

Joshua 19:1-51

This chapter describes the lot for the remaining six tribes, and then the inheritance granted to Joshua. Dan's inheritance gives insight into Jesus' reference to the "Gates of Hell" in **Matthew 16**.

Joshua 19:1 - "And the second lot came forth to Simeon, even for the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families: and their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah."

Joshua 19:9 - "Out of the portion of the children of Judah was the inheritance of the children of Simeon: for the part of the children of Judah was too much for them: therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of them."

Judah had 114 cities with their villages, in an area larger than they could occupy. But this also fulfilled the prophecy of Jacob, that the Simeonites should be "divided in Jacob, and scattered in Israel," a result of Simeon and Levi's perversion of the sign and seal of circumcision to exact revenge upon the Shechemites for violating their sister Dinah (See Genesis 34).

- **Genesis 49:7** - "Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel."

Simeon is the only tribe Moses does not bless in **Deuteronomy 33**. The tribe of Judah eventually absorbs the Simeonites, and they disappear from history.

[Levi was also "scattered in Israel," without inheritance. But because of the ministry of Moses and the Levite's zeal after the incident of the golden calf, their were rewarded with the priesthood. Their curse was transformed into a blessing by God's grace.]

The territories of the six remaining tribes are then listed - Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali and Dan.

The Tribe of Dan

Joshua 19:47 - "And the coast of the children of Dan went out too little for them: therefore the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and possessed it, and dwelt therein, and called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father."

Another failure

This all happened some time after the death of Joshua, but is recorded here as part of the laying out of each tribe's (eventual) inheritance. It was probably inserted by Ezra after the captivity.

The coast "went out too little for them," really meaning it simply "went out from them" i.e. they lost part of it:

- **Judges 1:34** - "The Amorites forced the Danites into the hill country and did not allow them to come down into the plain."

The Danites conquest of the city of Leshem or Laish with 600 men is recorded in Judges 18, along with a strange story of Micah, a Levite who apparently served as priest with an idolatrous image. It seems that Dan maintained its own priestly line and set up a graven image that survived until the captivity by the Assyrians.

The tribe of Dan not only lost their inheritance, but in trying to gain a new situation they lost their faith, and set up an idol. There is no mention of seeking God's direction in their assault on Leshem.

Nevertheless, Laish/Leshem/Dan became the northernmost border of Israel, just as Beersheba was the southern extremity. "From Dan to Beersheba" was the phrase to describe the whole land. It was also the location of the source of the stream that becomes the Jordan River, flowing from the cave of Pameas or Paneas.

The Gates of Hell

Laish/Leshem/Dan is called Caesarea Philippi in the New Testament, where Jesus asks "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" and Peter responds, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Then Jesus tells him, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (**Matthew 16**)

Later, Jesus' Transfiguration takes place on Mount Hermon, which overlooked Caesarea Philippi.

Mt. Hermon and Paneas are both associated with some strange myths and Jewish legends.

The fallen angels, according to the Book of Enoch, landed on Mount Hermon for the purpose of polluting God's creation through the creation of giants, "mighty men of old, men of renown" (**Genesis 6**)

See <http://www.reenactingtheway.com/blog/gates-of-hades-didnt-stop-jesus-from-building-his-movement-on-this-rock765300136087716925097>

Josephus described Paneas as the place where there is: "a top of a mountain that is raised to an immense height, and at its side, beneath, or at its bottom, a dark cave opens itself; within which there is a horrible precipice, that descends abruptly to an immeasurable depth: it contains a huge amount of water, which never goes anywhere; and when anybody lets down anything to measure how far down the earth is beneath

the water, no length of cord is sufficient to reach it.”

For centuries prior to Jesus’ visit, people thought spirits of the dead could enter and exit the underworld through the watery abyss in the cave. Like the story in Enoch, Ugaritic/ Canaanite myths tell a story of the *Rephaim*, semi-divine, powerful men with evil intentions who originated from the region around Mount Hermon. The same word is used in the Bible to describe the giants.

A late Old Babylonian fragment of the Epic of Gilgamesh (ANET 504, 5:C:13) states, “the dwelling-place of the Anunnaki” (“Anunnaki” is a group of gods) is in “the Lebanon ranges.” (The Greeks similarly located the home of the gods at another high mountain, Mt. Olympus.) Mount Hermon’s sheer heights and its deep watery abyss in the cave of Paneas made it a natural connection point or “*axis mundi*” for heaven, earth and the underworld.

The prophet Amos mentioned this belief in describing God's victory over Og, the Amorite king of Bashan, the land just to the east of Mt. Hermon and Paneas, and who is described as the “last of the Rephaim.”

-Amos 2:9 - "Yet destroyed I the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars, and he was strong as the oaks; yet I destroyed his fruit from above, and his roots from beneath."

Judges 3:3 and **1 Chronicles 5:23** both mention “Baal Hermon” — a Canaanite deity who lived on Mount Hermon. Baal was the most powerful god among the gods in the region. He could gather the divine council there. As a result, Hermon contended with Zion to be the true “mountain of God.” But the kings of that mountain in the north, Mount Hermon, failed to win the fight, according to the Psalms.

- Psalm 68:15–16 - "A mountain of the gods (Elohim) is the mountain of Bashan (Mt. Hermon). A mountain of many peaks is the mountain of Bashan. Why do you look with envy, O mountains with many peaks, At the mountain which God (or "the gods" - Elohim) has desired for His residence? Surely YHVH will dwell there forever."

In **Psalm 68:22**, Yahweh says, “I will bring them (Israel's enemies) back from Bashan. I will bring them back from the depths of the water,” referring to the cave of Paneas.

The psalmist is saying that God would remove his enemies from Mt. Hermon where they claimed to dwell, and from the cave of Peneas, where they claimed to qccess the underworld through the "gates of Hades."

The Greek and Roman world considered the cave of Pameas to be associated with the god Pan. As the son of Hermes, Pan could go in and out of the gates of Hades at will. The rabbinic tradition considers Paneas as the ultimate source of “lower waters” (b. B. Bat. 74b), associated with Sheol-Hades. “Lower waters” are located “opposite the gates of the Death Shadow and the gates of Gehenna” (Seder Rab. deBereshit 17)

If the gate of Hades is in Paneas, then the enigmatic saying pronounced around the time of Bar Kochba's revolt, near the Cave of Paneas by Rabbi Jose ben Kisma may be clarified. He said that the Messiah would come, "when the gate [of Hades?] falls down, is rebuilt, falls again, and again rebuilt, and then falls a third time, before it can be rebuilt the son of David will come" (b. Sanhedrin 98a).

The Paneion or sacred grotto dedicated to Pan was constructed at the foot of Mount Hermon around 200–198 B.C., perhaps in tribute to Pan for a Seleucid victory over the Ptolemaic army near the site. (See Polybius, *Historiae* 16.18–19; 26.1–3P)

By His resurrection, Jesus showed He alone has power over death - He literally passed in and out of the Gates of Hades. His descent into the grave/sheol/hades between the crucifixion and the resurrection was referred to as the "Harrowing of Hell" by early church fathers like Melito of Sardis.

- **Ephesians 4:9** - "(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?"

- **Acts 2:24, 27** - "God raised him up again, ending the agony of death, because it was impossible for Jesus to be held down by its power. ...For You will not leave my soul in Hades, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption."

- **Revelation 1:18** - "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death."

- **Philippians 2:9-10** - "God exalted Him and gave to Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bend, of those in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth."

- **Zechariah 9:11** - "As for you, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit."

In fact, Jesus has complete power over Hades, even to the point of eventually destroying it:

- **Revelation 20:13** - "The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works."

- **Revelation 20:14** - "Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."

Joshua Last to Receive his Inheritance - Reflection of Christ's Humility

Joshua 19:49 - "When they had made an end of dividing the land for inheritance by their coasts, the children of Israel gave an inheritance to Joshua the son of Nun among

them: According to the word of the LORD they gave him the city which he asked, even Timnathserah in mount Ephraim: and he built the city, and dwelt therein."

Joshua was from the tribe of Ephraim.

Being the last to receive his inheritance, Joshua demonstrated the humility of Jesus/ Joshua the Messiah.

- **Philippians 2:6** - "...although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped."

Timnathserah means "an abundant portion" or "a place in the sun" - Joshua's real reward was seeing the promises of God fulfilled before his very eyes.

- **Joshua 21:45** - "Not one of the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass."

Division of the Land Completed

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."

Bottom Line: This chapter focuses on the greatest benefit of our spiritual inheritance - eternal life in Christ, demonstrated by His power over the Gates of Hell.