

**Message #29****Joshua 17:1-18**

This book of Joshua is eye-opening. There are many wonderful lessons to be learned from this book. One lesson is that God has things for us to do and we need to get busy to do them. There are enemies to be conquered and if we, by faith, will move forward to fight those enemies, we will see great victory. Another lesson we learn from this book is that faithful obedience to God over time always leads to future blessings and inheritances. We never want to short change God in any area because being faithful over time leads to amazing things.

**GOD WILL ALWAYS GIVE TO EACH OF HIS PEOPLE THE RIGHT PERSONAL INHERITANCE AND THAT INHERITANCE WILL BE MORE THAN ANYTHING WE ACTUALLY DESERVE; BUT TO INCREASE THE INHERITANCE, ONE MUST INCREASE THE FAITHFULNESS.**

Now we don't actually deserve any inheritance from God. In fact, no one really deserved to be in the Promised Land. God could have legitimately kept any of His people from receiving any inheritance because no one has ever fully obeyed God and measured up to His standards.

The fact that Israel is in the land at this point is due to the wonderful provisions and power of God. The fact that Israel has taken the land is due to the wonderful grace of God. So actually having an inheritance is all about God's grace. Now the fact that God would permit some of His people to whine about their inheritance is again pure grace. What is even more amazing is that God actually seems to grant some of their requests, which again is pure grace.

Now this passage is an intriguing one. It shows us that God is a very personal God who takes a very personal interest in His people. His ear is open to their requests. He is a God who cares and a God who provides for each of His own. That is very clear from this division of the land.

Now there are five inheritance observations we want to see from this text:

**INHERITANCE OBSERVATION #1** – The tribe of Manasseh receives their land. **17:1-2**

We may recall that the half-tribe of Manasseh settled on the east side of the Jordan, but the other half did not and now it was their turn. Ephraim had their inheritance; now it was Manasseh's turn.

Machir, the first born of Manasseh, was given land on the east side of the Jordan. He was given the Gilead and Bashan regions because he was a man of war. He got this inheritance for two reasons:

- 1) He was a man of war who fought the other tribes within the land.
- 2) He was a man who could fight the forces that were in the Gilead and Bashan regions.

There would be many enemies in this land and Machir was a man who could and would fight them. God knew exactly who should live in this spot. He distributed this land precisely to the one who could get the job done in this land.

Don't ever forget this. God knows you and He knows that right now you need to be where you are, doing what you do. He places us in various contexts and He expects us to wage a good war in that context.

You are right now where you are in the situation you are in because God knows you can handle it. Feeling overwhelmed has nothing to do with it because all that means is that we must depend on God for victory.

Now we learn from **verse 2** that the lot was made for the rest of the sons of Manasseh according to their families. These families would live in the Promised Land and would inherit land that extended from the Jordan River all the way to the Mediterranean.

**INHERITANCE OBSERVATION #2** – One family from Manasseh did not have any sons but only daughters. **17:3-6**

**Now this is a very significant set of verses because it teaches us that an inheritance is not gender biased.** Men and women may earn an inheritance in the program of God.

Zelophehad, the great-great-grandson of Manasseh, did not have any sons, but he had five girls, five daughters (**v. 3**).

They came to Eleazar the priest and to Joshua and reminded them of **Numbers 27:1-11 (17:14)**. These five girls had gone to Moses and Eleazar and asked if they could receive some land as an inheritance. Moses consulted with God and God said they should receive an inheritance (**27:7**). These girls believed in the promises of God and in full conformity to what God said, they asked that they be given an inheritance. These girls were very spiritually-minded girls who were focused on God's Word.

For the most part in this ancient culture, women were considered nothing. In fact, in many of the eastern countries, they still are. This is not so in God's culture. God considers them to be something and He gave them an inheritance and they received it right here. Women of God had legal rights under the Mosaic Law.

What I find totally amazing is that Almighty God would listen to these girls and actually concede "the daughters...are right" (Num. 27:7). There is no doubt that there are times when women are right.

I know of some church situations in which some of the women have been right and the men have been wrong and the men should be listening to the women who know the Word of God.

I know of a woman who stood against a board and a minister because he was not studying to feed the flock the Word of God.

The men did not listen to her and the church ended up in a mess. When Joshua knew it was God's Word, he did it. That is good leadership. Now these daughters were respectful and submissive. But they did speak up and according to **verse 6**, they did get their inheritance.

There will be many women in heaven who will receive a great inheritance from God. Women play a vital role in the church. They serve, they pray, they give and in many ways are a key backbone of the church.

In Christ's day some of His most faithful supporters and financial backers were women (Luke 8:1-3). The same was true for the Apostle Paul (Acts 16:12-15). Women who put the Lord first will end up honored women.

One wise student of Scripture said take the women out of the church and you won't have a church.

**INHERITANCE OBSERVATION #3** – Specific land borders of Manasseh are described.  
**17:7-10**

There is some confusion concerning some of the places listed here, but here is what we can know. We may be certain that when this land was given by God to Israel, every one of these places named were factually and historically known.

According to the description here, we know that their land ran from the Jordan to the sea and that it was located north of the land of Ephraim (**17:9-10**). Both groups received land in the center of the Promised Land and this land was specific and precise.

When God gives an inheritance, it will not be some random surprise grab bag. It will be very specific and very complete. It will also be in total conformity to Him and His Word.

**INHERITANCE OBSERVATION #4** – Specific cities of the land given to Manasseh are described. **17:11-13**

Several specific cities were given to Manasseh, but they did not take complete possession of them because the Canaanites persisted in living in the land and refused to leave it.

What we learn from **verse 13** is that when the sons of Manasseh became strong, they made these Canaanites become forced labor but they did not drive them out of the land completely.

The Caleb mentality that "I'll fight them" and "I'll drive them out" is lacking here in these sons of Manasseh.

This is a problem that plagues the Middle East today. Forced labor is a compromise. It is not the same as eradication and elimination. Israel weakened her inheritance because they compromised with the enemy.

We may think we don't need to obey God fully. When we think like that we are only hurting ourselves. We weaken ourselves. We weaken our inheritance. Don't make compromises. Stand your ground.

**INHERITANCE OBSERVATION #5** – Joseph's sons complain about the inheritance they received. **17:14-18**

This should have been an exciting time for every child of God, but what is described here is a bunch of whining and complaining people. Both groups didn't think they got the right inheritance.

The text appears to indicate that some of the sons of Manasseh and some of the sons of Ephraim felt they had been short-changed, that they had too many people for their inheritance and they needed more.

According to the census taken in Numbers 26, Ephraim had 32,500 (26:37) and Manasseh had 52,700 (26:34). Neither group was happy with their allotment. They all wanted more land. So Joshua says, "fine," you want it, you have it—you take for yourself the forest area and clear it and live in it (**Josh. 17:15**).

J. Vernon McGee said this country is as rugged a country as he ever saw in his lifetime.

Now look at the response—instead of them praising God and thanking Joshua, they start complaining by saying there are all kinds of Canaanites who live in that land and they have iron chariots (**17:16**).

When they said this to Joshua, he responded in six ways:

**Response #1** - You have the numbers. **17:17a**

**Response #2** - You have the power. **17:17b**

**Response #3** - You will succeed. **17:17c**

**Response #4** - You must work. **17:18a**

**Response #5** - You must war. **17:18b**

**Response #6** - You will win. **17:18c**

If we are to lay hold of great blessings and a great inheritance, we need to learn these same lessons. We have the power of God to succeed in our lives, but we must do our part in working and warring for God; and if we do we will win.

We cannot sit idly by and earn a great inheritance. We need to get active. Arthur Pink said, “men will excuse themselves from labor on any pretense.”

What amazes me about this is that God put up with this and still does today. God gives us so much and often times it is not enough. We whine and complain and are not satisfied. God says fine—you want more, I’ll give you more and then you will whine and complain about that.

There is an inheritance that is there for the earning. We cannot earn salvation, but we can lay up treasures in heaven.