

# CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE- PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian  
Church, 10 Downing St. Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

## DHW BIBLE CLASS

### LESSON 13

#### JOSHUA

#### CHAPTER 15-19

**Joshua 19:51** – *“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.”*

### INTRODUCTION

The children of Israel had completed the conquest of the Land of Canaan. The rationale for the acquisition of the Land dates back to the time of Abraham, the father of the nation of Israel. The LORD God, Creator of the heaven and the earth, had made a covenant with Abraham and promised him that He would give the land of Canaan to him and his descendents for an everlasting possession.<sup>1</sup> God had kept His

---

<sup>1</sup>Genesis 17:7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after

promise. God was with the Israelites in acquiring the Land, which was a necessary process. But the more needful thing for the children of Israel was to settle down in the Land. Each tribe and its families would be given a portion of the Land. They were to destroy or drive out all the inhabitants of the Land.<sup>2</sup> God’s ultimate purpose was to have His chosen people, the children of Israel, settled in the Land and be the light and salt in the world that is in darkness and moral decay.

These chapters 15 to 19 record the course of actions taken by Joshua and the children of Israel to claim and settle in the Land. Our initial thought is that it would not be difficult for the Israelites to claim the portion of their Land inheritance. After all, the major opposition had been destroyed; and the inhabitants of the Land had been subdued. The tribal Israelites should now move in and carry out what God

---

thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. 8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. (See also Genesis 15.)

<sup>2</sup>Exodus 23:23 For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off. 24 Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works: but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images. . . .27 I will send my fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee. 28 And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee.

had commanded them to do. In addition, God reiterated His promise to be with them to drive out the Canaanites. Caleb's claim of Hebron as his inheritance was an example for them to follow. Like Caleb, they should trust the LORD, be courageous and take the Land. We shall see that not all the Israelites wholly followed the LORD; as a result, the children of Israel would suffer from the actions of the remaining Canaanites in later years.

These five chapters can be broadly divided into the following sections:

1. The Allotment given to Judah (15:1-63)
2. The Allotment given to Joseph (16:1-17:18)
3. The Allotment given to the remaining seven tribes (18:1-19:51)

The reading of these chapters may be tedious to some students, but as the Apostle Paul said that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4). We shall therefore prayerfully read these chapters and discover precious truths and principles to help in our walk with the LORD our God.

## COMMENTARY

### Allotment Given to Judah – 15:1-63

The distribution of the Land was by lot as commanded by the LORD. This means that it was done before the LORD, who was the final authority. The tribe of Judah was given priority in the distribution of the land. It should have been the tribe of Reuben, who was the first-born of Jacob's twelve sons. But Reuben had forfeited his first-born rights because of his sin, which he committed against his father.<sup>3</sup> Simeon and Levi, the second and third son, were next in line, but they too forfeited their birthrights when they dishonoured the name of their father by cruelly killing the Shechemites.<sup>4</sup> Jacob blessed his

---

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 35:22 And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard *it*. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve:

Genesis 49:3 Reuben, thou *art* my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power: 4 Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou *it*: he went up to my couch.

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 34:25 And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males. 26 And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out. . . . 30 And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I *being* few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house.

fourth son, Judah, who would be the bearer of the sceptre, the symbol of authority and royalty.<sup>5</sup>

Judah was allotted the southern region of Canaan bordering with Edom as its neighbour, Israel's long-time enemy (refer to your Bible map at the back of your Bible). Caleb was from the tribe of Judah. He was specially given Hebron which he had asked for. He killed the three sons of Anak, and moved onwards to take Debir, a city near Hebron. The taking of Debir was assisted by Othniel, the son of his brother, Kenaz. When Othniel took the city Debir, Caleb rewarded him with his daughter, Achsah, and a parcel of the land (15:17). There was a lack of water in the Land, and without water, the Land was of little use. So Achsah went to ask her father, Caleb, for springs of water so that they could irrigate the Land. Caleb willingly gave her two springs of water, an upper and a lower part of the land so that the Land could be

---

<sup>5</sup> Genesis 49:9 Judah *is* a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? 10 The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*.

The tribe of Judah led in battle after the death of Joshua (Judges 1:1). The first judge or deliverer of the children of Israel was from the tribe of Judah (Judges 3:9). King David and Solomon were from the tribe of Judah (2 Samuel 5:12). The Lion of the tribe of Judah is the greater Son of David, the Lord Jesus Christ (Revelation 5:5)

productive. This generous act of Caleb shows that he was a kind and loving father, who cared for his daughter and son-in-law. One spot worth noting was the beautiful oasis at Engedi. It is situated just north of Masada by the Dead Sea, and the city of salt might be what we now know as Qumran where the Dead Sea scrolls were found in 1947.<sup>6</sup> It is a sad note that the children of Judah could not drive out the Jebusites, who were the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They dwelt with the children of Judah, and Jerusalem was not taken until the time of David (1 Chronicles 11:4-6).

### **Allotment Given to Joseph – 16:1-17:18**

The next lot fell on the tribe of Joseph, who was the first-born of Jacob's favourite wife, Rachel. Joseph had two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim; in that order (16:4). But Ephraim was taken first instead of Manasseh, who was the first-born. The reason for the younger taking precedence over the elder was that Jacob had blessed Ephraim above Manasseh.<sup>7</sup> The families of the

---

<sup>6</sup> A. Graeme Auld, *Joshua, Judges, & Ruth*, p.92.

<sup>7</sup> Genesis 48:13 And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought *them* near unto him. 14 And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid *it* upon Ephraim's head, who *was* the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh *was* the firstborn.

children of Ephraim were given cities separate from those given to the children of Manasseh. Once again, the children of Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanites. The former dwelt with them and the Ephraimites forced them to be their servants and even imposed tribute on them, and thereby, gaining additional wealth. This materialistic attitude of the Ephraimites was a double affront to the LORD: they disobeyed the LORD by not driving out the Canaanites, and they did not wholly trust the LORD for their provision and prosperity. The LORD had clearly said that the Canaanites must not live with them in the Land.<sup>8</sup> The next lot was the tribe of Manasseh. The Land given to them was just north of Ephraim (refer to map). The general feeling of the children of Israel was that they felt strong and powerful. Then instead of obeying and trusting the LORD by driving out the Canaanites, the Manassehites, like the Ephraimites, exacted tribute from the Canaanites in order to get additional wealth.

Moreover, the Ephraimites and the Manassehites complained to Joshua that they were given “one lot and one portion to inherit” (17:14). They wanted more because they had increased in their number. They

piously attributed this increase to the LORD. They failed to realize that the other tribes also experienced an increase in their numbers. It was a problem for Joshua, but he dealt with them resolutely. Joshua told them that if as they said that they were “a great people”, they should move into action by clearing the forests and driving out the inhabitants of the Land. If the hill country was not enough for them, they should cut down the trees, drive out the Canaanites even though they might have iron chariots, and they could increase the boundaries of their respective lot (17:15-18). The tribes of Joseph’s sons were not content with the LORD’S gift and they were guilty of a deeper problem of distrusting the LORD’S ability to provide for them adequately. The Ephraimites and Manassehites had forgotten who the LORD was. Did they not remember that He was the God who brought them out of Egypt in a great way, and who defeated the mighty Pharaoh and his charioteers who were all drowned in the Red Sea? Did they not also remember that God supernaturally provided and sustained their forefathers in the wanderings of the wilderness for thirty-eight years?

Before we move on to the allotment of the seven tribes, Zelophehad, a descendant of Manasseh, had no sons but daughters. There were five of them (17:3) and they came to Eleazar, the

---

<sup>8</sup> Exodus 23:33 They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee.

priest, Joshua, and the tribal chiefs. They reminded them that the LORD had commanded Moses to give them a land inheritance among them. When their father died, he had no sons. It was customary then for a man who had no sons, to divert his inheritance to the nearest male relative. These five sisters appealed to Moses then that they should not be deprived of an inheritance. Moses brought the matter to the LORD. The LORD agreed with the women and commanded that when the acquisition of the Promised Land was completed, they were entitled to a portion of the Land. These five women remembered the promise of the LORD after so many years, and they acted in faith for the actualization of the promise.

### **Allotment Given to the Remaining Seven Tribes – 18:1-19:51**

The tribe of Judah, the tribe of Ephraim and the remaining half-tribe of Manasseh had their lots. Seven tribes were left. But before these remaining tribes were allotted, something significant took place. The Tent of Meeting and the Tabernacle which had been in Gilgal since they entered the land were moved to Shiloh (pron. *shee-loh*). The new place was situated in the territory of Ephraim.

This sudden change of scene was significant because it ushered in a new beginning for the children of Israel. Up to this moment, Gilgal had

been their base (Joshua 14:6). Now it was going to be Shiloh, which was between Shechem and Bethel. It was more central and accessible to all the twelve tribes (refer to map). It would also be the centre of their worship of the LORD during the pre-monarchic period. Although it is not mentioned, the LORD must have directed Joshua to make this move. Knowing the person, Joshua would not have dared to do it if the LORD had not instructed him.<sup>9</sup> The LORD'S intention was for His people to come together to worship Him in spirit and in truth, to rejoice and to enjoy His peace and rest.

Seven tribes had not received their land inheritance. They had been negligent. Joshua lamented: "How long are ye slack to go to possess the land which the LORD God of our fathers hath given you?" (18:3). Joshua had to push them into action. He came out with a plan. He told them to choose three men from each tribe, and he would send them to survey the Land. They would then describe the

---

<sup>9</sup> Deuteronomy 12:5 But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, *even* unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come: 6 And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks: 7 And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee.

Land in writing and bring the reports back to him. They would then divide the remaining Land into seven parts and hand the result to Joshua, who would then cast lots for them “before the LORD our God” (18:4, 6). This last phrase is important because when the lot has been cast, the recipient cannot reject or change it. The LORD God was the final authority and arbiter. Once again, it is mentioned that the Levites would have no Land inheritance. So, they were not involved. It was agreeable to the seven tribes, and they set out to do in accordance with Joshua’s instructions. They did precisely what Joshua had instructed them to do: surveyed the land, divided it into seven parts, and gave the result to Joshua. The seven tribes gathered in Shiloh in front of the Tabernacle before the LORD (18:10).

The seven tribes were allotted their Land in this order: Benjamin, Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali and Dan. An interesting comment by the divine writer is said of Simeon’s inheritance. It is written that the children of Judah gave a portion of their land to the children of Simeon. The land allotted to the children of Judah was too large for them. This was a very considerate act of kindness and generosity. Jacob their forefather had pronounced a curse on Simeon and his descendants that they would not be united and would be scattered. The children of Judah truly

lived up to the trust that Jacob had in them.

There was still one more family who had not received its Land inheritance. It was Joshua’s. Joshua had completed the dividing of the land to all the tribes. Now it was his turn, and the children of Israel gave him the city which he asked for. He asked for Timnath-serah in mount Ephraim. The name “Timnath-serah” means “My abundant portion”. How Joshua reflected his gratitude towards the LORD and considered his mountainous country an abundant lot. He showed himself a true leader by waiting until every tribe had got its Land inheritance before claiming his. The whole exercise began with the granting of Caleb’s inheritance and ended with the granting of Joshua’s. Interestingly, were they not the two spies out of the ten who encouraged the Israelites to enter and claim the Promised Land at Kadesh-barnea?<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Numbers 14:6 And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, *which were* of them that searched the land, rent their clothes: 7 And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, *is* an exceeding good land. 8 If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. 9 Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they *are* bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD *is* with us: fear them not.

This set-up of the completion of the land inheritance truly honours the two faithfuls!

### **PRACTICAL VALUE**

God has proven that He is true and faithful to His Word as Jeremiah declares in Lamentations (3:23): "...great is thy faithfulness." We have seen from chapters 15 to 19 the fulfillment of God's covenant promise to Abraham that He would give the land of Canaan to his descendants for everlasting possession (Genesis 17:8). God brought the nation Israel out of bondage in Egypt and led His chosen people through the wilderness for thirty-eight years. It was an arduous journey, and finally they crossed the Jordan River to claim the Promised Land. There were seven powerful Canaanite tribes occupying the Land, and the LORD God of Israel empowered and energized their leader Joshua to conquer and possess the Land which He promised them. Now they had the Land. God kept His promise. Modern Israel is still the chosen people of the LORD God. The children of Israel were scattered to the ends of the world since A.D. 70 and not until after the Second World War on May 15, 1948 did the Israelites have the right to return to their homeland and regain nationhood among all the other nations of the world. That was a stupendous miracle.

God had promised to give them the Land for an everlasting possession. Today, Israel is being attacked and her right to exist is being threatened with extermination. It will never happen. God is faithful and true to His Word. Israel will go through another holocaust, but this time her Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, will return and smite all the nations, and will vindicate Israel and establish His millennium kingdom of peace, prosperity and justice.

If only the Israelites in possessing the Promised Land had obeyed the LORD by destroying and driving out the Canaanites; things would have been different. But they disobeyed. But Caleb and Joshua were faithful and they trusted the LORD implicitly. They obeyed God and did His will. We see that God knew how to honour and reward them.

The lesson simply is to obey God and do His will. God will be with us; and we will have the victory. This has always been the way of the LORD.

Discontentment, exhibited by the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, is borne out of a distrust of God's goodness and greatness. It is a sin not to trust God. If we have a problem, we should go to God in prayer, as He has taught us. God's hand is not too short to help. His loving-kindness has no bounds. Indeed, His power and

tender-mercies are from everlasting to everlasting.

Someone said this of God's intention for His people: *"The final triumphant entry into the land flowing with milk and honey is the victorious song of the soul that triumphs in Christ. It displays the overcoming life of the soul set free from self, finding its fulfilment and rest in the place of God's provision. This is God's ultimate purpose for His people"* AMEN

had very little water (15:19). What lesson can we learn from Achsah's request to her father, and the latter's response to her request?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**Daily Readings**

**MONDAY:** Joshua 15:1-63; Luke 11:13; Philipians 4:19.

**TUESDAY:** Joshua 16:1-10; Genesis 48:1-20; Romans 6:12-14;

**WEDNESDAY:** Joshua 17:1-18; Numbers 27:1-11; Hebrews 4:16.

**THURSDAY:** Joshua 18:1-28; 2 Peter 1:3-8; Hebrews 6:11-14.

**FRIDAY:** Joshua 19:1-51; 2 Peter 1:4-11.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Caleb gave Achsah his daughter in marriage to Othniel, his nephew, and the "south land" which

2. Contrast the spirit of Caleb (14:12) with that of Ephraim and Manasseh, the children of Joseph (16:9, 10)? What were the results of Caleb's attitude and the LORD'S actions? What can you do to become more like Caleb?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

3. What was Joshua's answer to Ephraim's complaints (17:14-18)?

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

4. What wrong attitude is Joshua's pointed question designed to correct (18:3)?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

5. What leadership qualities would you say Joshua showed in chapters 17:3-5, 14-18; 18:3-10)?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

6. How is Joshua a model for Christian leaders in 19:49-50?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

7. In reviewing these chapters, why do you think the children of Israel had difficulty in taking full possession of the land?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---