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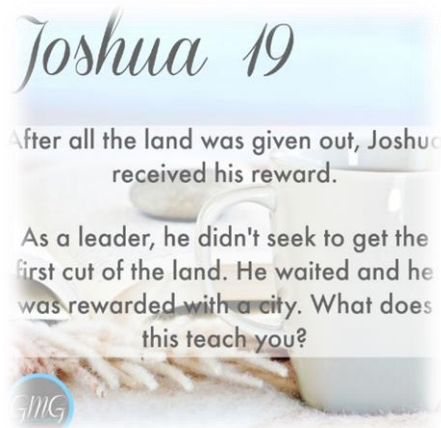
“Life Lessons from Joshua in Leadership and Refuge!”

I Prayer

II Recap and Overview

In our last Bible Study, we covered Joshua 17 & 18. As we continue our analysis of Joshua, focusing on chapters 19 & 20, in addition to picking-up where we left-off, we also complete our discussions on the divisions of the territories that were divided among the respective tribes in the Promised Land. Moreover, from a very practical perspective, this evening’s textual analysis also provides us with life lessons in leadership and a basis for conversation about immigration.

As a matter of structural organization, chapter 18 presents an issue regarding the seven tribes that have not yet received an allotment. That issue is systematically resolved, by an exercise of Joshua’s leadership, in chapter 19. Then, *after* the final lands were distributed among the tribes, Joshua received an apportionment of land for himself. Based on the way Joshua takes the apportionment, there are most certainly a few things we could all learn from his leadership example. Further, after the final land distribution—not only to the tribe, but also to Joshua—chapter 20 transitions into fulfilling God’s desires, previously expressed in Numbers, for there to be six cities of refuge, three cities on one side of the Jordan River and three cities on the other. The idea of “refuge,” especially considering chapter 20’s use of the term “alien,” presents public policy questions and considerations for us, as believers, as we look at America’s immigration reform policies.



III Reflective Matters for Consideration

As we enter into the space of chapters 19 & 20, I ask you to reflect on *your leadership*, whether it be with your family or the church. Are there any lessons you can learn from Joshua? In particular, please consider whether, as a leader, it is appropriate to put the needs of others before your own needs and what type of message such an act sends. Further, in connection with today’s politically charged climate and debates around immigration reform, deportation, and border crises, please also think about the concept of “Sanctuary Cities” in our discourse and whether you believe the “Cities of Refuge” model for due process sets an example for how we should function as a society.

IV Textual Examination (reading select portions of Joshua 19 and 20)



Before looking at Joshua 19, please recall the issue presented in chapter 18. Please pull 18:2-4 (seven tribes). In moving to 18:11, we see the boundary description of the first allotment/lot and its conclusion in 18:20. The second allotment/lot is where chapter 19 begins.

In 19:1, the tribe of Simeon receives its allotment and, unlike the others, it is within the territory allocated to Judah. Why (see verse 9)?

19:10 describes the third allotment, to the tribe of Zebulun, and 19:16 notes that this allotment is their inheritance.

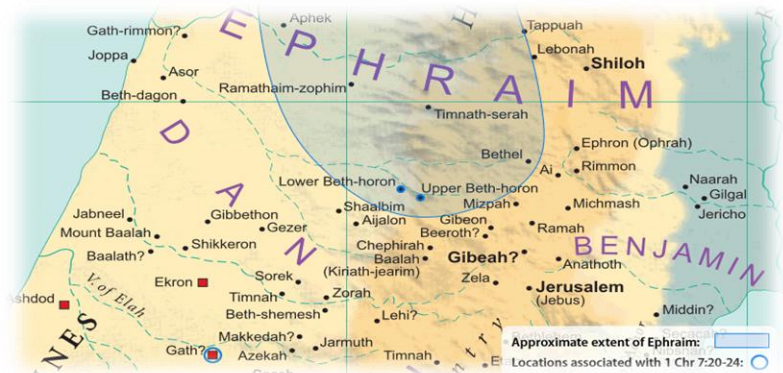
In similar fashion, 19:11 describes the fourth allotment, to the tribe of Issachar, and 19:23 notes that the allotment is their inheritance.

Regarding the fifth allotment, 19:24 describes it as going to the tribe of Asher, with its description following, and customary summary that this was their inheritance (19:31).

With respect to the sixth allotment, 19:32 describes it as going to the tribe of Naphtali before its description and before 19:39 concludes that it was the tribe's inheritance.

Similarly, the same pattern follows in 19:40, where the seventh allotment goes to the tribe of Dan and the deception is represented to be the tribe's inheritance in 19:48.

NOW: 19:49-50 begins our consideration of leadership. The word *Timinath-serah* literally translates from Hebrew as "leftover portion." Look at the land, in the hill country of Ephraim, that Joshua inherited. Joshua was "the leader." Surely he would have been given the best portion? Does his portion look fertile, like he can grow crops in an agrarian society?



In preparing to look at chapter 20, please consider what you know about immigration issues in the United States, whether they be with bordering nations or more remote nations. Examples of “foreigners” or “aliens” entering another land and being given refuge repeatedly run throughout the Holy Bible. Please revisit your thoughts on *your own* leadership (family, church, social club, *etc.*), in the context of establishing something that is fair and just for people accused of wrongdoing. Ask yourself whether “due process” can ever be a bad thing?

- 20:2 tells us that God originally expressed the “City of Refuge” model through Moses. As a point of reference, please pull Numbers 35:9-15. In reading Joshua 20:1-8, what do you take a “trial before the congregation” to mean? Is there anything like this in the AME Church (hint: *Book of Discipline*)?
- Verse 9 is deliberate in using the term “aliens” and establishing an adjudicatory process for aliens, in line with due process. What happens if an alien/foreigner enters the United States and is alleged to have committed a crime? Are there any differences?
- As a backdrop, let’s consider select parts of Number 35:13-28. What is the difference between murder and manslaughter? How does this relate to intentional, opposed to unintentional acts and whether foreign nations should provide temporary refuge (sanctuary) until adjudication, in the case of unintentional acts? Please look at the very last words in Joshua 20 (verse 9) in concert with your considerations?

V Follow-up Questions

VI Closing Prayer