

Message #28**Joshua 16:1-10**

Just recently I watched a marathon that was a qualifying marathon for the Olympics. The man who won, Galen Rupp, is a 29-year-old runner, who ran the 26.2 miles in 2 hours 11 minutes and 12 seconds. It was a very impressive marathon to watch him run. In the last stages of the race, he pulled away and won easily. When he was being interviewed after the race about his impressive victory, he said, “We still have more work to do.”

People who succeed enjoy moments of victory, but they keep working and keep training and keep disciplining themselves so that they can accomplish more.

That is exactly the lesson Israel needs to learn and so do we. This was a great time in the history of Israel. The nation had entered the Promised Land and had experienced great victory. Land was now being distributed and it was time to enjoy life. But that does not mean all work is done. That does not mean there still isn't more to do.

It is like our Christian life. We may experience great victory and great blessings of God in many ways, but that does not mean we have arrived to a level of perfection. There is still more to do and more to accomplish. That point is seen right here in Joshua. What we learn here is this:

WHEN GOD'S PEOPLE EXPERIENCE THE GREAT BLESSINGS OF GOD, THEY NEED TO ENJOY THEM BUT ALSO REALIZE THERE IS MORE TO DO.

In these next two chapters there is tremendous comfort; there is great challenge and there is overwhelming conviction.

Now in **verse 1** we read “then the lot for the sons of Joseph...” It was now time to officially distribute the land to the sons of Joseph.

Now before we actually look at this, there are a couple of observations we want to make:

Observation #1 - Joshua was from the tribe of Ephraim. **Num. 13:8**

According to Numbers 1:10, one of Joseph's sons was Ephraim and his son was Ammihud and his son was Elishama (I Chron. 7:26). Elishama had a son named “Nun” and Joshua was the son of Nun (I Chron. 7:27). So Joshua's grandfather was Elishama and his great-great-grandfather was Ephraim.

Now what I find so intriguing about this is that Joshua waits his turn until the lot falls to Ephraim. Joshua is the great leader of Israel and yet he waited for God to permit the lot to fall to his family. He could have pulled rank, being the leader. He did not demand extra perks for being the leader. Those who wait on the Lord will always experience the great blessings of God.

Observation #2 - God is the One who sovereignly determined the time and the extent of the blessings for Joseph's sons.

Proverbs 16:33 says, "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD." In O.T. times, God sovereignly determined things for the people by casting of lots. It was God who determined that now the lot fell to the "sons of Joseph."

This is an important principle for us to learn. **God grants His blessings in His time, not our time. To experience His blessings, we need to remain faithful over a period of time.** If we purpose to do that, we will reap His blessings.

It must have been hard for each family of the children of Israel to wait to see when it would be their turn to experience God's inheritance blessings. Each group must have thought, when will it be our turn? But they all waited patiently on the Lord and in His time, the blessings did come.

Observation #3 - God gave those blessings to the sons of Joseph based on His faithfulness to fulfill His own Word.

Joseph's territory was divided into two parts: one section for his son Ephraim (Joshua 16) and one section for his son Manasseh (Joshua 17). The reason for the division was it was a reward for Joseph's service during his time in Egypt.

Jacob promised Joseph that both of his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born to him before Jacob came to Egypt, would be honored as one of Jacob's own sons (Gen. 48:5). God is faithfully honoring this here in Joshua. Not only is He faithfully honoring that promise, but the order of the promise, Ephraim first and Manasseh second, is also being honored.

According to Joshua 16:4, Manasseh was the first born, but Ephraim was the first to receive land.

God does not ever forget about any of His promises. We may forget, but He does not. When it comes time for reward, those rewards will be based on precise conformity to His Word. God will give rewards and eternal blessings based upon what He has actually said.

Furthermore, in this case, those rewards were in precise conformity to Jacob's statements. In eternity, the testimony of leadership will matter and it will make a difference (Heb. 13:17). God will not ever forget one verse from His Word.

Now there are three main parts to this allotment for Ephraim:

PART #1 – Ephraim receives the general boundary limits for her land allotment. **16:1-3**

When we carefully analyze the land dimensions written in these verses, we may quickly realize that Joseph's sons inherited some rich, plush land in central Canaan.

In fact, many have observed that Joseph's territory in Canaan was, in many ways, the most beautiful and fertile land in all of the Promised Land.

What is described in these verses are southern boundaries of Joseph's land, not the northern boundaries.

In this listing there are two groups of people mentioned: 1) the Archites (**16:2**) and 2) the Japhletites (**16:3**).

Both of these groups lived in the hill country of the southern border of Joseph's land. We know nothing about these groups, except they were non-Israeli and they were still in the land.

We learn later from Scripture that Hushai, David's counselor, was an Archite (II Sam. 15:32).

It is possible that these were distant descendants of Japheth, Noah's son (Gen. 5:32), but that is not known for certain.

PART #2 – Ephraim receives specific boundary limits for her land allotment. **16:4-9**

Just as Jacob had predicted, Ephraim was awarded his blessings prior to Manasseh, even though Manasseh was older (Gen. 48:14, 17, 20). **Everything God does is done in precise conformity to His Word.**

In **verse 5**, the description of Ephraim's border begins with the southern boundary. From here the description in **verse 6** swings west and we do not know for sure where some of these boundaries were.

We do know that Michmethath was the northern city of the boundary (**v. 6**), and from there **verses 6, 7 and 8** move both east and west.

Some of these cities named here had become key places of victory under Joshua's leadership. We learn from **verse 9** that some of the cities were located in the middle of the inheritance given to Manasseh.

This was probably designed to maintain a brotherly and tribal unity between these two groups. Of all of the cities inherited by Ephraim, the most significant shows up in **verse 6**—Taanath-shiloh.

Shiloh would become the site of Israel's early sanctuary in the time of the Judges.

What we see here is that God knew exactly how much Ephraim would need and He met the need. He gave precise land blessings in complete conformity to His Word. Scholars today are still baffled by some of the names listed here.

The locations of these cities today are not known for sure, but we can know this—God knew them specifically and He specifically gave them to His people.

There will come a day when every inch of this Promised Land will belong to Israel.

PART #3 – Ephraim did not drive out all of the enemies from her land allotment. **16:10**

Everything is wonderful until we come to **verse 10**. Don't miss this verse. All of the Canaanites had not been driven out of the land. There was still a thorn in the side of the people of Israel. They had not fully obeyed God.

Now why didn't they drive out all of the people?

(Reason #1) - Perhaps it was convenient to not be in another hassle.

Most of the land was conquered so what difference does it make if a few obscure Canaanites exist in part of the land? We will always end up suffering in some way when we neglect to do God's will for convenience sake.

(Reason #2) - Perhaps their motives were for gain—the Israelites could profit from these people.

Worldly gain is never a good motive for disobeying God.

(Reason #3) - Perhaps they felt they were no longer a real threat.

Governing our actions by our feelings that are contrary to God's Word will ultimately lead to disaster.

(Reason #4) - Perhaps they felt they could win the people over to their side.

Associating with God-mocking people is dangerous and disastrous. We typically do not influence them; they influence us.

Whatever the reason, they did not obey God fully.

In Deuteronomy 7:1-5, God specifically warned against a failure to eradicate these people. God warned that these Canaanites would have their greatest effect on their children.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I agree with Dr. H.A. Ironside, **compromise with evil never pays**. In the end, disobedience to God will cost you.

We who know the Lord and who have experienced many blessings from God need to stay on top of our lives. There is still more work to do. Keep alert. Keep active. Keep working.