

# A Practical Study of JOSHUA

## “The Path of Obedience Leads to Victory”

### Study Number Eighteen – Joshua 18:1-28

We find ourselves in the eighteenth chapter of Joshua and the third major section of the book.

- I. The **INVASION** of the land—chapter 1-5.
- II. The **SUBJECTION** of the land—chapters 6-12.

And now we're at:

- III. The **DIVISION** of the land—chapters 13-22.

Joshua's getting older. His purpose in being here was to take the people into the land, to subject it and then divide it among the twelve tribes.

Thus far in the chapters, under the **DIVISION** of the land, the Reubenites, Gaddites and the half-tribe of Manasseh have settled in the east and Judah's gotten their inheritance. The sons of Joseph, Ephriam and Manasseh have gotten their inheritance—in chapters 15 and 16. In chapter 17 we looked at the other half of the tribe of Manasseh.

Now in chapter 18 we need to recognize there are a couple of

things that will set the stage. First of all, we're getting ready to make a geographical shift. We're going to move from Gilgal to Shiloh.

The other thing we need to recognize is only five of the twelve tribes have gotten their inheritance—so there's still seven left. And with these thoughts in mind, we have titled chapter 18:

## THE INHERITANCE OF BENJAMIN.

Understand how these tribes got their names and how we get to the twelve tribes? Jacob of course was very prolific. And by means of two wives—Rachel and Leah—and the handmaids, twelve boys were born. And these are the twelve boys that form the twelve tribes of the nation Israel.

We're going to talk about the youngest son—Benjamin. Chapter 18 is the inheritance of Benjamin.

Our passage is outlined with three points:

### I. Shiloh, Seven and the Survey—verses 1-10.

Shiloh, Seven and the Survey—those are the three dominant themes in the first ten verses. And there'll be a reason for that.

### II. The Boundaries for Benjamin—verses 11-20.

### III. The Cities of Benjamin—verses 21-28.

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Now with that outline in mind, let's go back to point #1—Shiloh, Seven and the Survey—verses 1-10.

First of all, we're going to talk about Shiloh in verse 1.

**v. 1 The whole assembly of the Israelites gathered at Shiloh and set up the Tent of Meeting there. The country was brought under their control,**

“The whole assembly of the Israelites gathered at Shiloh and set up the Tent of the Meeting there. The country was brought under their control,”

What's going on in Joshua's mind at this point?

Matthew 6:33

But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

When our priorities are straight and we're seeking God first, watch God take care of all the details and the blessing.

Invariably a lot of needs in our lives are the direct result of botched up priorities. And when we don't really put God first in our lives, God has a way of getting our attention in that regard. And here Joshua recognizes that there's no place for the “Tent of the Meeting.” And it's time to make a move before we go any further, and that's to take care of the Lord's house

first.

And so, because the tribe of Ephraim, his home tribe now has their inheritance. He is going to move 14 miles northwest of Gilgal to this new location called “Shiloh.”

Gilgal is just right across the river. We can look at Gilgal the same way as Saigon.

Saigon for 7 years was the military post of all operations for our armed forces while they were in the Vietnam War. Gilgal was that place. That was the safe place just across the river where all the families stayed and where the men returned after their conflict in the central campaign, the southern campaign and the northern campaign. Now we’re moving away from Gilgal to Shiloh.

Shiloh means “the place of rest.” Isn’t that a good name for the House of the Lord? And naturally when we hear “the place of rest” we think of Matthew 11:28-30.

### Matthew 11:28-30

“Come unto Me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ...

Now this is not the permanent home for the Tabernacle. It will be during the whole period of the book of Judges. But the Philistines, of course, overrun the children of Israel and steal the Ark for some time. And it’s moved around to Nob and

several other places, but ultimately it is retaken by David and brought and left in a tent in the city of Jerusalem after he makes the capital there. And then under Solomon, a permanent place is built for it.

Joshua is going to take care of first things first. We're going to take care of the Lord's house and then we'll get back to this business of providing the land for the tribes.

Now there's another interesting observation. In Jacob's final deathbed prophecies for the twelve tribes—as his sons stood before him—he said of the tribe of Judah, “until Shiloh comes” (Genesis 49:10). And that is a term referring to the coming of the Messiah.

Picking this city has a lot of different ramifications. But now that's going to be the central location and where everything is going to take place in these remaining chapters of allotment.

Verse 2—now we get to the seven. Add Shiloh, it's turned to seven.

**v. 2 but there were still seven Israelite tribes who had not yet received their inheritance.**

“but there were still seven Israelite tribes who had not yet received their inheritance.”

We know the five that have, don't we?

Reuben, Gad, Manasseh, Ephraim and Judah.

So that leaves us the other seven sons that haven't gotten their inheritance. And the first one of those is going to be Benjamin. In our next study we'll get to see the other six.

It's not a long, boring study because there's six tribes and we're only taking one. So don't form a preconceived notion.

**v. 3 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 fathers, has given you?”**

“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 fathers, has given you?’”

Dear, dear Joshua. He has found that the biggest problem he has in his ministry and work is motivating people. They get into the land and everybody just wants to sit down and enjoy the scenery and look around. Nobody wants to get to work in the possession of the land, so it's tough.

There was a cartoon out of the *Wall Street Journal* that was so funny. There's a picture of a little Israelite standing on a hill and he had his crooked cane and he was looking up toward heaven, and the statement underneath it said, “Gee, we were sort of hoping that the Promised Land would be somewhere outside the Middle East.”

It might be that they're sitting down in some of these sand dunes thinking it sure would be nice if the Promised Land was somewhere else but here.

But they're not motivated and so Joshua, equal to the situation, comes in with motivation plus a method. And first of all, in motivation he stirs them up with a question: "How long are you going to wait before you begin to take possession of the land?"

"Time's wasting and I'm getting older. I want to get this job behind us."

Gordon MacDonald in his book *Restoring Your Spiritual Passion* has this to say on leadership:

(Restoring Your Spiritual Passion by Gordon MacDonald)

No person in any form of leadership is going to go on forever without certain feelings of betrayal or terrible loneliness. And if leaders put their trust in the applause or loyalty of human beings, a terrible letdown will likely result.

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When you see a cluster of people who drain each other in this fashion, mentally picture a stretched tandem bicycle where three people are supposed to be peddling. Most of us have seen the humorous vignette, usually in cartoon form, in which only the first person pedals strenuously while the second and third

become passengers who sit back and enjoy the view. The first never looks around to see what the other two are doing. He assumes that they are working as hard as he is. But they're not, and one is left to do the work of three, spending most of his energy just to keep the bicycle upright and in motion rather than going somewhere. Therefore, weariness sets in, a slow and certain loss of desire to keep on going.

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Joshua must feel that. He's thinking, "Look what's happened. We've invaded the land, we've subjected the land, and now people just want to sit around and be content to just be one big blob instead of getting the inheritance that belongs to them."

So, a man that motivates has also got a method. He has some objectives and a plan. We're going to get to the survey now.

**v. 4 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.**

"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."

Alright, he says, "This is my plan. Get a survey team—three from each tribe."



Now if it's just the seven tribes that don't have their land, that's 21. Verse 1 says all Israel is gathered at Shiloh. So that would mean all 12 of the tribes. This is a 36-man survey team.

We can see them with their transoms and their tapes and their log books. They're getting ready to go out as a team to map out the land in seven parts for the people that don't have theirs yet.

John White has written a great book on leadership called *Excellence in Leadership* and he quotes this:

(Excellence in Leadership by John White)

Admiral Mahon of the American Navy during the war of independence is said to have insisted on a dictum when teaching his officers. "Gentlemen, whenever you set out to accomplish anything, make up your mind at the outset about your ultimate objective. Once you have decided on it, take care never to lose sight of it."

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Joshua hasn't and he's communicating with them how we're going to get there.

Another good book is by Ted W. Enstrom called *The Pursuit of Excellence*. He says this about leadership:

(The Pursuit of Excellence by Ted W. Enstrom)

It's too easy to be like the Texan who waltzed up to the ticket agent at the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport and said, "Ma'am, I'd like you to sell me a first-class ticket."

The agent asked, "But where to, sir?"

The Texan replied, "It didn't really matter, ... I got business everywhere."

There's nothing wrong with having business everywhere, but it's to your advantage to take care of your tasks one at a time and to recognize that each of your goals will take effort, determination, and time.

Perhaps the simplest advice to you who face this dilemma is do something. Choose a goal and work toward it. Later you may modify it, expand it, or even eventually abandon it for a better one. But first make a decision. Decide to decide or plan to plan. But don't be like the overenergetic cowboy who raced into the corral, saddled up his bronco, and rode off in all directions.

Franklin Roosevelt once said, "It is common sense to take a method and try it. If it fails, admit it frankly, but above all, try something. It's the only way you'll ever begin to realize your God-given potential and it can be the glorious beginning in your pursuit of a life of excellence.

(source unknown)

Joshua says, "We need a survey team. When we get this team together their job description is to go out, measure out the land that's left, write a description of the territory and then bring back the results to me."

## **v. 5 You are to divide the land into seven parts. Judah**

**is to remain in its territory on the south and the house of Joseph in its territory on the north.**

“You are to divide the land into seven parts. Judah is to remain in its territory on the south and the house of Joseph in its territory on the north.”

In other words, “We’re going to leave everything as it is that we’ve done to this point. Just because we’ve come to Shiloh doesn’t mean we’re going to change any of that. So leave those territories alone.”

**v. 6 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.**

“After you have written descriptions of the seven parts of the land, bring them here to me and I will cast lots for you”

“and tell you what you’re going to do.” Is that what the text says?

“I will cast lots for you in the presence of the Lord”

“your God.” Is that what it said?

The little word “our” is incredible.

“in the presence of the Lord our God.”

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Do we recognize the significance of leaders who declare their dependence upon a supreme being for direction in their life?

Now it's an amazing thing, but at many of our couples' conferences we find couples who have never prayed together because the men are too macho and they don't ever want to give the wife an impression that they're dependent upon a source outside themselves. They want their wife to find their total security in his ability and his alone. So their pride never allows them to be humble and dependent enough to pray with their wives.

Here is a man who has come all of these years. He's been faithful to walk with God and he's a successful leader and he's coming down the homestretch and he doesn't change a thing. He's learned to bring it before the Lord our God and we'll get an answer and it'll be the right one. So, at the end of it, he brings the Lord into it.

Now don't get to feeling sorry for the Levites in verse 7. Hang on for a few chapters and we'll deal with them.

**v. 7 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.”**

“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.”

He wraps it up by saying the reason there are these other tribes involved and the reason we’re only going to divide it into seven parts is Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh are on the east and the Levites aren’t going to get an inheritance in this seven-part deal. So that’s why he tells them he’s to divide it into seven parts.

Now we know he’s an excellent General because first of all he tells them, then he tells them he told them. We never communicate with one shot. Everybody knows that works with people for a little while. People just do not hear us the first time. And so, he comes back with a second missile in verse 8 and summarizes everything he said in just a sentence or two.

**v. 8 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.”**

“As the men started on their way”—we can see them. Boy, they’ve got their transom packed and their tapes and they’re burning the highway. They’re ready to go, get the job done, get on with it. They’re motivated.

Joshua says, “Hey fellas”—as they’re on their way:

“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.’”

“Now don’t y’all get out there and get all excited about the dividing of the land and divide up the inheritance. You bring the results back here, we will before the Lord, divide up the land among the tribes.”

“Just some of you guys that don’t have your inheritance, you get out there and you see a choice beast and decide that’s going to be yours. Listen, get back here and before the Lord we will make the choices as to where the land is going to go.”

**v. 9 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.**

“So the men left and they 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.”

Now that probably took them a little while to tour the landscape and do all this. It wasn’t just something that happened over night or in a couple of weeks safari. This took

some work.

**v. 10 Joshua then cast lots for them in Shiloh in the presence of the Lord, and there he distributed the land to the Israelites according to their tribal divisions.**

“Joshua then cast lots for them in Shiloh in the presence of the Lord, and there he distributed the land to the Israelites according to their tribal divisions.”

Isn't that great? He came back to the Lord.

The secret to Joshua's success is the **THREE D's**. And it's the secret to success in any person:

1. he's **DISCIPLINED**,
2. he's **DEPENDENT**, and
3. he's **DETERMINED** to finish his task.

When we put those three D's together, we have a winner.

He's **DISCIPLINED**, he's **DEPENDENT** upon God, and he's **DETERMINED** to finish the task.

This is really a great statement on the whole business of being dependent upon God and to trust Him:

(Come Away My Beloved by Frances J. Roberts)

Lift not [your] hand to attempt to accomplish any slightest task in [your] own strength. This have I forbidden. God helps not those who help themselves, but He is the champion of those who cannot help themselves, and of those who are wise enough not to try. It is not [your] cooperation for which I have asked, but thy submission. Not that thou go alone until [you fall], but that [you] draw upon My strength for *every step*—both the smooth and the rough.  
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Rejoice, therefore, and face each day with joy; for I have planned ahead for [you], and made all necessary arrangements and reservations. I am [your] guide and benefactor. Put your hand in Mine.  
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Now that's good, isn't it? She is hitting it right on target. And that's the lesson Joshua's learned way back there. And so again he's declaring his dependence upon God in allocating this land.

Now we come to number 2 in the outline:

II. Verses 11-20—The BOUNDARIES for Benjamin.

In the rest of these we'll see the boundaries first. We'll walk



around the land. And then after we walk around the land, we'll see the cities that are allocated in that inheritance. And as we know, in these Hebrew words there are some very special, meaningful things.

**v. 11 The lot came up for the tribe of Benjamin, clan by clan. Their allotted territory lay between the tribes of Judah and Joseph:**

“The lot came up for the tribe of Benjamin, clan by clan. Their allotted territory lay between the tribes of Judah and Joseph.”

Now we're going to look at our map. There's a little sliver of land. It's between Judah and Ephraim—or between Judah and Joseph. And it's that little sliver of land—the smallest of the inheritances—that goes to Benjamin.

Now this is the territory we're talking about. What we're going to do is we're going to start on the northern side of that, right at the Jordan, and we're going to go all the way over to the west there and we'll make that little hook around and we'll come back on the south side—back to the Jordan. We're going to make a circle in these verses and whip around there.

Now some of these locations aren't known on the land archaeologically so they aren't all on there. But some of them are because they have been found and established. We didn't just purposely leave off a whole bunch of towns. But basically, the geographical drawing will give us a picture of where the land is located.

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Now let's get back to the text and make ourselves good friends of little Benjamin. Joshua is hard at work. He's had the survey team do their job and now he's in the business of seeing to it that each of the tribes that remain get their inheritance.

Joshua probably thinks, "I have been working so long and working so hard, doing the impossible for the ungrateful, that now I'm qualified to do anything with nothing."

Time for allocation has come. And the first one of all things falls to baby Benjamin.

Now let's talk about Benjamin's birth and the blessings that were pronounced upon Benjamin by old daddy Jacob before he died, and before Moses died, and then we'll dig into the inheritance that's given to them.

Now remember the very sordid story about Jacob's family? Jacob ended up with two girls. He ended up with Rachel and Leah in his family simply because there was a tricky father-in-law involved in this deal. And Leah started having children. And before very long Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid, had two and Leah had six. And then on top of that Leah's handmaid Zilpah had two—so we had ten. And then to top it off even further, dear Leah had a little girl by the name of Dinah. So there are eleven kids and Rachel doesn't have any children.

Then she gives birth to two children. Her first-born son is Joseph—and we talked about that in our last study. But her second-born son and the final one of the twelve is little baby Benjamin. We read in Genesis 35 the record of his birth:

### Genesis 35:16-20

Then they moved on from Bethel. [This is Jacob and his whole family.] While they were still some distance from Bethlehem (or Ephrath), Rachel began to give birth and had great difficulty. And as she was having great difficulty in childbirth, the midwife said to her, “Don’t be afraid, for you have another son.” As she breathed her last—for she was dying—she named her son Ben-Oni. But his father named him Benjamin. ...

So Rachel died and they had a funeral service right there just before they got to Bethlehem. It was a sad time.

Now why did he name the boy “Benjamin” instead of “Ben-Oni”?

“Ben-Oni” means “the son of my sorrow” or “the son of my pain.” And Jacob says, “No, Rachel has died and this is my final offspring in memory of her. This boy will be the son of my right hand. He will have the place of honor among all the rest. He’ll sit at my right hand because—in memory of his mother who died in birth.”

Now when we think of “son of my sorrow” and “son of my right hand” we immediately think of Jesus. He was a man of sorrow

and acquainted with grief. He's the son of pain. He hurt for us.

But where is He today? He's at the right hand of God the Father interceding on our behalf. He is there as our great intercessor—"Son of my right hand."

Now Benjamin immediately becomes that very special, special son to Jacob when Joseph at 17 is sold into Egypt. So if we say that Joseph was about 6 or 7 when Benjamin was born, Benjamin's probably about 10 when he gets all of his daddy's love and affection because Joseph is gone.

And we know that he got all that love and affection because when they started to starve and he wanted to send the boys down into Egypt to get grain, who'd he keep at the house? He kept his little Benjamin there while the rest of the boys went down there to check on the grain.

And when Joseph made an issue out of Benjamin before he revealed himself to the boys, Jacob nearly starved the whole family to death before he was willing to turn loose of Benjamin to let him go.

And then when Benjamin got down there, remember he was really important. He got everything! They had a big dinner at the White House and who gets five steaks, while everybody else gets one? Benjamin.

Who gets five suits of clothes while everybody else just gets one? Benjamin. He gets the royal treatment from everybody.

And so we just think Benjamin—the baby brother—he’s going to get all the special treatment and he is really going to come out as one of the great 12 tribes of the nation Israel. Well, that remains to be seen as we look further in the study.

Here on the death bed then is the statement of old daddy Jacob as all the boys are gathered for their final blessing. In Genesis 49 this is what he said about Benjamin—this is a troublesome verse:

### Genesis 49:27

“Benjamin is a ravenous wolf;  
in the morning he devours the prey,  
in the evening he divides the plunder.”

That means he’s going to be warlike. He’s going to be a military man. He’s going to be a tribe of fighters.

Now this is what Moses says about Benjamin. It almost sounds completely different:

### Deuteronomy 33:12

“Let the beloved of the Lord rest secure in him, for he shields him all day long, and the one the Lord loves rests between his shoulders.”

The place where Benjamin is located is between the shoulders of Joseph and Judah—the other brothers—because the land is

right in between those two places and it is a place of great, great security for him.

Deuteronomy 33:12 and Genesis 49:27.

Now what we want to do in these next verses is just take a quick little trip around the territory and then we're going to come to number 3 and look at the cities—some meaning out of that.

**v. 12 On the north side their boundary began at the Jordan, passed the northern slope of Jericho and headed west into the hill country, coming out at the desert of Beth Aven.**

“On the north side”—here we are up on the north at the Jordan.

“On the north side their boundary began at the Jordan, [it] passed the northern slope of Jericho and headed west into the hill country, coming out at the desert of Beth Aven.”

We have three Hebrew words there that we need to think about.

1. What does Jordan mean? Jordan means “flowing down.”

It is named Jordan because it flows down from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea. It's a picture of humanity. The minute we're born we begin to die. We are one week closer to

our death today than we were last week—the time of our demise. That’s humanity.

Natural humanity says, “Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die.” Keep it on automatic pilot and we’ll end up there. There has to be a decision sometime to get out of the Jordan, to get out of the flow. And that’s:

### Matthew 7:13, 14

Enter in at the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, ...

The second city is Jericho we had in our last study:

2. Remember what Jericho means? It’s the “city of the moon.” It’s the “fragrant place.” It’s the “place of the world.”
3. The third word is “Beth Aven.” That means “house of vanity” or “house of idols.”

Isn’t that interesting? That’s the picture of the natural man and the world right there, isn’t it? In that very first verse.

We have the natural man. He’s flowing down to physical death. He’s living according to the dictates of the world and he lives in Beth Aven when it comes to religion. He has his house full of idols. Whether it is the house he lives in and the car he drives or whatever, he has all of his idols, and they’re nothing but vanity.

They are “meaningless, meaningless, utterly meaningless.” They are empty. And that’s a picture of the world.

Now when he is confronted with spiritual things, he always responds by the word “Luz.”

**v. 13 From there it crossed to the south slope of Luz (that is, Bethel) and went down to Ataroth Addar on the hill south of Lower Beth Horon.**

“From there it crossed to the south slope of Luz”

“Luz” means “to turn away, to depart, to go back.” It means “perverted” or “perverse.”

This is often the picture of mankind when it comes to the Gospel. He turns away. He departs. He never responds.

William Barker in his book *A Savior for All Seasons* says:

(A Savior for All Seasons by William P. Barker)

The problem, of course, is not external [with man]. It’s internal. As Pogo put it so beautifully, “We have met the enemy and he is us.”

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And that’s the picture that’s described here in these first words.



But it turns around at Bethel.

“(for that is, Bethel)”

What does “Bethel” mean? “Beth-el”:

“Beth” means “house,”

“el” means “God.”

It’s “the house of God.” Jacob, his first night away from home, he met God in this place. And we meet Him face-to-face. We come to know His Son. We’re brought into right relationship with Him.

“and went down to Ataroth Addar”

And that’s a very interesting word. That means “crowns of glory and honor.” And once we meet God at the house of God, we’re living for crowns of glory and honor. We want crowns of glory and honor to throw at the feet of our Savior when we meet Him face-to-face.

And those crowns of course are:

the crown of righteousness,

the crown of life,

the incorruptible crown,  
the crown of rejoicing and  
the crown of glory.

We qualify for these as our lives as believers begin to produce fruit for the glory of God.

“on the hill south of Lower Beth Horon.”

Okay, “Beth Horon.”

“Beth Horon” means “place of the hollow”—“place of the hollow.”

Where do we think of when we think of the “place of the hollow”? Anybody got any ideas how we could get some spiritual truth out of the “place of the hollow”?

Okay, “place of the hollow.” The catacombs. That isn’t it.

Tomb. That isn’t it.

We think of the caves. Okay maybe the caves where Elijah was in the cave when God came passing by. Moses was in the cleft of the rock when God came passing by. That’s great but that isn’t it.

The hollow of His hand is a good one but that’s not it.

There's only one more hollow in the scripture.

In Genesis 32 Jacob was touched in the hollow of his thigh by the angel who wrestled all night with him.

What's the principle that comes out of being touched in the hollow? The principle that comes out of that is sometimes God has to touch us physically to get us to respond spiritually. Genesis 32.

Listen to Frances Roberts again when it comes to talking about touching the hollow:

(Come Away My Beloved by Frances J. Roberts)

Lo, I wait to bless [you];

I wait to give [you] of My fulness.

I delight to do for [you]

for I love [you] beyond [your] power to begin to know.

Only drop those things which [you grasp] in [your] hand,

and place [your] hands in Mine.

Only wrest [your] eyes from those things [you hold] precious,

and I will fill them with My glory.

Loose [your] affections from all others.

Place in My hands those [you hold] dear.

Leave them in My keeping:

for so shall [your] heart be set free to seek Me

without distraction.

p. 74

Lo, My heart is grieved by [your] independence. How would Joseph have felt if his father and family had remained at home, starving in the famine, when he had invited them to share the bountiful stores which he had at his disposal and desired to share freely with them? (Ge. 45)

Would he not have grieved far more deeply than over the unjust actions of his brothers who hated him? ... And I have put Mine arm about [you] to draw [you] closer, but [you] have been impatient and irritable as though I sought to interfere with [your] liberty. Lo, I am able to give [you] greater liberty than [you shall] ever find by seeking to be independent of Me. I seek not to interfere with [your] happiness, but I do require that [you] relinquish [your] will; for I cannot bless [you] as I desire to do until [your] will is yielded up and [you] accept Mine in exchange.

p. 169

Sometimes God has to put us through a painful experience to get us to yield it up and give it over to Him.

**v. 14 From the hill facing Beth Horon on the south the boundary turned south along the western side and came out at Kiriath Baal (that is, Kiriath Jearim), a town of the people of Judah. This was the western side.**

“From the hill facing Beth Horon on the south the boundary turned south along the western side and came out at Kiriath

Baal”

Now see that’s that little hook. We’re going to start heading back east again on the south side. And these are two pagan cities here—“Kiriath Baah”:

“(that is, Kiriath Jearim), a town of the people of Judah. This was the western side.”

“Kiriath Baah” means “city of Baal.” Of course, Baal worship was prominent in the land by the Canaanites.

And “Kiriath Jearim” means “city of the woods.” And much of the religious activity took place in the woods.

It was the “city of Baal,” the “city of the woods” that’s described here in these verses.

Now verses 12-14 take us north and west. And then verses 15-19 now go the southern boundary back toward the Jordan River.

**v. 15 The southern side began at the outskirts of Kiriath Jearim on the west, and the boundary came out at the spring of the waters of Nephtoah.**

“The southern side began at the outskirts of Kiriath Jearim on the west, and the boundary came out at the spring of the waters of Nephtoah.”

“Nephtoah” means “opening.” We think of a spring that bubbles up out of a fissure in the ground or in the rocks. That’s the picture at “Nephtoah.” It’s an opening where the water is bubbling up.

**v. 16 The boundary went down to the foot of the hill facing the Valley of Ben Hinnom, north of the Valley of Rephaim. It continued down the Hinnom Valley along the southern slope of the Jebusite city and so to En Rogel.**

“The boundary went down to the foot of the hill facing the Valley of Ben Hinnom,”

The words “Ben Hinnom” is “valley” and there was historically an awful lot of child sacrifice in that “Valley of Ben Hinnom.”

“north of the Valley of Rephaim.”

We already know that it is the “valley of the giants.”

“It continued down the Hinnom Valley along the southern slope of the Jebusite city”—and that’s Jerusalem—“and so to En Rogel.”

“En Rogel” means “the fountain where I wash my garments white.” When we think of “En Rogel” what do we think of then?

Isaiah 1:18

“Come now, let us reason together.”

“Though your sins be as scarlet,  
they shall be as white as snow; ...

It’s the cleansing fountain. It’s the place where “I wash my garments white.”

**v. 17 It then curved north, went to En Shemesh, continued to Geliloth, which faces the Pass of Adummim, and ran down to the Stone of Bohan son of Reuben.**

“It then curved north, went to En Shemesh, continued to Geliloth, which faces the Pass of Adummim, and ran down to the Stone of Bohan son of Reuben.”

Now “En Shemesh” means “fountain of the sun.”

“Geliloth” means “circuit” or “region.”

And “Adummim” means “red.”

And the name of Reuben’s son “Bohan” means “thumb.”

“Bohan”—we don’t know anything about him. He’s Reuben’s son. But evidently, he built an altar and that stone altar becomes a landmark for several of these tribes. He’s mentioned earlier in the book of Joshua.

Now we're down to verse 18.

**v. 18 It continued to the northern slope of Beth Arabah and on down into the Arabah.**

“It continued to the northern slope of Beth Arabah”

“Beth” means “house.”

“Arabah” means “desert.”

It's “the house of the desert.” Think of the Arabian desert.

“and on down into the Arabah.”—or the desert.

**v. 19 It then went to the northern slope of Beth Hoglah and came out at the northern bay of the Salt Sea, at the mouth of the Jordan in the south. This was the southern boundary.**

“It then went to the northern slope of Beth Hoglah”

That means “house of the partridge.”

“and it came out at the northern bay of the Salt Sea,”

Where is that? North of the Salt Sea and at the end of the Jordan River.

“at the mouth of the Jordan in the south. This was the



southern boundary.”

**v. 20 The Jordan formed the boundary on the eastern side. These were the boundaries that marked out the inheritance of the clans of Benjamin on all sides.**

“The Jordan formed the boundary on the eastern side. These were the boundaries that marked out the inheritance of the clans of Benjamin on all sides.”

Now we took a little trip around the territory and we saw the boundaries. Now what they do in these allotments is describe the cities and each of the cities have some meaning.

III. The Cities of Benjamin—verses 21-28—are now listed.

They’re divided into two groups. We don’t know why.

There’s one group of 12 and there’s another group of 14. Some of these words are going to be meaningful and some are just going to be for our academic satisfaction in knowing the meaning of them. But we’ll move through them quickly and stop when we need to, to point out a little lesson on the landscape. Okay?

**v. 21 The tribe of Benjamin, clan by clan, had the following cities: Jericho, Beth Hoglah, Emek Keziz,**

1. The first city is “Jericho.”

“The tribe of Benjamin, clan by clan, had the following cities: Jericho, Beth Hoglah, Emek Keziz,”

We’ve already had Jericho.

2. “Beth Hoglah”—“the house of the partridge.”

That sounds lonely, doesn’t it?

David says, “I feel like a bird alone on the housetop.” (see Psalm 102:5-7)

The house of the partridge—lonely, lonely place.

Jesus always counted on the presence of the Father. And at that moment when He died, He cried as He was being made sin for us in the hour of loneliness. “My God, my God, why have You forsaken us?”

House of the partridge—just makes us feel loneliness.

3. The third city is “Emek Kezik.” It’s a valley where an “abrupt cut-off” has taken place.

And of course, we can put John 15 there, where the branches are pruned, if we want to develop that thought.

**v. 22 Beth Arabah, Zemaraim, Bethel,**

“Beth Arabah, Zemaraim, Bethel,”

4. “Beth Arabah”—“house of the desert.” We’ve had that.
5. “Zemaraim”—we haven’t had that one yet. That means “wool or double fleece.”

Again, we think of Isaiah 1:18. But when we think of double fleece, what do we think about?

Who’s the guy who plays with the fleece? Judges 6:36—Gideon. The fleece had to be wet and the ground dry. Then the ground had to be dry and the fleece was wet so he would know that it was the Lord’s will for him to take up arms and go against the Midianites and be the judge that would liberate the children of Israel.

6. The sixth city “Bethel” means “house of God.” We’ve had that.

### **v. 23 Avvim, Parah, Ophrah,**

“Avvim, Parah, and Ophrah,”

7. “Avvim” means “those who inhabit desert places.”
8. “Parah” means “the village of heifers.”

Evidently, it’s cattle ranch country.

9. And the ninth city is “Ophrah” which means “fawn.”

Evidently, it’s deer hunting county.

**v. 24 Kephart Ammoni, Ophni and Geba—twelve towns and their villages.**

“Kephart Ammoni, Ophni and Geba—twelve towns and their villages.”

10. “Kephart Ammoni”—that’s in verse 24—and that means “the village of Ammonites” and they are descendants of Lot and were a real problem to the children of Israel and their future history.

11. The name “Ophni” means “to become moldy.”

Where is there mold in the book of Joshua?

Joshua chapter 9, the Gibeonites fool the children of Israel into thinking they are from a far country so that they’ll make a treaty with them. And they don’t inquire of the Lord and they make a treaty with them. And they live right here in the middle of where the tribe of Benjamin’s going to be.

And so right in this location they put up a city and they call it “Ophni” because one of the things that tricked them was the worn-out wineskins and the moldy bread.

It’s good sometimes to mark down a place where we really

blew it and remember it. They can never come to Ophni, but they remember, “Ah ha! We didn’t inquire of the Lord. We signed a peace treaty and Ophni will always remind them of the moldy bread because of what we’ve done.”

We forget so quickly when we fail the Lord and we don’t learn the lessons we ought to learn sometimes. We ought to name a little place, a little city, a little something, so we mark it down so we’re smarter the next time. And they did that here with the eleventh city.

12. The twelfth one is “Geba” and that means “hill.”

Now that’s the first group of 12 cities and there are 14 that remain and they’ll be easy so just hang on tight.

### **v. 25 Gibeon, Ramah, Beeroth,**

“Gibeon, Ramah, Beeroth,”

The first city in the second group is:

1. “Gibeon” and that means “a city built on a hill.”

Now “Gibeon” is the residence of the Gibeonites. They are the ones that tricked them.

What’s interesting about the city of Gibeon? Archeologists have found pottery with Gibeon written on it so they have actually found the city of Gibeon.

What is Gibeon famous for? Gibeon is the Napa Valley of the land of Israel. It is the oasis of the vineyards and it was the great wine industry of the day.

Now that's meaningful when we think in Joshua chapter 9 when they fooled the sons of Israel. What'd they do? They went out in the warehouse and grabbed a few old grubby worn-out wineskins, threw that over an old hay burner that was sway-back and put on a dusty blanket. And then they got some moldy bread and wore some worn-out clothes and they were totally ready for the trick! And they pulled it off successfully because Joshua did not inquire of the Lord over there.

And so, wineskins come from Gibeon. No big deal. That's just part of it.

It's fun to see the archeologists spade go over and verify everything we found. They haven't discredited anything yet. It's just great. They can keep trying until the Lord comes but they won't. And it's fun to see them vindicating it though and encouraging us along the line finding these places.

Now the next city in that second group is:

2. "Ramah"—that means "a lofty place." But it's "a lofty place consecrated to the worship of idols."

"Ramah" was the place where a lot of idolatry took place.

Third city:

3. “Beeroth”—means “well.”

We think of Beer Sheva. Beer Sheva is the “city of the well of the oath.” And “Beeroth” means “wells.”

### **v. 26 Mizpah, Kephirah, Mozah,**

“Mizpah, Kephirah, Mozah,”

4. “Mizpah” means “watch tower” or “lofty place.”

5. “Kephirah” means “a village.”

6. “Mozah” means “a fountain.”

And then we get down to verse 27.

### **v. 27 Rekem, Irpeel, Taralah,**

“Rekem, Irpeel, Taralah,”

The seventh city:

7. “Rekem”—is a “flower garden.”

Evidently “Rekem” was the flower city. It has a reference to a many-colored flower garden so it was a beautiful place.

The eighth city was:

8. “Irpeel” which means “Jehovah heals”—H-E-A-L-S.

And the ninth city was:

9. “Taralah” which means “reeling” or “dizzy.”

We don’t know why it is, whether it’s the altitude or the spirits or what in the place, but it was named “reeling.”

**v. 28 Zelah, Haeleph, the Jebusite city (that is, Jerusalem), Gibeah and Kiriath—fourteen towns and their villages. This was the inheritance of Benjamin for its clans.**

“Zelah, Haeleph, the Jebusite city (that is, Jerusalem, Gibeah and Kiriath—fourteen towns and their villages. This was the inheritance of Benjamin for its clans.”

The tenth city is:

10. “Zelah”—it means “a rib.”

And what do we think of? The rib that came out of Adam’s side so that Eve came into existence—Genesis 2:21-25.

There was a classified ad that was run in the paper:



(Building Your Mate's Self-Esteem by Dennis & Barbara Rainey)

For Sale: One 52-year-old husband. Never remembers anniversaries, birthdays, or special days. Seldom holds hands, hugs, kisses, or says, "I love you." Rarely is kind or tender. Will sell cheap—two cents. Call 555-0366. Will dicker."

[Then the writer says:]

[The] advertisement illustrates the end result of a hollow marriage, one void of pleasing one another. Undoubtedly that woman's self-worth bore the mark of her husband's lack of attention. Had her husband made a conscious effort to strengthen her self-worth by pleasing her, that advertisement never would have appeared.

p. 139

And then William Barker, talking on marriage in that book *A Savior For All Seasons* has this great story:

(A Savior For All Seasons by William P. Barker)

A young couple named Jennifer and Doug discovered this for themselves. Their arguments seemed to grow harsher and their disagreements seemed to get deeper. Jennifer began praying, understanding that she and Doug were meant to keep their marriage vows, even if she wasn't sure how. She continued to pray for strength and guidance and received help from a counselor. She discovered traits in herself that marred

the relationship.

One evening, her husband seemed unusually irritable, almost spoiling for a fight. He finally found an excuse to start a severe tongue lashing. He carried on for several minutes, belittling and criticizing her. This time, Jennifer did not answer back in a counterattack. Praying for strength, she quietly walked up to him, took his hands, and with tears streaming down her face said, “Doug, I love you still.”

The young husband tightened for a moment, then broke down. “I’m sorry, Jennifer, for what I’ve been doing. I guess you should have married a better man.”

Jennifer answered softly, “I did.”

She remembered the man Doug was and could be, and continued to see possibilities in her man.

p. 69

“Zelah”—“the place of the rib.”

11. “Haeleph” the eleventh city means “ox or cow.”

12. And Jerusalem—“the possession of peace.”

The thirteenth is:

13. “Gibeah”—we’ve had that—means “hill.”

And the fourteenth:

14. “Kiriath”—we’ve had that—means “city.”

Now we get seven lessons out of that chapter to focus on.

Lesson #1: Joshua handles first things first.

It's a place for the Lord and then a place for the people.

Put Matthew 6:33 out there beside it for a New Testament illustration.

Lesson #2: The people had CONQUERED and CONTROLLED the land but had not possessed it as yet.

How does that apply to us? Well, we don't have any land to possess, but we have the Word of God.

God designed those 66 books for us to possess them. We've been conquered by Jesus Christ and we've been brought into a wonderful relationship with Him, controlled by Him as a believer. It is His purpose that we possess the Word of God—chapter by chapter, book by book—until we have a hold of the whole divine revelation.

Lesson #3: Joshua depends upon the Lord in making these last seven allotments of land.

He is disciplined, remember? He is dependent upon God and he's determined to finish. Joshua depends upon the Lord in making these last seven allotments of land.

Lesson #4: Have you been to Bethel for a meeting with the

Lord?

Lesson #5: Has God had to touch you physically to get you to respond spiritually?

We're talking about the place of the hollow here.

Lesson #6: The Father's pruning leads to greater fruitfulness.

Lesson #7: Are you letting God work in your marriage to produce oneness?

What happens to baby brother Benjamin? Most prolific of the boys has ten children.

How does he turn out when it's all said and done?

Well, we've got to turn over to the book of Judges to see some of the tragic story:

### Judges 1:21

The Benjamites, however, failed to dislodge the Jebusites, who were living in Jerusalem; to this day the Jebusites live there with the Benjamites.

Just like the other tribes, they have compromised. They've left the Jebusites in the land. That's going to create future problems for them.

The tribe of Benjamin is famous for something else. The tribe of Benjamin is a tribe of left-handers.

Ehud, the famous judge, is from the tribe of Benjamin. He's the left-handed judge.

The tribe of Benjamin barely survives the time of Judges because of an immoral encounter. In chapters 19 and 20 all of Israel comes out in war against Benjamin and nearly wipes out the whole tribe.

When the tribe of Benjamin is described as they're getting ready for war, here's another very interesting verse about the tribe:

### Judges 20:16

Among all these soldiers there were seven hundred chosen men who were left-handed, each of whom could sling a stone at a hair and not miss.

They were good shots and nobody messed with them and their sling-shots.

What kind of people come out of the tribe of Benjamin that we know about?

There are three that begin with "S."

1. The first of whom we know well as the first king of the

land, that big man, KING SAUL. He came from the tribe of Benjamin but he is a man who never said “the Lord our God,” but it’s “the Lord your God.” He’s a man who never learned to repent and to seek God’s face in real, genuine transparency—King Saul.

2. Out of the tribe of Benjamin also came a little man who is a snake in the grass by the name of SHIMEI. Shimei came to David out of Bahurim as David fled from Absalom who had taken the city of Jerusalem and his kingdom. And at the lowest point of his life, Shimei curses David—kicks the dirt and throws the rocks at David and his men as they flee to safety from Jerusalem.

3. And the other man is not much better. His name is SHEBA. Sheba is the one who met them when they came across the river coming back to Jerusalem to get the kingdom. And Sheba says, “All of Israel join me against David.” And as Israel did, Sheba fled with many, many men all the way north and had to finally be captured and beheaded before the revolution was put down.

That sure isn’t a very pretty picture. But it does fit the ravenous wolf theme doesn’t it, that old daddy Jacob saw in Benjamin?

Is there any good press for the tribe of Benjamin?

The best man that probably ever lived, from a human point of view, was the apostle Paul. Old Saul of Tarsus was proud to

be from the tribe of Benjamin. And on the Damascus Road, he met Jesus Christ. He never was the same and he wrote about it in:

## 2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things passed away; behold, all things are become new.

And he too was just as disciplined for he fought a fight and he was also determined to finish—“I finished the course; I kept the faith.”

May God cause us to reflect on these lessons from the cities and from the tribe of Benjamin and that He, God will have some thoughts that will bring blessing and edification to our life.

Father, we thank You for the privilege of doing this study. Thank You for the chance to look into a chapter that's often neglected. And in its words and verses to find some things that can edify and build up the spiritual man. May You do that as Your Spirit takes the truth and applies it to hearts. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

# A Practical Study of JOSHUA

## “The Path of Obedience Leads to Victory”

### Study Number Eighteen – Joshua 18:1-28

### NOTES

v. 1 The whole assembly of the Israelites gathered at Shiloh and set up the Tent of Meeting there. The country was brought under their control,

v. 2 but there were still seven Israelite tribes who had not yet received their inheritance.

v. 3 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 fathers, has given you?”

v. 4 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.

v. 5 You are to divide the land into seven parts. Judah is to remain in its territory on the south and the house of Joseph in its territory on the north.

v. 6 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.

v. 7 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.”

v. 8 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.”

v. 9 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.

v. 10 Joshua then cast lots for them in Shiloh in the presence of the Lord, and there he distributed the land to the Israelites according to their tribal divisions.



## NOTES

v. 11 The lot came up for the tribe of Benjamin, clan by clan. Their allotted territory lay between the tribes of Judah and Joseph:

v. 12 On the north side their boundary began at the Jordan, passed the northern slope of Jericho and headed west into the hill country, coming out at the desert of Beth Aven.

v. 13 From there it crossed to the south slope of Luz (that is, Bethel) and went down to Ataroth Addar on the hill south of Lower Beth Horon.

v. 14 From the hill facing Beth Horon on the south the boundary turned south along the western side and came out at Kiriath Baal (that is, Kiriath Jearim), a town of the people of Judah. This was the western side.

v. 15 The southern side began at the outskirts of Kiriath Jearim on the west, and the boundary came out at the spring of the waters of Nephtoah.

v. 16 The boundary went down to the foot of the hill facing the Valley of Ben Hinnom, north of the Valley of Rephaim. It continued down the Hinnom Valley along the southern slope of the Jebusite city and so to En Rogel.

v. 17 It then curved north, went to En Shemesh, continued to Geliloth, which faces the Pass of Adummim, and ran down to the Stone of Bohan son of Reuben.

v. 18 It continued to the northern slope of Beth Arabah and on down into the Arabah.

v. 19 It then went to the northern slope of Beth Hoglah and came out at the northern bay of the Salt Sea, at the mouth of the Jordan in the south. This was the southern boundary.

v. 20 The Jordan formed the boundary on the eastern side. These were the boundaries that marked out the inheritance of the clans of Benjamin on all sides.

v. 21 The tribe of Benjamin, clan by clan, had the following cities: Jericho, Beth Hoglah, Emek Keziz,

v. 22 Beth Arabah, Zemaraim, Bethel,

v. 23 Avvim, Parah, Ophrah,

v. 24 Kephrah Ammoni, Ophni and Geba—twelve towns and their villages.

v. 25 Gibeon, Ramah, Beeroth,

v. 26 Mizpah, Kephirah, Mozah,

v. 27 Rekem, Irpeel, Taralah,

v. 28 Zelah, Haeleph, the Jebusite city (that is, Jerusalem), Gibeah and Kiriath—fourteen towns and their villages. This was the inheritance of Benjamin for its clans.

**QUESTIONS:**

1. Read Joshua 18:1-28 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

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2. What happens, according to verse 1?

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3. How many tribes had not yet received their inheritance, according to verse 2?

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4. What is Joshua's question to the Israelites in verse 3?

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5. What does Joshua command the men to do, according to verse 8?

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6. Where is the tribe of Benjamin located, according to verse 11?

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7. Locate, on a good biblical map, as many of these geographical boundaries as possible.

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8. What formed the eastern boundary for the tribe of Benjamin, according to verse 20?

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9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

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10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

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**LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:**

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Joshua handles first things first: a place for the Lord and then a place for the people.

LESSON #2: The people had conquered and controlled the land but had not possessed it as yet.

LESSON #3: Joshua depends upon the Lord in making these last seven allotments of land.

LESSON #4: Have you been to Bethel for a meeting with the Lord?

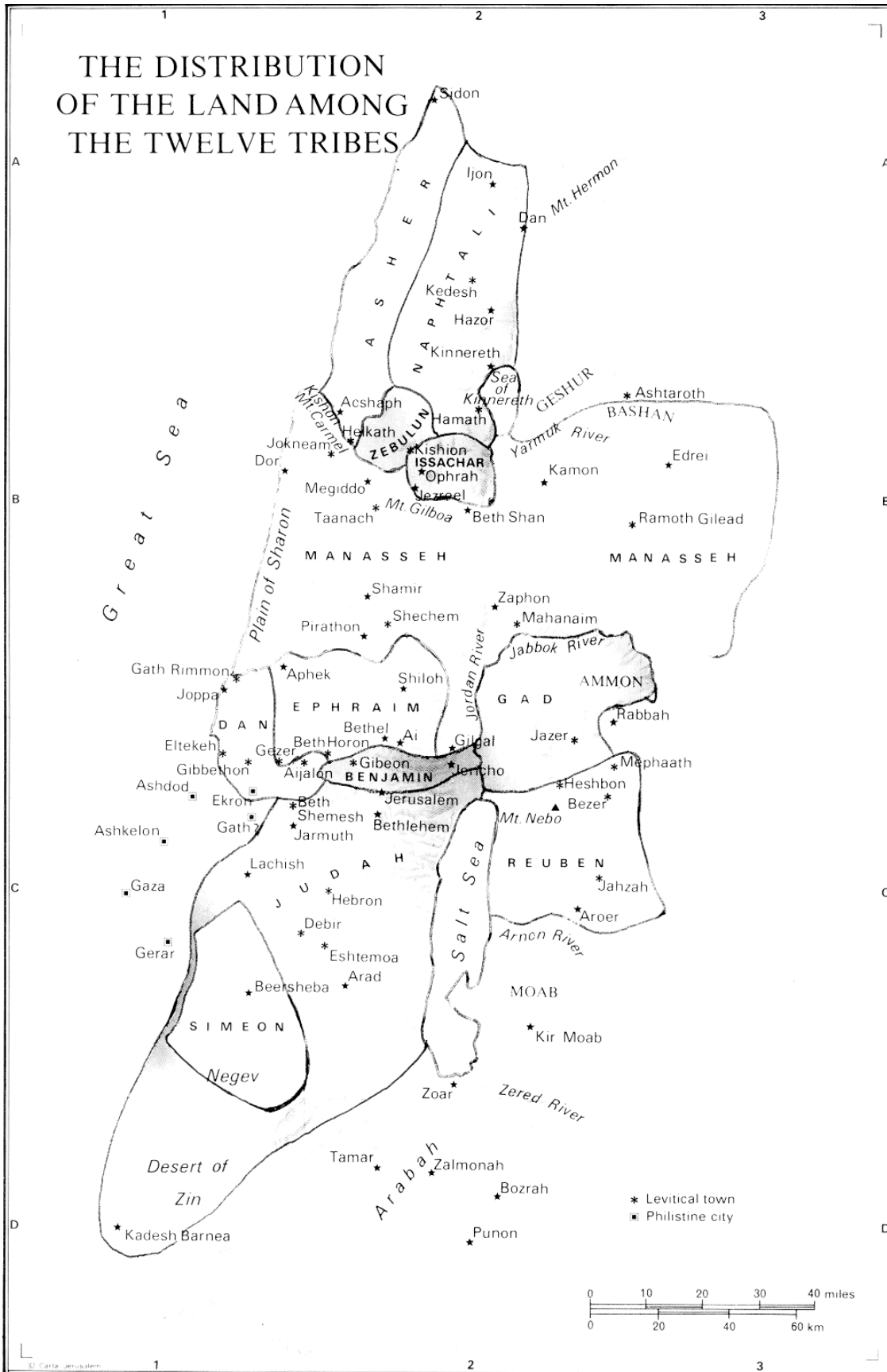
LESSON #5: Has God had to touch you physically to get you to respond spiritually?

LESSON #6: The Father's pruning leads to greater fruitfulness.

LESSON #7: Are you letting God work in your marriage to produce oneness?

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