

# The Indolence and Arrogance of Israel

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[ 0 : 00 ] All right, well, take your Bibles and open them to Joshua, and we're going to, well, we're going to be in a lot of different places.

A lot of places are talking about a lot of things within six chapters of Joshua. Well, we're kind of to that place in the book of Joshua where it's a little difficult to find preaching points.

And if you've ever read through Joshua, then you know what I'm talking about. And these chapters that I'm going to be referring to, or at least referring to specific parts of, because we're not going to be going through these verse by verse and chapter by chapter, word for word and all that kind of stuff.

But rather, I'm going to go through it issue by issue. I'm going to pick out of these chapters some important issues that come up that are very instructive for us.

And you're wanting to know where should I turn. Between Joshua chapter 15 and Joshua 20, from 15 all the way through 20, is the section of the book that we're going to be looking at tonight and next time.

[ 1 : 22 ] And we'll have, by the way, a special speaker here next Sunday with the IMB, missionary to Thailand. And so I won't be in Joshua next week. So you'll have to wait until the following Sunday in June to get the rest of this.

All right. So we're going to be looking at it by issues. And I really desired not to skip several chapters because of kind of the, excuse me for saying mundane nature of it.

Because these chapters, of course, deal with the allotment or descriptions of the physical boundaries of each of the tribes of Israel according to their inheritance in the promised land.

And so there are a lot of names of cities and places and boundaries and, you know, a whole lot of words that are impossible to pronounce.

And so that's why I'd rather just skip it. And, of course, you know, you don't know how to pronounce them either. So I can just say anything I want. Who would know? Well, well.

[ 2 : 34 ] And so that's what we have in these six chapters. Now, really, the allotment of the land, the inheritance, began back there in chapter 14. And when we looked at Caleb, talked about Caleb, and that's when it began.

But here in chapter 15, we have actually the boundaries being described. And then the Bible will go through all of the 12 tribes and describe their boundaries and so forth.

And it ends, this block of Joshua ends with the description or designation of six cities of refuge.

And we'll get to that, even though some of our songs really focused on that. That's not what we're going to look at tonight. Just can't get there tonight. That's going to take a larger time than we have. So I'm going to reserve that for next time. Sorry, Jonathan. See, we get together, you know, early in the week. And I kind of, sometimes, sort of tell him where I'm going.

[ 3 : 37 ] And I think I emphasize that I probably would go to the cities of refuge. But we're not going to make it there tonight. Well, it's okay.

It's all right. Right. Yeah, there are. For that subject, plenty of material. Plenty of songs we could sing. Now, a point of clarity before we look at three, actually just two tonight, issues.

Issues in these six chapters. There is a priority, a priority that's placed upon three of the tribes of Israel that is interesting and I think it's something that we ought to discuss or ought to understand. A priority placed upon. Now I hear the rain. Praise the Lord. And it has to do with, you know, who comes first in the list, the boundary list.

And who does come first? Well, Judah does. The tribe of Judah is first. Now, I mentioned this just kind of in passing last time when we were talking about Caleb, Caleb of the tribe of Judah.

[ 4 : 52 ] And he figures prominently at the beginning of God's description of the allotment, the inheritance of Judah. And so I mentioned a little bit about Judah being a priority, the most important tribe.

And it is. Judah was the most important tribe. Now the question is why? Why? Well, because Jacob, Judah's father, Jacob, the patriarch, whose name was changed to Israel and that's why the people are called Israel, out of Jacob came the 12 tribes.

Jacob had pronounced a very specific blessing upon his son Judah way back in Genesis chapter 49 and verse 10. And we're not going to turn back to that.

In fact, he actually, in that whole chapter, he is giving blessings and curses, actually, upon each of his sons.

And he begins with Reuben and then goes on from there. And so when you get to Judah, he gives this blessing. And it's larger than this, but this is the main part of the most important part of it.

[ 6 : 04 ] He said that the scepter shall not depart from Judah. A very special blessing placed upon Judah. And so we know, don't we, that out of Judah came King David.

King David. And then even more significantly, of course, King Jesus. King Jesus came out of Judah. And his throne is forever, shall be forever, and ever, and ever.

So a particular blessing, a priority was placed upon Judah even before Judah had any children, even before Judah became a tribe, long before David came out of Judah to be king, the most beloved king of Israel, long, of course, before the king of kings would come out of Judah, Jesus Christ.

So Judah is in a place of priority. And, you know, and so that's why they're listed first. He is listed first, or that tribe is listed first.

And so we have an entire chapter devoted to Judah's boundaries and key cities, allotted cities within their inheritance. And you can read that for yourself.

[ 7 : 21 ] I'm not going to read it. But you would notice as you read it that it is very detailed. In fact, you know, you can almost visualize, kind of imagine, you know, there on the screen.

I guess I could have done it this way if I'd had time to really work this out. You can kind of imagine a line being drawn. And with each bit of the description, we have this kind of, in some places, very zigzaggy line that is the boundary of Judah's inheritance.

And so that's what we have. It's very detailed. Partly because they are prominent. Judah is prominent. And so the description is very detailed. So we begin with Judah.

Then the second description of allotment or boundaries is what the Bible, or the Bible says, Joseph. Joseph.

Now, is Joseph one of the tribes? No. Joseph, one of the sons of Jacob? Yes. And so it begins there in chapter 16.

[ 8 : 29 ] The lot fell to the, and here's the key, children of Joseph. Who were the children of Joseph? Joseph was not a name for the tribe of Israel.

He was son of Jacob. But his inheritance, the inheritance and boundaries described in this chapter, chapter 16, pertain to the tribes that came out of Joseph.

And that would be Joseph's children, his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. The description here in chapter 16 is just for all of the tribe of Ephraim, but for half the tribe of Manasseh, because the other half, what?

They were on the east side of the Jordan. And Moses allowed them to have an inheritance on the eastern side of the Jordan, not in the promised land proper.

And so here the description in chapter 16 is of Ephraim and half of the tribe of Manasseh. And what's interesting is that because Joseph was their father, and it's listed here, the children of Joseph, then these two tribes are grouped together.

[ 9 : 41 ] And they are given one lot. One lot, which will be a bone of contention for them a little bit later in that chapter. We'll get back to that because that's one of the issues we want to deal with tonight.

All right, so Joseph then is taken second after Judah. Judah has the priority, but Joseph also is very, very important. Or his children, the tribes that came out of him are very important.

Because Joseph too received a very special blessing from his father Jacob. And again, in Genesis chapter 49, verse 26, I'll just read a portion of it, really the last part of the blessing.

The blessings of your father have excelled the blessings of my ancestor up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills. They shall be on the head of Joseph and on the crown of the head of him who was separated from his brother.

Brothers of his brother. All right, so a very special blessing that is placed upon Joseph. And so he is taken next in the description or the allotting of the land and the boundaries that are set.

[10:51] All right? And so we have two entire chapters devoted to Joseph's inheritance, boundaries and cities, Ephraim and half of Manasseh.

And finally, we have nearly two chapters, chapters 18 and 19, devoted to the balance of the tribes. All the rest of them are grouped together in all of 18 and most of 19.

And what's interesting is the descriptions there are not near as detailed as those for Judah and for Ephraim and Manasseh.

And there's also an undetermined amount of time that has elapsed between the boundaries being listed for Judah and Joseph and now the boundaries that are being described for the remaining.

Some time has elapsed because Israel has moved. They've moved to a different camp. And, you know, we're not going to spend any time talking about the significance of that.

[11:56] But they, up until really all the way through the time of the conquest and through the pronouncement of the boundaries for Judah and Joseph, they were encamped at Gilgal right near Jericho.

And you might remember at the very beginning of the conquest, Gilgal was the place of encampment and a lot of very significant, very spiritual things occurred in Gilgal. But now they've moved.

They've moved to Shiloh, the Bible says. Shiloh, which was a city within Ephraim's allotment of land. Now, then, chapter 19 closes with Joshua's inheritance.

Now, Joshua is not one of the tribe, members of the tribe. He's a member of a tribe. But we have Joshua getting an inheritance. Joshua was of the tribe of Ephraim.

And it was the city of Timnath-serah. Timnath-serah. That was the allotment, the inheritance for Joshua.

[13:04] Up to this time, Joshua has been giving the inheritance or really speaking for God to the people of Israel. And then Israel turns around and says, We want to give you this city. And this is your allotment.

And later he would be buried there. Now, the description of the land, way back, the distribution, rather, of the land that started back in chapter 14, began with Caleb.

Do you remember? Began with Caleb's inheritance. And now we're at the end of the distribution and it ends with Joshua. Kind of like bookends on the description, the distribution of the land.

Now, what did these two men have in common? They were both spies. And they were faithful spies. And the only two.

Both of them. Numbers chapter 14, verse 26. And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who complained against me?

[14:11] Speaking of the people of Israel. I've heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against me. Say to them, As I love, says the Lord, just as you have spoken in my hearing, so I will do to you.

The carcasses. Now, this is terrible. The carcasses of you who have complained against me shall fall in this wilderness. All of you who were numbered according to your entire number from 20 years old and above.

What's he talking about? Talking about all of Israel. They were unfaithful. They believed the report of the ten spies and did not believe the report of the two faithful spies, Caleb and Joshua.

And so none of them were allowed to go into the land. They would all perish in the wilderness during that 40 years of wandering. Their carcasses, he said, shall fall in the wilderness.

All those 20 years old and above except, he says, for Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua, the son of Nun.

[15:15] You shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. So the only two, two faithful men who were allowed to enter into the land, the only two in all of Israel, even Moses, was not allowed to enter the land.

Just Joshua and Caleb. They both received then a special portion of the land. Not only were they allowed to go into the land, but they were given special portions of the land as a reward for their

faithfulness.

And that's just kind of all preliminary because now I want to get into these two issues. Well, I would say that chapter 20, which is the final part of this larger text, is where we're given the reason for and the location of the cities of refuge.

And we'll get to that next time. All right, so, I want us to consider then tonight two of three issues that as you read through these chapters, they stand out.

And all three pertain to Israel's sin in one degree or another. To sin in the land. And here they are, if you're writing these down.

[16:28] Indolence. Where? What's that word? We'll get to that in a minute. Indolence. That's issue number one.

Arrogance. And negligence. These three issues we want to deal with in this block of Joshua.

Indolence, first of all. And I use that word because I borrowed it. It is a real word, by the way. Okay, some of you are really pretty smart and you know what that word means.

I decided to go with this kind of old, antiquated word because I borrowed it from A.W. Pink's treatment of this particular passage. And I thought it was just a good word. Besides, the alliteration worked well for me there.

Indolence, arrogance, and negligence. Okay? Now you know my secret. But anyway, he wrote an article on this particular passage and he entitled it Indolence in Final Possession.

[17:31] Now there's a title. Indolence in Final Possession. And of course the word is old and unused today. I doubt very seriously any of us have ever used that word in a sentence.

I certainly haven't until tonight. But it basically means we would say idleness. Idleness would be a synonym for indolence.

Laziness. Here's an even better one. Tolerance. A tolerance. In fact, I guess I could have used that word instead of indolence.

That fits with my alliteration. Alright, so the issue then is Israel did not complete the task. That's what stands out as you read throughout these six chapters.

As you read through the kind of the laborious kind of description of the boundaries and the particular cities all of them being a part of the various allotments for the tribes.

[18:36] And what stands out among a few other things that we'll get to is that Israel didn't complete it. They didn't finish. They didn't get the job done. They didn't conquer all the land. And they didn't complete God's judgment of its people.

That's what this was really all about in the bigger picture. God using Israel as an instrument of judgment upon a people who had not only rejected God but they had chosen gross immorality and perversion.

And God was judging them and Israel was used to be used for that process and Israel didn't finish it. It's not just that they couldn't. They could have.

It is that they just got lazy. Well, even worse, they became tolerant of some of the people that were living there in those cities and places that were now a part of their inheritance.

It's indolence. Indolence. And so, look at the last verse of chapter 14 and the last sentence in that verse, it's verse 15 of chapter 14 and it's a very poignant statement and you're going to take it one of two ways.

[20:00] In fact, we're probably going to take it one way which is the wrong way. And here's what the Bible says. Then the land had rest from war. Praise the Lord.

Wonderful. I mean, that sounds good, right? The land had rest from war. What could be bad about that? Peace. And so, it seems that this would be a word of finality for one thing.

It's all the battling and warfare is all over with now. So, the battles are over. You know, it even suggests the idea of victory.

But is it? Is it? So, look at chapter 15 and verse 63. This just will stand right out to you as you're reading along.

This is the closing remark after Judah's inheritance is described. And in verse 63, as for the Jebusites, it's only just kind of tacked on the end.

[21:07] Oh, and by the way, as for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out. But the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem to this day.

And so, add, you know, connect that within the land had rest from war. And so, here's the boundaries of Judah and the cities.

And yet, alas, they did not drive out the Jebusites. And they dwell with them to this very day. Now, fast forward to Luke, excuse me, not Luke, that's Sunday morning.

Look at chapter 16 and verse 10. This is the closing remark after Ephraim's inheritance is described. Alright, so he's described the boundaries for Ephraim and the principal cities that have been, that are part of their inheritance.

And then it closes with, and they did not drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer. But the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites to this day and have become forced laborers.

[ 22 : 25 ] There it is again. I guess we might say, well, at least they made use of them. You know, put them to work for them. Maybe just short of becoming their slaves.

But don't forget, Deuteronomy 20 and verses 16 to 18 commanded complete, whether you like it or not, complete annihilation of the Canaanites. They were to be annihilated.

They were not to be spared. Nor were they to be subject to them as forced laborers. That's not what God commanded. Let's go a step further.

Look at chapter 17 and verse 12. Verses 12 and 13. Chapter 17, verse 12. And this comes right after Manasseh's inheritance is described.

The half-tribe of Manasseh is described. Yet, and that's the clue right there. Yet, we can even say alas, the children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities but the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land.

[ 23 : 35 ] And though it doesn't say this, we could add, and they let them. They tolerated them. You know, the Bible doesn't hold any punches. It doesn't play any favorites. It's, remember, the three most important tribes because the blessing of Judah, the blessing of Joseph would be passed on to Manasseh, Ephraim and Manasseh.

The three most important tribes highlighted, again, by their place and prominence in the boundary list. These three prominent tribes all were unable to drive out the Canaanites from their lands.

And they allowed them to live and allowed them to live among them. Yeah, okay, they made, in many cases, made them servants, subservient to them.

But they did not drive them out. One theologian put it this way and we're getting to an application here. They had the power, these three tribes, had the power to remove the Canaanites from the land and so to be God's instruments of judgment to remove wickedness.

They had the power to do that. Right? God had promised that to them. So they had the power to do it. But they chose to tolerate wickedness. Sound familiar?

[ 24 : 58 ] They chose to tolerate wickedness and to use for their own purposes that which God had devoted to destruction. remember the people of the land, they were part of the band, a band had been placed there.

They were gods to do with as He pleased in His holiness and righteousness. And so, strange enough, odd enough, that, you know, Judah and Ephraim and Manasseh, they're tolerating these Canaanites and not annihilating them as God had commanded was actually robbing from God.

They belonged to God. Canaanites did. To do what He had judged to do. Let me go on with the quote because it ends in an amazing way.

And so, they sowed the seeds of their own destruction. It would cause them troubles from then on. Sowed the seed of their own destruction and I'll get this.

Peace with wickedness is to be preferred to war for righteousness. That's a tremendous quote. Peace, now think about this.

[ 26 : 21 ] This is what they chose. Peace with wickedness. That was to be preferred over war for righteousness.

Indolence. They were lax in their devotion and duty to God and they tolerated sin in their land. Now remember the promised land as I have explained a number of times is a picture of the life of the believer.

The life of the believer and battling with sin conquering our land and what a mistake it is then that we make when we do not deal with sin.

Whether we're talking about that within our own lives and certainly that's the application here for us today. We have no similar command by God to annihilate unbelievers and perverted people.

We certainly don't have that. But we do have a command by God to deal with sin in our own lives and yet instead of dealing with it we tolerate it. We just allow it to persist and so we get lazy lazy about purity and holiness and we tolerate sin in our own lives.

[ 27 : 43 ] And God says to us what Joshua said to Israel in chapter 18 and verse 3 how long will you neglect to go and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers has given you?

How long are you going to just let let these people stay here and dwell among you? How long is it going to take for you to possess this land? Listen to A.W.

Pink and this is Rich. How like the vast majority of modern church members were those Israelites. They had crossed the Jordan and set foot in Canaan but they had become slack and failed to make their own the fair prospects before them make the land their own in like manner countless thousands make a profession join the church and imagining that their sins have been forgiven and their souls delivered from the wrath to come are satisfied rather satisfied with their case complacently rest on their oars they make no conscience of mortifying their lusts no serious efforts to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord no progress in the Christian life they are drones yea stumbling blocks to those who seek to be diligent in making their calling and election sure they are deceived by

Satan persuaded that they were saved sometime in the past they delude themselves into thinking that however slack they may be in resisting the devil and overcoming the world they are eternally secure they shirk the cross yet imagine the crown is sure they engage not in the good fight of faith yet suppose they have laid hold of eternal life they do not make the pleasing and obeying God of God their daily concern yet think to obtain the reward of the inheritance that's how Israel was thinking many of them that's how many believers are thinking and those especially who are false believers so the first issue is indolence the second one is arrogance the second one that stands out as you read throughout this narrative of of Joshua is arrogance arrogance and this is found at the close of

Joseph's inheritance Ephraim and half of the tribe of Manasseh so I want you to look there get your Bible open to chapter 17 and verse 14 then the children of Joseph all right so let me set this up the boundaries have been declared for for Joseph Ephraim and Manasseh half a tribe of Manasseh all that's been done and then we have that little blurb there about them not driving out the Canaanites and then verse 14 then the children of Joseph spoke to Joshua saying why have you given us only one lot and one share to inherit since we are a great people in as much as the Lord has blessed us until now!

[ 31 : 02 ] You pick up on this kind of the tone of this the tenor of this so Joseph answered them if you are a great people then go to the forest country and clear a place for yourselves there in the land land of the Perizzites and the giants since the mountains of Ephraim are too confined for you but the children of Joseph said the mountain country is not enough for us and all the Canaanites who dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron both those who are of Beth Shean and and its towns and those who are of the valley of Jezreel Joseph spoke to the house of Joseph to Ephraim and Manasseh saying you are a great people and have great power or so you say I inserted that myself so you shall not have only one lot but the mountain country shall be yours although it is wooded you shall cut it down and its forests farthest extent shall be yours for you drive out the

Canaanites though they have iron chariots and are strong now do you sense the arrogance of these people the half tribe of Manasseh and Ephraim the Lord had allotted the land and that allotment was combined because they're the sons of Joseph that's the way God determined it and yet that allotment was not enough for them and so they challenged God himself since the allotment was according to his divine decree his choice and so their very complaint is an affront to God it's an insult to God he's the one to determine their boundaries but in verse 15 Joshua then you know speaking for God he said okay all right if the land is too small for you then go up into the forest and clear that land for your people and they said arrogantly that is not enough for us either because we're great people big people and

I think they're you know they're not only referring to their numbers in fact I don't think they're referring to that at all remember half of the tribe of Manasseh was on the other side of Jordan so not that they were just people of importance because after all their father was Joseph and he was greatly blessed and so they ought to get in fact when you look at the land itself and the boundaries this lot Manasseh and half a tribe was larger than any other tribes and so it was just that they were

haughty about it and so Joshua was making kind of a concern there's this land over here you'll have to take care of the force have to drive out the giants and Canaanites but you can have that too and they said that's not enough all the Canaanites said and here is really the issue the real issue with them all the Canaanites who dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron see what arrogance this is you say it doesn't sound arrogant sounds like they're very strong no arrogance always has a mixture of weakness in it because arrogance by its very definition is to think that you're more important than you really are and by extension to think that you're more intelligent than you really are or that you're stronger than you really are that you're braver more courageous than you really are that you're you know you're somebody and spiritually speaking it is to get to thinking that you are deserving of

God's special blessing and this is where they were in the sense that he owes it to you you know you're very special people God owes it to you because of your worth to his kingdom and it's interesting how this ends Joshua basically says tongue in cheek if you can do the job on your own strength then the extra land is yours but the Lord does not commit himself to fight for you as he has done previously for his people that is you think God has shorted you something here has not given you all that you are worthy of because of your importance you think God owes you more! okay you can have some more but you'll have to go it alone you'll have to go it alone see and see how that works for you see here's the guard that we this should place upon our own lives that somehow we get to thinking that we we're more deserving than what God is dishing out to us right now that this just isn't fair and you know I deserve better deserve more and where where in the Bible do we get that nowhere it is a form of arrogance that if we're not careful we can slip into and this arrogance always mixed with fear because as soon as we become arrogant we become minus God minus God in the sense of his his indwelling presence in our life giving us strength and as soon as we lose that then there's nothing left but fear fear of those things that are going on it's a vicious cycle arrogance and fear and cowardice man the minute we begin to think that we're really better than we really are more important than we really are and this is what had happened to [ 37 : 12 ] Ephraim and the half tribe of man ass indolence arrogance and then next time negligence in the sense of sinning because of negligence just not careful accidental murder and that's what the cities of refuge were were designed for but give you a heads up if you don't already know the cities of refuge are such a crystal clear picture of Christ of Christ he being our refuge so we'll get to that next time Thank you.