out in faith in God and seize the last portions of the land. Strong Biblical Leadership mentors this mental attitude and verbally encourages it often. Their worship and praise will be their on-going strength to encourage them on to courageous actions. Truly the Bible says, "The joy of the Lord is my strength". **Exodus 15:2, Deuteronomy 33:25, 2 Samuel 22:33, Nehemiah 8:10, Psalms 21:1, 27:1, 28:7-8, 46:1, 62:7, Habakkuk 3:19, 2 Corinthians 12:5-10, Hebrews 12:11-15.**

Worship and Praise always begins recovery from anything that has distracted us from following the path of God for us. If ever you are discouraged, remedy the depression with praise, and begin the recovery process by reading these verses and praising God for His grace, peace and mercy towards you.

The biggest failures in the lives of believers of all generations centre in the principles contained in Joshua's letter and speech to his people. If we fail to worship the Lord, we will fail to walk with the Lord. If we fail to follow through from our worship with walking in obedience, then we will fail to achieve what the Lord has for us in our role upon the earth. As the late Dr J Vernon McGee used to say, "We need to say 'Amen' always in shoe leather".

Joshua will repeat and refer back to many of the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 4:1-10. He will remind them that all they have become, and all they have done, they have been "enabled" to do by the power of God. It is the Lord alone who has given them their land and their inheritance within it. The Lord has given them, as He gives us, the victory in the battle He calls His people to fight. **Exodus 14:13-14, Psalms 44:1-3, Deuteronomy 20:1-4.**

The Lord has given them all the land from the Mediterranean Sea to the mountains of Arabia and it is theirs to now fully seize and live within. They will fail to follow through on this promise, but David will believe it, and he will step out in faith and courage, and he will succeed in receiving nearly the full inheritance. We live in God's kingdom when we operate in His will for our life, and we can expect God's provisions to achieve God's objectives, and in the divine plan they are already won. Advance believer!

The Lord's promise was that they would personally drive out the Canaanites if they expressed their faith in the Word of God and simply attacked them. The people had to step out in faith and attack the superior forces of the enemy and claim the Lord's words, and the Lord would drive the enemy before them. God's call to all generations is to say "Amen" with shoe leather, as we move out to claim the promises and get victory through His power. **Exodus 23:26-33, 33:1-4, 34:10-17, Deuteronomy 11:22-28.**

Verses 6 – 13. Courage is a requirement for all soldiers of the Lord, and we are all called to be soldiers in the Angelic Conflict. **Ephesians 6:10-19, Hebrews 12:1-4.** Paul captures the spirit of Joshua's words when he calls the

Corinthians Church to the same standard for living their faith out in daily life in a pagan city. "Watch you, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong!" **1 Corinthians 16:13**. We are not here to relax in deck chairs!

We are to be, at all times, "valiant for the truth". We need to stand strong in a pagan world, believing, speaking and living out our faith in the Lord and our belief in the truth of His Word. Psalms 60:12, 108:13, 118:15-16, Jeremiah 9:3. We are to express courage firstly in holding tenaciously to the truth of the Lord's words to us, obeying them in spirit and in truth, and not turning away from them, to the right or to the left. Deuteronomy 5:32-33, 12:30-32, 17:18-20, 28:14, Proverbs 1:7, 2:1-15, 3:1-8, 4:22-27.

There is a recognition by Joshua in his words here that the Canaanites will remain "among them"; they will not be eliminated now. The people have waited too long to destroy them and there is not the will to obey the Lord in this now. Joshua recognises the ongoing danger that these people will be to Israel. Their spirit is evil and their worship is of the pagan gods who are actually demons. **Leviticus 17:7, Deuteronomy 32:7, Psalms 96:5**. These people are active evangelists for evil and if the Israelites compromise with them in any way they will fall steadily into more and more evil themselves. Paganism is not neutral, nor just "cultural practise" – it is worship of evil and demons are in the midst of it.

The names of the pagan gods are not to be used in any way. They are not to be named at all. This may appear foolish to us, but to give the enemy a personal name is to give him respect and then power over you. To show any respect or admiration for the beauty of the pagan temples or their colourful worship is to be enticed by it. They are to hate the enemy and all the evils associated with them, and not even mention them. Joshua is simply reminding them of the words of Moses from the Lord. **Exodus 23:32-33, Deuteronomy 7:1-11**.

Complete separation from evil is called for by all who would advance in their spiritual life and gain victory in the Angelic Conflict. **Psalms 16:1-5, 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, Ephesians 5:11-20**. We must hate with all our heart the things of the enemy, and be sure in our own spirit of our beliefs and our values. We must know and believe the doctrines of the Lord's Word, and we must apply them into the fabric of our daily life.

Their attitude to the Lord is to be the same as to their beloved wife or husband; they are to love and "cleave" to the Lord their God. Joshua 22:5. The word used means to cling so tightly that none can separate you from each other. It is a word originally from the hunt, and indicates that every scrap of energy is focused upon catching and holding the desired/loved one. All our energy is to focus upon holding onto the reality of our faith. Faith is not to be a part time activity, but woven into the fabric of our being and it is to be a passionate faith. **Acts 11:23, 26:23-29**.

If we stand in faith we can stand against the enemy, no matter how powerful they may appear to be. They have the promise of God that one man will destroy a thousand of their enemies. Leviticus 26:8, Deuteronomy 32:30, Judges 3:31, 7:19-22, 15:15. They have the Lord with them, and none can stand against God. If the Lord be for us who can be against us? The answer to that question is clear; the enemy can be, but in Christ we are superior to him. 1 John 4:4. Let us walk in the power and plan of God and so we will always have the victory He promises us. In dark places, facing mighty enemies, let us sing the Psalms of God and draw our strength from the promises of the Lord. **Psalms 35:1-9, 44:4-8, 46:1-7, Romans 8:28-39**.

Let us examine ourselves to ensure that we are still in the faith of our fathers! **Psalms 26:2, 1 Corinthians 11:28, 2 Corinthians 13:5, Ephesians 5:15-18, Hebrews 12:15**. Let us ensure our love for the Lord remains strong each and every day. When we fall back from total devotion and worship of the Lord, we fall back into doubt, fear, worry and despair. Let us keep faith alive through worship, and prayer, and service daily. If the people of God marry with unbelievers and compromise with them in any way, then the promise of victory will evaporate away before their very eyes. To mix with these people is to lose the strength and power to win.

Any compromise with evil and any fellowship with evil people will erode their spiritual life and cause them to lose their path in life. Satan's policy is to distract the Lord's people from their source of power and the path of God for them. Satan deceives, dissembles, distorts and distracts God's people. If they fail to heed this warning, (and sadly they will), then they will lose their national identity in the end. Isaiah 1:4-10, Ezekiel 18:23-24, Luke 9:62, Hebrews 10:38-39, 2 Peter 2:18-22.

Verses 14 – 16. Joshua now solemnly and calmly explains the nature of the curses that will come upon them if they rebel against the Lord's will for them. In the very place where these curses were read aloud he repeats the main points to ensure these people are without excuse before the Lord. He speaks of his own coming death as a natural process, and the end for all men, which ought to make all value things that last eternally. Death is the reality that should make commentary upon the priorities and deeds of our short life here upon the earth. Job 30:23, John 14:1-4, Hebrews 9:27-28, 2 Peter 3:8-13.

The Lord has not failed to deliver on His promises to the people and while they remain obedient to the Word of God they can depend upon the Lord's grace to give them all they need to fulfil His will for them. In the same way as the Lord has given them good things through their obedience to His Word and will, just so the Lord will deliver judgment upon them if they walk away from the path the Lord has called them to walk.

There is only one way for them to walk with blessing and that is God's way. Matthew 7:7-14, Luke 13:24, 21:29-38. The Lord has zero tolerance for evil and for any of His people who play with evil that is to be hated and avoided. Judgment will fall upon all who play with the enemy rather than resist him. James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:9. Let us stand for truth, and passionately cleave to the Lord of Truth.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. There are only two paths for man to walk; either we walk with the Lord, or we walk with the enemy. Let us focus daily upon being obedient to the Lord of glory and walk according to His will for our lives.
2. We are at war with Satan and his forces. Let us awake each day as a soldier awakes to battle, and put our spiritual armour on and be ready to serve in the Lord's Army every moment, under the orders of our Commanding Officer. Let prayer and Bible study be woven into the fabric of each and every day of our life.
3. Genuine Biblical Faith will always have a practical outworking in the shoe leather of daily life. If our faith is not working out into life then there is a spiritual blockage of sin or disobedience of some kind within us. Let us be careful and prayerful in all we do for the Lord. The promises of God's Word are not just to be praised and gloried in, they are to be applied into the daily battles of the Angelic Conflict. Let us fight the fight the Lord has called us to today!

REFLECTION UPON OUR DAILY OBEDIENCE

1. Obedience is better than offerings (1 Samuel 15:22; Proverbs 21:3; 28:9). If we are not in God's will, any "worship" we offer is unacceptable.
2. Obedience is something you have to learn. The basic training in obedience has to start in childhood. As it says in (Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16) "Honour your father and your mother. " (Proverbs 4:3,4; 22:6; 29:15-17; Hebrews 5:8)
3. Teaching your child obedience is an act of love (Proverbs 3:12; 19:18; 23:13-14).
4. We have to obey those who are in authority over us (Exodus 20:12; 22:28; Leviticus 19:3; Deuteronomy 5:16; Romans 13:1-5; Ephesians 6:1-5; Colossians 3:18-22; Titus 3:1).
5. Those in authority have been put in that position by God (Romans 13:1).
6. Obedience to those in authority is obedience to God (Proverbs 24:21; Ephesians 6:7; Colossians 3:23-24; Romans 13:5).
7. Disobedience to those in authority is disobedience to God (Romans 1:30; 13:2).
8. But when we are ordered to do something that is against God's Will we have to disobey (Acts 4:19; 5:40-42).
9. The fifth commandment (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16) is the only commandment with a promise (Proverbs 10:17; Ephesians 6:1-3). Social life in a society is only possible when the people in it have learned to obey.
10. If this commandment is ignored, if the authority of the family is denied or not exercised, society will quickly slide into anarchy (Isaiah 3:12; Proverbs 29:21; 30:21-23; Romans 1:30).

NOTES

CHAPTER 24**INTRODUCTION**

This chapter records the final speech of Joshua to the leaders of the twelve tribes of Israel. All the people are not called to attend necessarily, but certainly all the civil, military and priestly-judicial leaders of the nation are called to attend. The tabernacle is moved to Shechem for this meeting and then taken back to Shiloh at some time later, for it is back at Shiloh when we enter the times of the book of Judges.

Joshua speaks from his heart to the people to follow up the letter he has sent to them all beforehand. Joshua gives a summary of the grace plan of God as it begins in Ur with the call of Abraham, and traces God's deliverance and guidance right through to their own days.

His message will be centred in the calling and election of Israel as God's people and the need for them to be a holy people before the Lord. Joshua sees that the Israelites have a role in their age to minister God's truth and prepare the way for the Messiah of the world who Moses has told them will be coming from their nation. They are part of the Plan of God and they are where they are supposed to be in God's economy. They are to play their part in the plan with all their heart and with all their courage.

JOSHUA 24:1-33

24:1 And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God. **2** And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods. **3** And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac. **4** And I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau: and I gave unto Esau mount Seir, to possess it; but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt. **5** I sent Moses also and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt, according to that which I did among them: and afterward I brought you out. **6** And I brought your fathers out of Egypt: and ye came unto the sea; and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and horsemen unto the Red sea. **7** And when they cried unto the LORD, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them, and covered them; and your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt: and ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season. **8** And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt on the other side Jordan; and they fought with you: and I gave them into your hand, that ye might possess their land; and I destroyed them from before you. **9** Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and warred against Israel, and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you: **10** But I would not hearken unto Balaam; therefore he blessed you still: so I delivered you out of his hand. **11** And you went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho: and the men of Jericho fought against you, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I delivered them into your hand. **12** And I sent the hornet before you, which drave them out from before you, even the two kings of the Amorites; but not with thy sword, nor with thy bow. **13** And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat. **14** Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. **15** And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. **16** And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods; **17** For the LORD our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed: **18** And the LORD drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: therefore will we also serve the LORD; for he is our God. **19** And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. **20** If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good. **21** And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD. **22** And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses. **23** Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel. **24** And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey. **25** So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. **26** And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that was by the sanctuary of the LORD. **27** And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the LORD which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God. **28** So Joshua let the people depart, every man unto his inheritance. **29** And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old. **30** And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathserah, which is in mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash. **31** And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the LORD, that he had done for Israel. **32** And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried

they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph. 33 And Eleazar the son of Aaron died; and they buried him in a hill that pertained to Phinehas his son, which was given him in mount Ephraim.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1. Joshua calls the assembly of all the leadership of all the tribes. It may be that many of the people also came, the text is not clear on that point. It was a great meeting and like the last meeting with Moses, Numbers 36:13 – Deuteronomy 33:29, it was a time of teaching. Moses words were written down and delivered as three great speeches, but Joshua will give only one speech, and it is likely that we have here before us only a summary of what may have been a re-reading of the entire book of Deuteronomy.

The elders are called to Shechem to “present themselves before God”. This phrase tells us that Phinehas has agreed to move the tabernacle itself to Shechem before the meeting so that it is ready to be the centre of the meeting and available for the leadership of the nation to re-affirm their faith. This is not a handing on of political leadership, but a call to religious revival and faithfulness. The leadership of the nation is now divided into twelve tribal groups, but the unifying principle is the tabernacle and the pure faith it portrays. They are to be a theocracy, with all the tribes united in their worship and obedience to the Lord. The High Priest is to be their unifying leader, and spiritual, not political power, is to be the force that binds them together.

Shechem is a key place for Israel's history. It was one of the places where Abraham received the promise of the land itself. Genesis 12:6-7. It was the first place where he built an altar in the land. Jacob returns to this place of his grandfather on his return from Haran, purchases a field there, and builds a new altar there. Genesis 33:18-19. The great evil of the rape of his daughter Dinah occurred there and the subsequent massacre of all the men ended the Canaanite occupation of that place. Genesis 34.

The spiritual revival that occurs in Jacob's family after this time leads to all the foreign statues of the gods being destroyed and buried under a great oak at Shechem. Genesis 35:3-4. It is likely that it is this very oak, that Joshua will use to erect the stone pillar underneath. As oaks live for well over 500 years it is likely that the mighty oak in this chapter, verse 26, is the same one that Jacob had buried the idols underneath. Joseph's mummified body will be buried close by to this place, in the field that Jacob had purchased.

Verses 2 – 4. Joshua takes the people back through 600 years of history to remind them that the Lord has called them out of their original homeland in Chaldea to worship and serve Him in truth and purity. The key though of Joshua is that the Lord called Abraham out of a major centre of idolatry to worship God in spirit and in truth, and that the spiritual battle from the beginning was against the inroads of idolatry coming back amongst the Lord's people. Terah was an idol worshipper, and later Rachel would steal her father's idols and worship them. Genesis 31:19, 30-35. Jacob would bury the last of these family idols that had crept back into family worship under the oak here in Shechem. Genesis 35:3-4.

God's call was to leave behind all the paganism of Ur and his call remained strongly against all forms of idolatry. Exodus 20:1-6. Moses had given a similar speech to this one of Joshua's, which is recorded in Deuteronomy 26. Joshua saw that the pressure to return to idolatry from the Canaanite survivors around about the Israelites would be the main spiritual temptation they would face. It was this religious system of Satan that was the enemy of their souls and was the visible sign of the daily reality of the Angelic Conflict for them.

God has called out Israel to be different from the pagans amongst whom they were to live and witness the truth to. 1 Peter 2:9-10. God gave Abraham a son of promise in his old age as testimony that he was a special man and that he had a special role in the history of mankind. Nehemiah later reflects upon this period of Israel's early history, drawing on the words of Moses and Joshua, for in this time period he sees the Lord's call upon them to turn away from every vestige of their old pagan Chaldean past. Nehemiah 9:7ff.

Joshua also reflects that Esau was given Mt Seir and his descendents still dwelt in that area, but Jacob, with his sons, went down to Egypt for 400 years to await the inheritance of their land. Esau's people were settled first, and remained so, yet the Israelites were last to receive their land and they still had to fight for it against the pagans. The contrast between the sons of Esau and the sons of Israel is deliberately drawn here to make a comment upon idolatry also.

Sadly Esau's descendents went back into the idolatry of their fore-fathers in Chaldea, and so they had peace from Satan, for they were back in his camp. Israel was still having trouble because they were in the Angelic Conflict and were standing for God. Joshua calls them to maintain their stand for the truth against the increasing pressures that Satan will bring upon them. The same call is to ourselves today – it is to battle, not bafflement at the malice of the enemy.

Verses 5 – 7. Joshua's theme of idolatry as the enemy of Israel continues in the way he tells the story of the time of the Israelites in Egypt and the nature of their deliverance. He reminds the people that the way the Lord delivered them from Egypt involved a total judgment upon all the main gods of the Egyptians. The Lord declared war upon the gods-idols of Egypt. The Lord “plagued” Egypt; every plague being a judgment upon one of the gods of their pantheon. Refer to the Commentary on Exodus 7-10.

The judgment of the Yam Suf (Sea of Reeds) was the final elimination of the enemy, and the proof that the Lord was superior to the powers of Egypt and the power of nature itself, for the wind, the fire and the sea obeyed the Lord God and the enemy were destroyed. Exodus 14, Nehemiah 9:9ff, Psalms 95:1-11, 105:1-6, 23-45.

Verses 8 – 10. Having brought the people through to the hills of Moab the Israelites faced the battle test of the Amorites whose hatred of them was total. The enemy attacked, and the Lord enabled the Israelites to defeat their far superior numbers and inherit their lands. Numbers 21:21-35, Deuteronomy 2:26-37. The next attack of the enemy was more subtle. The enemy of Israel bought the services of Balaam the Midianite prophet. He tried to earn his fee by cursing Israel, but God would not let him, but he persisted in his malice. Numbers 22-24, 31:1-8, Deuteronomy 3:1ff.

This is a powerful illustration of the Angelic Conflict at this point in Israel's history, and how God will over rule the words of prophets and frustrate the will of kings if they stand against Him. 1 John 4:4. None can stand against the Lord God, and He will over rule all men to ensure His obedient people achieve the objective of His plan in His mighty power. Isaiah 54:17, Romans 8:28-39. There is no power anywhere that can frustrate the plan of God, and this means for all believers, that if we simply remain obedient to the plan we are in the safest place for our lives. No matter how dangerous the road may appear, if it is God's road, no weapon formed against us will be successful! We have God's Word upon this.

Verses 11 – 13. The battle of Jericho was a turning point experience, for in the collapse of this city's walls the Israelites saw what God could do against a great fortress city of the Canaanites. Many of the great cities of the Canaanites still stood against the Israelites in the days of Joshua, and the experience of Jericho was a reminder to them that these places did not need to stand; they could be taken. All the people needed to do, was express the faith of Joshua and pray their way through the pressure situation to receive the victory that God would deliver to them.

The Lord drove the enemy before Him with spiritual power that made them unable to stand against the Israelites. Everything they now enjoyed they did so because the Lord had opened the door for them. The Israelites were the recipients of grace and would continue to be if they remained true to the Word of the Lord. **Deuteronomy 6:10-11, Joshua 3:5-17, 4:1-18, 6:20, 27, Psalms 44:1-8.**

Verses 14 – 15. Joshua makes his personal stand by the Oak at Shechem. Whatever the others will do, he and his house will serve the Lord alone and reject all forms of idolatry. In the very place that Jacob buried the pagan idols of his family Joshua calls the people of Israel to stand for the Lord and reject the idolatry of their ancestors and the pagan nations around them. They are called to lives of sincerity, not lives of hypocrisy. These same two alternatives are with us today. We are called to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth, with no compromise with the religious world system of Satan. **Numbers 16:21, Ezra 10:11, 2 Corinthians 6:17, Hebrews 7:26.**

The fact that Joshua has to call the people to "put away" the idols from amongst them tells us that many of the people have already started to take paganism into their homes with house shrines to the pagan gods. The traditional worship of the Israelites was idolatry, but as Abraham and Jacob had to put such things away, so each generation had to actively reject their past worship and "cleave" to the truth in their worship of the one true God. Those who select to follow after idols must accept the judgment that such satanic religion brings with it. **Psalms 119:105-112, Ezekiel 20:1-20, 39-44, Amos 5:21-27, John 6:61-69.**

Verses 16 – 18. The people gathered before Joshua very strongly affirm their commitment to the Lord and reject any thought of forsaking the Lord and serving the pagan gods. It is a spontaneous bursting out of emotion. They do not believe they will forsake the Lord, yet clearly, from Joshua's words, many already have done this evil. They re-affirm the truths that Joshua has been stating; that it was the Lord God alone who brought them from Egypt and delivered them the land. They owe all they have to the Lord alone and their fixed intention at this time is to serve the One who has given them so much.

Verses 19 – 21. Joshua reminds these people (and ourselves today) that we CANNOT serve the Lord and compromise in our worship by serving other gods at the same time. God is a jealous God, and will share His beloved with no-one else. As no husband who loves his wife will share her with another, just so the Lord will not share us with anyone else. If the people of God go away and serve other gods they will be destroyed for their spiritual adultery. With these serious words ringing in their ears the people once again affirm that they will serve the Lord alone. Psalms 99:1-9, Isaiah 5:11-16, 6:3-5, 30:8-18, 44:1-10, Hebrews 10:26-39. Isaiah 44 mocks the very concept of making your own god, and points out graphically the results of such foolishness.

Verses 22 – 23. Joshua keeps the whole process very formal and calls them to witness to their own affirmation of faith. They do this and solemnly certify their commitment to the Lord. Joshua does not then mince words about the idols that many of them have. He calls them to prove the truth of their words by getting rid of the house idols straight away as evidence that they have spoken the truth. **Judges 10:15-16, 1 Samuel 7:3-4, Hosea 14:1-9, 1 Corinthians 10:19-22, 2 Corinthians 6:16-18.** Action is required to back the fine words; it always is required!

Verses 24 – 25. The people reaffirm their commitment, but there is no mention of the household idols of the pagan gods and goddesses being handed over at this time for destruction, as there was with Jacob's family. Joshua formally sets up a "statute and ordinance" with them at Shechem; in effect he renews the Mosaic Covenant with them. Such things are done today still, with re-affirmation of wedding vows, and recommitment of the life to the Lord, all done in front of the church at a service. Whenever we do this let it be done seriously, and let there be action to follow. Words without deeds are rank hypocrisy and God hates hypocrisy above all else.

I myself do not support such public and verbal “re-affirmations”, for they are all too often just formally prepared words, when the Lord calls for actions in daily life. It is not the formal play-like production in front of a crowd that guarantees obedience, it is the daily habit of obedience to the words of the Lord that will keep us away from evil and walking the path of the Lord. I prefer steady attendance at bible class rather than dram in front of the church and “one off commitments” that make people feel emotionally good, but often don't generate life change.

These people are in an emotionally charged environment and they all say the right things, but they do not go back home and destroy their idols! It is the private action in the home that will be the guarantee as to where the people are going, not their public affirmations. Let us test ourselves in this matter. Let us put less emphasis on public hand waving, and far more on private action taking! James 2:14-26.

Verses 26 – 28. Joshua writes down the words spoken, and possibly the first draft of the book that bears his name is written at this time also. This book of record is placed with the priests at the tabernacle. Joshua then has set up a great slab of stone as a pillar under the very oak that Jacob buried the family idols underneath as a testimony to the Israelites stated determination to walk away from idolatry.

The tabernacle was set up alongside the oak tree and the slab of stone was alongside the tabernacle outer wall and parallel to the entrance to the tabernacle tent itself. The stone is a stone of record; that this stone “heard” the people speak the words and it will stand there as a reminder to all who see it that the people promised to abolish idolatry. Sadly they will all head away and few will destroy their idols. The process of corruption has begun and without a total revival it will slip ever down hill from here.

Verses 29 – 33. At some point after these events Joshua dies. We are not told whether it was days, weeks or months afterwards, but his time had come to pass from the earthly stage. He was a good man and he served the Lord well and did all he could to encourage the people to follow after the truth. None could argue that Joshua had not told them the truth, for he made the truth clear to all. Joshua was buried on the north facing slope of the hill he had inherited in the land. He had enjoyed over twenty five years in this area before his death.

The traditional burial of the ancient Middle Eastern people was north facing. Do not make this sound pagan, or relate it to the North Star, for it was probably not related to such things. To bury in the land on the dark side of the hill speaks of something, perhaps the “sleep” of death, but it may have other significance, now lost to us. In the northern hemisphere the north facing land was the most barren and so the least useful for production and it may be that this was a significant reason. The reason for a north facing burial might be economic, not religious at all!

During the days of Joshua there were no open rebellions, but we cannot say they served the Lord purely, for we have Joshua's own words relating to their idol worship to correct this impression. There was no golden spiritual age here, for these people were the same ones who did not seize all the land, and left the Canaanite remnant to live on amongst them and influence them for evil. The people did not openly fall into paganism, but the slide was already started by the time of Joshua's death.

The writer wants us to remember the greatness of this man, and that is right and correct, for he left the people without any excuse for their later evil. He and Eleazar spoke and did the truth. Eleazar also dies at some point around the time of Joshua and he also is buried in the land of Ephraim. The tribe of Levi was spread around the land and so each family had to make its own burial arrangement in the area they dwelt. There was no Levitical land for burial, just borrowed land from the tribe amongst whom they dwelt. Joseph's body is also interred close by to where Joshua and Eleazar are buried. Three great burials are here, each man standing for active and influential faith in the Lord their God.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. We cannot influence others and force them to follow the truth, but we can have a godly influence so that they are without excuse. We are the watchmen of the Lord, and our job is to tell the truth, but what the people do with it is their own affair. We are responsible for telling the truth, and so let us be faithful witnesses and heralds of the King as these three great men were in their life times. Ezekiel 3:4-27.

2. Let us preach the truth in Holy Spirit power and demand of the Lord's people far more than verbal assent to the truth. Let us remember the words of James, “the devils believe and they tremble”. James 2:19. If we believe the Word of God a lot more responsiveness is required than simple verbal assent, for that puts us below the response of the devils to the truth! Let us challenge God's people to work out their salvation in daily life, with acts of obedience every day of their lives.

3. God still does not want to share us with idols. Let us examine ourselves in this matter, for many things intrude into our lives and interfere with our worship and service of the Lord. Let us be vigilant against the idols of worldliness, and serve the Lord alone, not things!

REFLECTION UPON THE SATANIC NATURE OF FALSE RELIGION

1. Satan's religion is a humanly acceptable one: no sin, no judgment, no Saviour and no Hell. Satan appears as an angel of light to deceive, distract and tranquilize man into inaction towards the one true God. (2 Corinthians 11:13-19,26)
2. Many pastors in the churches of Christendom are servants of Satan's policy, knowingly or unknowingly, for they teach and model falsehood. (Isaiah 30:12, Jeremiah 2:8, 2 Peter 2:1-10)
3. Satan's strategy towards unbelievers is to keep them blinded to the gospel. (2 Corinthians 4:3-4, Colossians 2:8, 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10)
4. Satan's strategy towards believers is:-
 - a) To confuse by false teaching. (Matthew 7:15, Romans 16:18)
 - b) To appeal to pride. (2 Corinthians 10:12)
 - c) To promote idolatry. (Habakkuk 2:18,19)
 - d) To promote legalism. (1 Timothy 1:7-8)
5. Satan's policy calls for counterfeit faith:-
 - a) Counterfeit gospel. (2 Corinthians 11:3-4)
 - b) Counterfeit pastors. (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)
 - c) Counterfeit communion. (1 Corinthians 10:19-21)
 - d) Counterfeit doctrine. (2 Timothy 4:1)
 - e) Counterfeit righteousness. (Matthew 19:16-28)
 - f) Counterfeit way of life. (Matthew 23)
 - g) Counterfeit power. (2 Thessalonians 2:8-10)
 - h) Counterfeit gods. (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)

REFLECTION UPON IDOLATRY

1. Idolatry is forbidden (Exodus 20:3,4,23; 23:24; Deuteronomy 4:28; 5:7; 6:14; 7:16; 8:19).
2. In the Ten Commandments, the first commandment prohibits mental idolatry, the second commandment prohibits overt idolatry.
3. Idolatry is spiritual adultery, an attack on the believer's love towards God (Jeremiah 3:8-10; Ezekiel 16:23-43; 23:24-30; Revelation 17:1-5).
4. Idolatry of mind precedes idolatry of practice. Mental idolatry occurs before overt idolatry (Judges 2:10-13; Ezekiel 14:7).
5. Idolatry occurs when the creation, rather than the Creator, is worshipped (Romans 1:18-25).
6. Demons function through idols and practices of idolatry (Zechariah 10:2).
7. Idolatry is the devil's communion table (1 Corinthians 10:19-21).
8. Idolatry is related to sexual sins under the phallic cult (Ezekiel 22:3-18; 23:37-49). Consequently idolatry has a adverse effect on both soul and body (1 Corinthians 6:9).
9. Idolatry causes the national judgment of destruction and enslavement (Isaiah 2:8; 2:18-20; 21:9; 36:18-20; Jeremiah 2:27-30; 3:6-11; 7:17-20; 17:1-4; Ezekiel 6:4-6).

WHAT IS WORLDLINESS?

1. Worldliness means to follow the beliefs and philosophy of man rather than that of God's revelation.
2. Worldliness is the opposite to Godliness; it is thinking/doing in opposition to God's revealed word. Titus 2:11-14.
3. All people are faced with the constant choice of following God's way or the world's. Romans 5:12, 3:19, 1 Corinthians 1:21, Ephesians 2:12, James 1:27, 2 Peter 1:4, 2:20.
4. Satan is the "prince of this world", and has power to deceive those who are negative to God's plans. John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11, 1 Corinthians 4:4, 1 Peter 5:8,9.

5. We must not love the world, 1 John 2:15-17.
6. We must hate all the world stands for, in thought and in deed. 1 Corinthians 5:9-13, 11:30-32, Galatians 6:14, James 1:27, James 4:4, 2 Peter 1:3,4, 1 Corinthians 3:18, 19.
7. We must not return to our old behaviour patterns, Ephesians 2:1-7.
8. This evil world system and the prince of this world will be condemned. Matthew 18:7, John 12:31, 16:11, 1 Corinthians 6:2, 2 Peter 3:7, 2 Peter 2:1ff.