

Joshua 18:1-28

The Failure of the Seven Tribes

At this point, the Tabernacle was moved from Gilgal to Shiloh, a more central location in the territory of Ephraim. The Tabernacle would remain here for 369 years until the time of Samuel, when because of the sins of the sons of Eli it was removed.

The chapter also defines the territory of the lot cast for Benjamin.

Joshua 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."

Shiloh = "place of rest or tranquillity"

The word is also used in the prophecy of Jacob to his son Judah:

- **Genesis 49:10** - "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."

Shiloh here could be translated as "peacemaker" or "the peaceable one"

The Targum identifies "Shiloh" here as "Messiah, whose is the kingdom."

The "prince of peace" is one of the titles of Messiah (**Isaiah 9:6**)

- **Romans 5:1** - "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Tabernacle, which as the resting place of God in the camp of Israel, is now situated at Shiloh - designated as the place of peace, but also a name for Messiah. (Because our "place of peace" in in Christ)

"And the land was subdued before them" -

"subdued" = *kabash* - to tread with the feet. Remember that God had told them he had given the land into their hands already. So, despite the incidences mentioned where Canaanites remained, this is an aspirational statement as well as a spiritual fact.

The statement in Micah shows the meaning of this submission for us today:

- **Micah 7:16-20** - "The nations shall see and be confounded at all their might: they shall lay their hand upon their mouth, their ears shall be deaf. They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth: they shall be afraid of the LORD our God, and shall fear because of thee. Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He

retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue (*kabash*) our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old."

To "subdue" the Canaanites = to "subdue our *iniquities*" This points to the fulfillment of the promise of the coming of the Deliverer in Genesis 3.

- **Genesis 3:15** - "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

...a victory we participate in:

- **Romans 16:20** - "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet."

Falling Short

Joshua 18:2 - "And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes, which had not yet received their inheritance."

Rashi - Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh had already received their inheritance in the days of Moses on the other side of the Jordan; and in the land of Canaan, the lot had already fallen for Judah, and Ephraim, and for the other half tribe of Manasseh.

The remaining tribes were Benjamin, Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan

Joshua 18:3 - "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?"

These apparently were satisfied to live off of the spoils of war from their campaigns and had not asked or applied for the lot to be cast on their behalf. Idleness, indifference, distraction, sloth are now revealed as further reasons we do not claim our inheritance fully.

"slack" = *raphah* - To fall, be cast down. This is the same root word describing the Rephaim, the "fallen ones."

The fallen angels had fallen from their former position in heaven. Here, these tribes had "fallen - *raphah*" from claiming their rightful inheritance. Basically, Joshua is saying they are acting like the Rephaim.

This warning surfaces again for us in the New Testament.

- **Romans 3:23** - "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"

Humankind "falls short" of God's glory. They never reached the tree of life because they settled for the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

- **Galatians 5:4** - "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."

This doesn't mean grace has been taken away from you, only that you have stopped short of it, or fallen away from it, settled for something less. The same was happening with the seven tribes, Joshua is saying. They had "fallen short."

Scouting the Land Again

Joshua 18:4 - "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."

This immediately recalls the original spying out of the land, in which only Joshua and Caleb insisted that Israel could defeat the giants since God was with them (**Numbers 13-14**).

Many of the places and cities we talked about in the border of Judah are now seen again from the opposite border of Benjamin.

Joshua 18:28 - "And Zelah, Eleph, and the Jebusite, which is Jerusalem, Gibeath, and Kirjath; fourteen cities with their villages. This is the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their families."

The future city of Jerusalem is listed with Benjamin as well as Judah because it was split between them.

Summary

Unless Joshua had admonished the seven tribes, Israel could have been locked in a perpetual cycle of settling for less than what God had in store for them.

Their destiny would have died right there!

This chapter is here for us to be warned.

- **1 Corinthians 10:6,11** - "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted....Now these things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come."

Our inheritance is laid out before us. All we have to do is receive it. Where are we "falling short?"

- **Psalm 23:5** - "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over."

This is direct reference and a link back to the conquest of the Promised Land.

The Promised Land was laid out before Israel like bountiful table, but in the presence of the enemies - the giants, the Canaanites, the Rephaim and the sons of the Anakim.

But the Tabernacle has now come into Shiloh the place of tranquillity. The Land is subdued before us. He has given it into our hands.

It's time for us to claim it, release the peace and joy that belong to us, and tread the enemies under our feet.