

Message #33**Joshua 19:10-51**

When we carefully study this part of the book that deals with land distribution, we observe something that is very important. Some of the land that was given to certain tribes was plush and some wasn't. Some of the land would be very productive and some of it would not be so productive. Some of the land could be enjoyed immediately and some couldn't. Some of the land had some enemies still in it and some didn't. **Now the one who determined who got what land was God.**

Every tribe received their specific land inheritance by decree of God. They were not all in the same place nor were they in the same kind of place, but they were all from God. This is the way it is in life. God puts people in different places and different ministries. Some are plush and others are lean, but our job is to take our entrustment, whatever it is, and try to develop it for the glory of God. God expects each of us to develop our lives so that we reflect His power.

We are put in situations that sometimes may flourish and at other times seem to be a famine. Our job is to get the job done for God. Don't run and don't quit. What we see is this:

GOD IS THE ONE WHO SOVEREIGNLY DETERMINES WHERE WE LIVE AND MINISTER AND IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO DEVELOP AND CULTIVATE A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM SO THAT WE CAN ACCOMPLISH EVERYTHING HE WANTS US TO ACCOMPLISH RIGHT WHERE HE HAS PUT US.

Sometimes God will put us in a fertile area and everything will flourish. Sometimes we will be in a dry area where nothing seems to grow at all. Sometimes we will experience the positive and sometimes the negative. But regardless, God expects us to use what we have right where we are to accomplish great things for Him.

God takes a very Personal interest in the very place we live. He is sovereign in the very home we live. He is sovereign over this church and He expects us to fight a good fight and wage a good war for Him in this church. Whether it is a time of prosperity or poverty or whether we are surrounded by positive or negative, God wants us to develop for Him and His glory.

Now in these verses there are six distributions we want to observe:

DISTRIBUTION #1 – The third lot falls to Zebulun. 19:10-16

Not much is known about Zebulun. It was a relatively quiet tribe. It went after Canaanite forces (Judges 5:18). The men appeared to be skilled and solid soldiers. They could use any weapon. They are a tribe who was very stable and very loyal and not fickle (I Chron. 12:33).

When we read the prediction given by Jacob concerning Zebulun in Genesis 49:13, it is clearly stated that Zebulun would ultimately dwell by the seashore and be a haven for ships.

Yet when we look at our maps and see the boundaries given to Zebulun, it would appear as though it is landlocked, several miles from the sea.

Now many have suggested that there was a strip of land which extended to the Mediterranean, making travel easy from the Sea of Galilee to the Mediterranean. We get some real help on this point from the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah predicts that when the Messiah reigns, Zebulun will have a completely blessed land “by way of the sea” (Is. 9:1).

When Jesus came the first time, Galilee was primarily controlled by Gentiles. In fact, all of the twelve Apostles, except Judas, were called to be Apostles in the Galilee region. This prophecy has still not been fulfilled, but when Christ comes back a second time He will fulfill it.

Zebulun did receive land that was very fertile and very productive. She got the city of Gath-hepher (**19:13**), which was the birthplace of Jonah (II Kings 14:25). She also got a city named Bethlehem. Now this Bethlehem is not the famous Bethlehem-Ephrathah, the small village in Judah spoken of by Micah as the birth place of the Messiah (Micah 5:2). This is the Bethlehem in Zebulun, which was located about 8 miles west of Nazareth.

Zebulun received its inheritance from God and they were expected by God to trust Him and use it for His glory. Zebulun was a quiet, behind scenes tribe. You don’t have to be in the limelight to do great things for God.

DISTRIBUTION #2 – The fourth lot falls to Issachar. **19:17-23**

Issachar received a beautiful inheritance. The land was potentially rich and very productive. Of all the places Issachar received, the most famous was the valley of Jezreel (**19:18**). This valley became a noted and “perennial” battlefield of Israel.

It was the valley where David fought many battles with the Philistines. Truth is it appears that the people remained in the mountain areas until the time of David. For example, in the time of the Judges, Deborah and Barak came down out of the mountains to attack Sisera in this valley (Judges 4:14-15; 5:15). We know during the days of Gideon that the Midianites and the Amalekites were living in the valley (Judges 7:12).

So what we have here is a tribe of God’s people who have great land given to them by God who are too afraid to move forward and live in and enjoy this land. Instead of this tribe enjoying this land, they would live in these mountains for 300-400 years until David surfaced.

This teaches us something important. It is possible to be saved and not enjoying the full blessings or achieving the full accomplishments of God. It is possible to spend a lifetime living in the mountains when God wants us to enjoy His wealth in the plush valley. We must trust God and by faith fight enemies and move forward for Him.

We must face things and obey Scripture and our relationship will be plush no matter where we are.

DISTRIBUTION #3 – The fifth lot falls to Asher. **19:24-31**

Asher received potentially some of the most productive land in all of the Promised Land and most of it was controlled by the Philistines. Asher received land along the coast of the Mediterranean from Mount Carmel to Sidon and Tyre. She inherited “the fortified city of Tyre” (v. 29). This was ancient Tyre.

Anna the prophetess, named Anna, who was alive when Jesus was born, was from the tribe of Asher (Luke 2:36).

Asher had some of the best potential land in the world. Yet we know that Asher did not take much of it and still hasn't. This tribe has never lived up to its potential and never really has accomplished all that God would have it accomplish.

May this not be the testimony of our lives. When God saved us, He gave us great potential, not only to accomplish everything He wants us to accomplish, but to enjoy a wonderful and full life. We need to move forward for the glory of God.

DISTRIBUTION #4 – The sixth lot falls to Naphtali. **19:32-39**

Of all the land distribution, this area right here became extremely important when Jesus Christ was on earth because much of N.T. history occurred in this very area. Christ ministered extensively in the land that went to Naphtali.

It was a land filled with productive valleys and fortified cities. It would be approximately 1400 years before Christ would show up on the scene, but when He did, this was the area that received much of His attention.

The lesson to learn from this is that we must not be too quick to write off something of God that doesn't presently look like too much. God may do His greatest work in that very person or place.

DISTRIBUTION #5 – The seventh lot falls to Dan. **19:40-48**

It has been said that the least desirable portion of the Promised Land was given to Dan. It was a productive land but it was in Philistine hands.

We know from **verse 47** that Dan could fight and conquer. The reason why they didn't do it was not because of capability but because of a lack of confidence.

They did have the capability to take the land but did not have the confidence in God to do it. They settled for something less than God wanted them to have.

DISTRIBUTION #6 – The special portion to Joshua. **19:49-51**

Joshua saw to it that everyone else got their land first and then he was last.

Two of Moses' servants had survived this history and both had been spies, who had gone into this land—Caleb and Joshua. Caleb got his place of residency first (Josh. 14:6-15) and Joshua got his last.

J. Vernon McGee said, in conformity with the Word and will of God, the people saw to it that their leader had a retirement package. Joshua's choice of cities was Timnath-serah, a city in the hill country, within his own tribe of Ephraim.

This city was located on the north side of a mountain (Judges 2:8-9) and it was the place Joshua chose to live and die. It certainly was not a rich fertile paradise. In fact, it was rugged, mountainous and relatively infertile.

One of the final glimpses we get of Joshua is that of a builder. He built the city and his home (Joshua 19:50). He could pick any place he wanted and this was the place he wanted. Joshua was well advanced in years yet he was still on the move.

There are some lessons to be learned about leadership here:

- 1) God's people saw to it that their leader was cared for in his elderly years.
- 2) God's leader saw everything through; he completed the project of taking and distributing all of the land.
- 3) God's leader demonstrated courtesy and humility in looking after other's needs before his own.

Godly leaders must often look out for the interests of others before their own. They sometimes put themselves out and make personal sacrifices of their own goals and desires and wants.

- 4) God's leader did finally receive a great blessing.

After the war and the rivalry and the competition, he was fully and finally rewarded.

Some of this land looked great and some looked grueling, but all of it was there by the sovereignty of God. If people would trust God and obey God, they would experience great blessings regardless of what land they received.

PRACTICAL LESSONS:

- 1) We need to stay faithful right where we are right now.**
- 2) We need to keep at fighting a good fight and never quit or give up.**