

Joshua 18-19 | Dave Stough

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[0:00] Well, I was going to start out my message today by saying I'm thankful for the Zoom platform that we can meet on.! Guess what? I still am. But I am even more thankful that we're going to be meeting next week.

And maybe the Lord would come soon and we would meet together without any social distancing at that point. We'll be in the presence and the glory of the Lord. I tell you that study in Revelation on Wednesdays has done the thing I needed to, I believe, and helping me.

And hopefully if you're in there to just think about what it's going to be like to be with the Lord.

Today, we are in Joshua chapter 18 and 19.

And we're going to talk about receiving an inheritance. You can bookmark Joshua 18 in your Bible. Hopefully you got your Bible because I won't have the scripture on the screen.

But you can bookmark Joshua 18. We'll be reading most of that chapter. Now, these two chapters, 18 and 19, they get into the particulars of allotting the land for Israel to claim their inheritance.

[1:16] I'd like to go back a little bit, though, before we get into that passage to give us some context and go over some really good things we've heard up to this point that we can take with us.

So when you look at the book of Joshua, there's 24 chapters. The first 12 chapters are primarily about the conquest of the land.

And the last 12 are about the land being divided up into an inheritance. So what we've seen mostly so far are some really good spiritual insights for doing spiritual battle.

Now that we're going to look at the inheritance portion of Joshua, I think it's important for us to go over the applicational part to us in regards to our inheritance.

What is it? How do we receive it? But first, let's go back and look at those practical lessons from the first part of the book. From the beginning of the book of Joshua, God has told Joshua, in essence, you're going to face enemies stronger than you.

[2:34] So make sure you stay close to me in the word. Stay with me. Be courageous. Don't be afraid. Just look to me. These enemies are big, but just look to me.

And so thus, really, the theme verse for the whole book is found in chapter 1. And it says, This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may observe and do according to all that is written in it.

For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed.

For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. When Israel stopped to reinstitute the Passover and circumcision before they did battle, We learn how important it is for us to remember our identity as God's covenant of people before we go do battle.

It's like God is saying to us, you need to know who you are in me before you do battle. That was the big takeaway from there for me. When Israel made the monument of the twelve stones when they crossed the Jordan, They did it so that they would have something to remind them of the way that God did the miracle of getting them into the land by splitting the waters of the Jordan.

[4:05] That serves as a reminder to us that it's important for us to have things in our lives, whether they be some kind of physical reminder or some way of remembering all the ways that God has led us individually to get us to where we are.

This is important to remember that God will do things in your lives, especially when you're facing the giants, right? Another stone monument in the book of Joshua was the monument that went over

Achan and his family.

It reminds us that sin is costly. The Lord had Israel pause from battle to rest and worship and read the law at Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, Teaching us the importance for us to take time to worship and remember the Lord, Not just on Sunday, but when we're doing battle, right in the middle of battle, God had them stop and do that.

We saw Israel get deceived by the Gibeonites because they did not stop to first consult the Lord before making a decision. God is saying, don't get independent and forget to consult me when you're faced with something you're not sure about.

We saw how God showed up to strengthen and fight for Israel in the morning after they marched all night to defend the giving nights against the kings of the south.

[5:35] Teaching us that the need for discipline and endurance is there while we wait on the Lord. We learn that Caleb's courage and boldness to face warriors bigger, stronger, and much younger than he was did not come from himself, that courage.

But it came from the knowledge that God would deliver on what he promised. Caleb's courage and his inheritance were a result of his faith in God's abilities.

Since remembering is a big lesson in the school of God, I thought it important to go over some of those key truths again. My desire for today's message is the same.

I pray that we have some truth, a truth like that, a central focus that will make a difference in our lives if we take time to pray individually before God about it.

Let's go ahead and read Joshua 18, 1 through 10 together. Excuse me while I get a drink first.

Hopefully you got your Bibles there or your phone.

[6:51] The whole assembly of the Israelites gathered at Shiloh and set up the tent of meeting there. The land was subdued before them under their control.

But there were still seven tribes who had not yet received their inheritance. So Joshua said to the Israelites, How long will you wait before you begin to take possession of the land that the Lord, the God of your ancestors, has given you?

Appoint three men from each tribe. I will send them out to make a survey of the land and to write a description of it according to the inheritance of each.

Then they will return to me. You are to divide the land in the seven parts. Judah is to remain in his territory on the south and the tribes of Joseph in their territory on the north.

After you have written descriptions of the seven parts of the land, bring them here to me and I will cast lots for you in the presence of the Lord our God.

[7:59] The Levites, however, do not get a portion among you because the priestly service of the Lord is their inheritance. And Gad, Reuben, and the half-tribe of Manasseh have already received their inheritance on the east side of the Jordan.

Moses, the servant of the Lord, gave it to them. As the men started on their way to map out the land, Joshua instructed them, Go and make a survey of the land and write a description of it.

Then return to me and I will cast lots for you here at Shiloh in the presence of the Lord. So the men left and went through the land.

They wrote its description on a scroll, town by town, in seven parts, and returned to Joshua in the camp at Shiloh. Joshua then cast lots for them in Shiloh in the presence of the Lord.

Now, this text comes toward the end of the tribes claiming their inheritance.

[9:12] The previous two chapters show some of the other distribution going on. Judah, Ephraim, Manasseh, Gad, and Reuben already claimed their inheritance.

In those chapters. So these seven tribes still haven't claimed their inheritance. Notice that in verse 1 it says, The whole assembly of Israel gathered at Shiloh to set up the tabernacle.

Or in this passage, the tabernacle is called the tent of meeting. Now, if you remember, the tabernacle was down south of Shiloh.

We'll look at a map in a second. But the tabernacle was closer to the Jordan River, not far from Jericho. That's where they put it when they first came into the land. So now that Israel has a land under control, it is important to have a central location for easier access for the nation as a whole.

The tabernacle, of course, is where worship and meeting with God primarily took place under the law. The presence of God is there in the tabernacle, don't forget, in the Holy of Holies.

[10:32] It is the presence of the Lord that it is in his presence that we really learn what he wants. It is in the presence of God that things happen and direction is given to those of us who seek.

Joshua and Eleazar cast lots to determine the inheritance, it says, in the presence of the Lord. Now it makes it a point to say that three times, twice in 18 and once in 19.

I think it's in the presence of the Lord that things are settled and seen for what they really are. Now, notice here in verse 3 in Joshua, he asks a question.

He says, How long will you wait before you begin to take possession of the land that the Lord, the God of your fathers, has given you?

How long will you wait? Now, when I first read that verse, I could almost feel that question jumping off the page at me. Have you guys ever had time in the Word where you're just kind of like, Oh, I got to listen to this. I got to pray about this.

[11:50] It was that question that led me to what I want to talk about today. Here's what it made me do. I had to ask myself, Have I claimed the inheritance that God has waiting for me?

What can I do now in this life that's going to affect that, either negatively or positively? So, before we get into that, let's take a look at the map for the allotment of the land.

Bear with me here for just a second while I share that. Okay. Okay, you guys have that in front of you now?

Good. Okay. So, now notice, it starts out, well, actually, chapter 18. Let me do this. Let me point out the tribes, the seven tribes.

There was Benjamin, Simeon, and up here you had Zebulun, Issachar, Naphtali, Asher, and then Dan down here.

[12:57] Those are the seven tribes. Now, there's a few points to look at this, but most of the rest of chapter 18 is about Benjamin getting his inheritance.

And chapter 19 is all about describing the towns, et cetera, and the borders of each tribe that gets each of these other tribes. Now, I will say, look at Benjamin, where his allotment is where Jerusalem is, where Jericho is, and actually you can't see it on this map, but it's where Bethel is also.

Then it goes on to talk about Simeon down here. If you remember, a couple weeks ago, Kent was talking about Judah's inheritance, and he went on to talk a little bit about the character of the founding patriarchs for each tribe.

And if you notice, Simeon's borders are inside of Judah's allotment. And the text in chapter 19 makes it a point to say that twice.

And so you have to kind of take note a little bit. If you remember, Kent made the point of saying that Simeon, him and Levi really had like an anger streak that was uncontrolled, and they did some things.

[14:20] And it doesn't sound like that we can tell that they were repentant of it. And so what we're seeing here by way of application is the difference between Judah and Simeon.

And now I understand that the size of the tribe is not everything. Sometimes there's different reasons for the allotments. But we can say that at least in part, the tribal allotments had something to do with the founding patriarch.

So not really much else to say in regards to those tribes. However, can you guys see me now? Okay.

All right. There we go. Thank you. I would say that I need to learn my technology a little better here. There we go. Okay. So now Israel's inheritance had to do with the promise given to Abraham, which were land and numerous descendants.

[15:30] That would make a mighty nation from which the Messiah would come. So really what they're looking at is they would be blessed with the land, as we've seen, descendants, and physical prosperity when they obeyed the Lord.

Primarily, Israel's inheritance was a material one involving physical blessings given in the here and now. So now, just as our inheritance will be, the amount of reward was determined by the deeds done in faith and obedience to God.

So we could say God was and is looking for faithfulness when he gives out rewards. However, our inheritance is not rewarded tribally or corporately.

It's done individually. 2 Corinthians 5:10 The inheritance promised to believers who make up the church of Jesus Christ is a spiritual inheritance.

It has to do with rewards given out to us in heaven in the very presence in the glory of God. 1 Peter 3 and 4.

[17:07] In verse 4. I'm sorry. Chapter 1. Verse 3 and 4 say, Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his great mercy, he has given us a new birth into a living hope and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade.

This inheritance is kept in heaven for you. So specifically, what is the inheritance we will receive? Will we be given positions of responsibility in the new Jerusalem? I've heard people talk about that. Will our reward have to do with the size of the dwelling place that Jesus talked about in John 14? He did say, I am going away to prepare a place for you. The way I understand it, that is going to be part of our inheritance. However, I think there will be something much more important to us than places or positions when we are in the presence of God.

It's something very important to God. Let me read to you something the Lord Jesus prayed in John 17 just before he went to the cross.

[18:34] John 17 verse 5. Oh, Father, glorify me together with yourself with the glory which I had with you before the world was.

Verse 20. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message. Verse 21. That all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you, that they also may be one in us. Verse 23. I am them and you in me so that they may be brought to complete union. Then the world would know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Father, verse 24. Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am and to see my glory, the glory you have given me, because you love me before the creation of the world.

Do you see in these verses a relationship between unity, love, and the glory of God?

[19:53] Jesus said that because we are in him and in the Father, he prays that we will share the same oneness and love that God the Father shares with God the Son.

He wants that for us now. But Jesus goes on to pray that he wants us to be with him where he is so that we can see his glory, the glory that the Father and the Son shared before the foundation of the world.

So Jesus is praying, Lord, make them one with us. Father, make them one with us so that they can experience this oneness that we have.

And it's in this glory that we had before the world even began that they're going to partake in. So this glory that Jesus is talking about, I think, is a reflection of the eternal love and oneness that the Godhead shares with one another, of which we will be partakers by the grace of God.

So at that time, when our salvation is made complete, and even these bodies we live in are made perfect, we will be in the very presence of God, sharing in the glory of God, which is somehow a reflection of his perfect love and unity.

[21:32] Think about that for a while. I'm sure we're going to be overwhelmed with gratitude and thankfulness to the one who saved us.

Now, Scripture goes on to talk about that in regards to inheritance, it goes on to talk about that we'll receive crowns. There's several mentioned in the New Testament.

I pulled up a few here. 1 Timothy 4 speaks of a crown of righteousness given by the righteous judge to all those who love his appearing.

That instantly makes me think of the verse in 1 John that says, Abide in him that you may not be ashamed before him at his coming. 1 Peter 5 talks of a crown of glory for elders who serve faithfully. James 1 tells us of a crown of life given to those who show their love for God by not sending one tempted. Revelation 2 talks about a crown of life given to martyrs.

[22:46] There's more, like I said, but it seems to be, though, that the main criteria God has for giving rewards is faithfulness to him when being tested.

If you've read Revelation 4, you know there's a worship service where the redeemed fall down on their faces before him who sits on the throne and worshiping and worshiping and worshiping and cast their crowns before the throne saying, You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power.

For you created all things. And by your will, they exist and were created. So get this picture. We will partake in the glory of God as grateful worshipers, casting back to God in worship the rewards he gave us.

It's going to be a way of saying, Thank you, Lord. Romans 8.18 says, I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

[24:09] We're going to partake of the glory of God. I don't know about you, but I want to have something to say.

Thank you, Jesus, for all that you've done for me. So that, I believe, is the essence of our inheritance.

Now, there's more to it, but that's got to be the essence of it. This inheritance that doesn't spoil our faith. Now, keep in mind, just as Kent was making a point a couple of weeks ago, we all have an inheritance.

We're all going to be there who have trusted the Lord Jesus and him alone for the salvation from their sin. But we are going to be rewarded for the things that we've done now.

So what else, excuse me, what else do we know from Scripture about our part in achieving crowns or other rewards God has for us? So we know Israel wage war with their enemies in obedience to God to claim their inheritance.

[25:20] We wage war with our enemies in obedience to God to claim our inheritance. Israel had physical enemies and physical blessings. We have spiritual enemies and spiritual blessings.

We wage war against our own fallen flesh and the demonic realm, which is in charge of this crazy world around us. Now, this future reward of an inheritance is determined in the here and now. The degree to which we walk in the spiritual blessings God has already provided for us will determine the degree of reward we get there.

What do I really mean by that? Let's take a look at a picture of this to make this a little more concrete.

Bear with me here. Okay, there we go.

[26:26] So, take about, you know, take a few seconds, kind of look at that yourself.

Just study it. Look at the particulars on it. Kind of get a general idea of it. I'm going to get a drink of water. Okay. Okay.

So, really, the way I see it, this is a picture of two ways a believer in Christ can walk while you're on earth.

Before Israel crossed the Jordan and entered the land, they wandered in the desert. When they crossed the Jordan, they entered into the promises that God had for them.

When they entered the land, they engaged in a warfare that, in essence, God fought for them. The illustration and lessons from Joshua are apparent to us when you start comparing and contrasting Israel and the church.

[27:35] Excuse me. We, as believers in Christ, like Israel, have to learn to trust God to grow in obedience. We cross over our Jordan River by claiming Christ's death and resurrection as a means for us to be freed from the priority of self that is in all of us, which is the big struggle.

Our sin nature still wants to exalt itself. But when we humbly see it for what it is, sin, then we have the cross of Christ that we can count on to enable us to live a new life.

Colossians 3 says, for you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. Therefore, set your mind on things above, not on things of the earth.

And, of course, don't forget Galatians 2.20. I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live. Yet not I, but Christ lives in me. So when we cross over this Jordan here, it's really surrendering.

And it's a way to be freed from the priority of self. So a believer who has done that starts to enter into the promises that God has waiting for him.

[29:03] Now, keep in mind, Paul said, I die daily. Right? So the reality of this picture, you know, not one picture fits all.

But the reality of it is that this is a glimpse of a growing Christian. Hopefully, he's going to the left side of it, crossing the Jordan. But we know that daily, this is a choice.

And hopefully, as we get older and as time goes on, we're doing that more and more. Look at what happens to a person who is claiming the promises of God.

On the left side, just over here, when Israel entered the promised land, they were in. They claimed their, they had to do battles, but they claimed their inheritance.

We, when we cross over, we go into this realm of the heavenly places. It's living now here on earth in the heavenly places. So a person walking now in the promises of God by the power of the Holy Spirit realizes their position in Christ.

[30:14] That is why I call that up there living now in the heavenly places. Ephesians 2, 5, and 6 says, Yes, one day we will physically be there in those heavenly places, but we are currently there right now spiritually because of the baptism of the Spirit, which we had when we first trusted Christ.

It's in this union, heaven above is brought into the here and now in our lives. The current reality is that we are inseparably united and spiritually united with Christ.

So, we are in Christ, and he is at the right hand of the Father. Therefore, we are seated in the heavenly places. So, this is how we can presently have these, the fruits of the Spirit, the armor of God, the gifts of the Spirit.

It's how we have the abundant life. This, this is, this realm of living is where we, how we lay, the motivation for laying up treasure in heaven.

It's how, when we're bombarded by the world or when we're tempted, it's how we rest in Christ. So, these verses, you know, if you want, you could take some time.

[31:48] It's good devotion reading before the Lord about entering into his presence. But, that's it. That, that is kind of a picture.

And hopefully it's, I'm not being too concrete here, or, but I'm, hopefully that's helpful. So, bear with me again.

Okay. So, really, we have some of heaven, like I was saying, in us right now. And because we're seated with Christ in the heavenly places, I've heard it said that God never lets anything happen on earth that's not first established in heaven.

Our spiritual blessings are already established in heaven. It pleased God to enlist us in the battle to defeat the evil and the evil one.

What still needs to be established, though, is how will we be rewarded? I hope Joshua 18, verse 3, spoke to you as it did me.

[33:13] Remember, he asked, how long will you wait before you claim your inheritance? May the Lord give each of us insight into this as we take time to pray about this before him.

You know, in eternity, we'll, there's this picture painted in Ephesians chapter 2, verse 7. And it's a picture, it'll make us, let me just read the scripture.

It's a lot better for me to do that. God raised us up and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ, that in the ages to come, he might show the exceeding riches of his grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

I pray that truth motivates us more and more as we see the day approaching, that we're going to be with him.