

Joshua and the Inheritance

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Preacher: John Howard

[0 : 0 0] All right. Well, today it falls to me to cover chapters 15 and I think 16, but we won't get that far. They're pretty much the same. I don't know about you, but at this point, Matt sent out an email and says, I just realized that the next umpteen chapters are the same, except the tribe name changes and the list of the cities change, but the same description and it was done quite intentionally.

It was to impress upon the Israelites and people reading the Old Testament, especially the Jewish ones, of how detailed God gave directions on how they were to occupy the land and how it was to be divided.

So chapter 15 concerns Judah and chapter 16, I think, is... I had it written down here somewhere, but I don't know what it is.

Anyway, chapter 15 includes Judah, but also Caleb. And if you know Caleb, it turns out, if you didn't know this, Caleb was not Jewish.

He was not an Israelite. He was a Kenesite. And somewhere in the past, he joined the tribe of Judah and became a part of the tribe of Judah.

[1 : 2 1] So here we have... I think this is important. You stop and think about how many people who were not Israelites became important in Israel. Just think of that.

We know of Rahab, right? And she's in the line of Jesus. We have Caleb, who is one of the two faithful men, spies, that said, yeah, we can take you.

He trusted God. And in chapter 15, he's 85 years old and he steps up and says, give me the hard part. I'm going for it. This is my inheritance. I'll take it.

I had the vigor of when I was 40. Well, there's a whole lot more in that chapter if you look at the little details.

And that's what I like to do sometimes. We tend to read the big picture, you know, and we get bored, especially in chapter 15. This is the boundaries of it. You know, it goes from here to here.

[2 : 1 9] And then it lists all these cities that were broken up. And it says, and this, and this. And we go, we don't even know where most of them are. And we go, okay, let's go to the, oh, it's the same thing.

It's like we were doing our Bible study, our Sunday school class. We were going to do lamentations. Well, about the 11th chapter, we said, you know what? These all sound the same. Let's quit.

And do something else. Well, I want to read the first verse. Here it is. It says, So they got a big, they actually got the biggest allotment of land.

They were also one of the biggest tribes, or not the biggest tribe, that was in the promised land. You notice that only nine and a half tribes got land in the promised land. The others were on the other side of the Jordan.

So Judah got the biggest section, the southern section of this thing. Benjamin is right in the middle of them. Now, what I want you to pay attention to here is how the land was allotted.

- [3 : 29] And when it was allotted, it was done by lots. Now, I'm not sure exactly. I think they may have used, they had their own special, the Urim and Thorim or whatever. But that basically was to throw the dice.
- What did they expect to happen? Was this by chance that they were going to divide this land up? God. God. God was in charge. They were going to trust God to divide the land up.
- It was also to be divided up so that everybody got their share. Big tribes got a big bunch of land. Little tribes got less land.
- But every clan within that. Now, that's the part I want you to notice. It says, by its what? Clans. Now, what's a clan? A family group.
- A family group. It's made up of households. They were all generally related. They tended. It was broken into clans for a couple of reasons. But one of the reasons was that the land was important.
- [4 : 26] And they didn't want the land to get away from the family. Remember the story of Ruth. What was the whole issue there when she came back? It was the land of the husband.
- It was going to be lost unless somebody came from the clan, the family, to claim it and claim Ruth. And so it happened.
- The land was preserved for the family. So here it's going to be broken up by clan. Now, in fact, marriage usually happened within the clan.
- You didn't. Why? Because you didn't want the land to get outside of the clan. It happened sometimes, but that was not the desire. And it was going to be God who would allot the land.
- They would receive exactly what they needed to have every family household thrive in the new land. You know, that was an amazing thing that God provided for them not just the land, but also the houses and the vineyards and the fields.
- [5 : 30] And in some cases, the animals, the ones that they didn't destroy. And it was allotted to the clan. It was the lowest level of allotment that was necessary to maintain a stability in the land.
- I think it also makes clear that God was intensely interested in his people, not simply at the macro level, the whole nation of Israel, but rather right down to the family.
- He wanted to see that each family and each clan and each tribe received the land in the conquered area. And this land, by the way, was intended to be an inheritance.
- Now, to inherit something, you've got to have someone before you that owned it. Who owned this land? God. God.
- He promised it to whom initially? Abraham. Abraham. In fact, there's an interesting thing that you'll miss if you're not careful when you read some of Joshua. Abraham was told by God, I'm going to give you and your descendants everywhere your foot touches.
- [6 : 44] Guess what God told Joshua? I'm going to give you all the land that your feet touch. God took the promise to Abraham and told Joshua, now you fulfill it.
- And it turns out that Joshua in the battles pretty much went the whole length of the land that was promised to Abraham. It was an inheritance.
- This land was an inheritance and promise to Abraham. Now God was giving it to his descendants. And they were going to divide it up.
- It was God's gift to them. It was his people. It was proof of his enduring love for his people. It even demonstrated God's faithfulness to Israel.

He was fulfilling the promises. He was showing that he had a faithful, intense, loyal love for them. He was doing what he said he was going to do. Now I want you to remember this.

[7 : 48] Because the whole first 12 chapters talk about this. Even as it was God who was giving them the land. Remember, he told Joshua, everywhere you go, I'm going to give it to you.

It's a gift. I'm giving you the land. They still had to take up arms, swords, shields, spears, and go into battle and secure it.

You get that? That's like me saying, in that field is some beautiful blueberry bushes. You can have all the blueberries in that bush.

All those bushes. You can have them free. Just take them. But you've got to remember there's a wild boar in that field. And if you go in there unprepared, he's going to eat you alive.

You go, what kind of gift is this? And you'd say, you'd pry off of me. You pick them, I'll take them. But that's, you know, basically God said, this land is yours.

[8 : 47] Go take it. And they had to by force of arms. And when he told them that, and they had to pick up their arms and go, what did he tell Joshua three times?

Be strong and courageous. Why? Because they were going into battle against much larger forces often and very fierce forces. Remember, one of the northern alliance had chariots.

They had never fought chariots before. And they were a fearsome weapon. They had to go into battle, though, or they didn't get it. By the way, if you read the rest of this thing, we're going to get there.

They never, even in chapter 15, Judah never took all the land. Why? Because they feared the inhabitants. They never took Jerusalem.

Why? Because they were afraid they couldn't do it. And they didn't try. Dan, by the way, I don't know who's going to preach Dan. Dan failed to take any of their land. Why? Because they were cowards.

[9 : 49] They just didn't believe God was going to give it to them. And they said, oh, we can't fight them. Because it turns out the land they got was Philistines. And guess who lived amongst the Philistines?

Giants. And they go, no, no, no, no. And they wandered from the southern part of Israel all the way to the north and tricked people up there into surrendering their lands to them.

Dan didn't last long. They had to, it was like there was no walking into the land. I mean, I don't know, I think sometimes we think this.

They walked into the land and God said, it's yours. And so, Mr. wherever, Shechem said, you know what? I like that house. You got the key? Sure.

Go ahead. Take it. It's yours. Oh, that comes with these fields, right? Yep, yep, yep. You know, it was just there and they just walked in and took it. That's not what happened. You know, that's sort of the equivalent of what in our modern Christianity.

[10 : 53] Squatters, yeah. Name it and kind of. God said, there it is, well, Lord, I take that. And you expect Him to do what? Just give it to you.

You don't have to do anything. You name it, He's obligated to give it to you. That's not how it worked. It didn't work then. It doesn't work now. It's only by acting on your faith that God allows the provision He's providing to be gained.

Now, do you know that we have an inheritance from God as well? Did you know that? We've been promised land in a sense as well. Did you know that? We too are also God's inheritance.

Now, sometimes I wonder, Israel was God's inheritance and I'm sure that at some point, well, I know He did, He regretted it. He told Moses that. I'll just destroy him all and start over. I wonder if He looks at the church sometimes and goes, boy, I sure got cheated on this one.

They got the better deal. But, He chose us just as He chose Israel. And as He provided for them in the wilderness and gave them the land, He's going to do the same for us.

[12 : 14] You see, we have a covenant with our God. And the one thing that we don't realize though about a covenant is we have a responsibility. God has a responsibility.

We have a responsibility in response. You go back to Israel. Israel had a very large covenant. Covenant of Sinai, if you want to call it. The Mosaic. They had a bunch of laws.

And what were they supposed to do? Keep them. Keep them. They were to be obedient to all this. Why? To make them a unique people. To show forth the glory of their God.

To demonstrate to the nations that God was real and He blessed those that were obedient and He cursed those that weren't. And to invite them to come in to the blessings of their God.

That's why the Gentiles, the ones, Rahab and Caleb, they were welcome. Even the Gibeonites were welcomed. Why? Because they were willing to submit to the God of Israel. In fact, the whole thing that God was after in this was you'll be my people and I'll be your God.

[13 : 25] That's what He wants. That's His whole purpose. Right from the get-go, if you go back to Adam, what did God want to do with Adam and Eve? Have fellowship. Fellowship with them. Remember He walked in the cool of the evenings with them.

He was going to be their God and they were going to be His people. And even after they fell and they sinned, He still didn't abandon them. He still talked to them. He still worked with them with the goal of establishing fellowship with them.

Now the New Testament takes up this idea of inheritance. It's not necessarily the land on this present planet that we're going to inherit though. It's a new land on the new earth.

And we'll find God's provision in that place. But most important, where will God dwell? On that land, that new earth.

The heavenly Jerusalem will come down and settle on the earth. And God will be there present all the time. And we'll be His people and He will be our God. Forever.

[14 : 36] And even as Israel was rescued out of the darkness of Egypt, we too have been rescued from the darkness of this world. Next slide there, young man.

Next slide. I've got behind myself. It says there in Colossians, giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you. You're qualified. Do you know that? Qualified to share in the saints' what?

Inheritance. In the light. He delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of the Son He loves. You have an inheritance.

And God has qualified you, made you fit for the kingdom and for that inheritance. We are possessors of a promised land.

But we too have a requirement, our part of the agreement. And that is to be obedient.

[15 : 40] Even as Israel was called to be. Next slide. Colossians. Again, it says, for this reason, we also, from the day we heard about you, have not ceased praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Now get this one. So that you may live worthily of the Lord and please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good deed, growing in knowledge of our God.

The only way you can live worthily and pleasing to Him is to be obedient to Him. And much like Phil was saying, He's got things for us to do.

I think sometimes we Christians forget there's two, it's a scale. On one side is you have to be something, but on the other side you have to do something in response.

What did Paul say? He said, works without faith is dead. Well, that's James. Works without faith is dead. Paul says, faith without works is dead.

[16 : 46] They go hand in hand. As Israel was told, take the land, they had to take arms and go do something. It caused risk to them.

We are called, as His people, to take up arms again. Ephesians 6, what does it say? Put on the arms of God and stand firm.

Now, you don't wear armor and stand firm in formation unless there's an enemy out there who is causing you some risk. We've got to do that.

Did you know that we're declared the children of Abraham? Next slide. For in Christ Jesus you are all what? Sons of God through faith.

For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. And the next one, down in Galatians again, just a couple of verses later, it says, and if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to the promise.

[18 : 00] The very thing that God wanted Abraham to have, he wants us to have. The very one thing that he wanted to get from Abraham and promised him it would happen is the same thing he wants from us and that is to be our God and us to be his people.

To dwell with him. That's God's whole purpose. He wants to dwell with us. You know the angels look like when he told them what he was going to do and create mankind? Satan just said, this is crazy.

You want to do what? With them? And God said, yes, I delight in them. Remember, we're doing Job. You know what Satan said? He told God, you know the only reason they love you is because you do nice things for them.

Let me take all those nice things away and see what happens. Well, what was the end result? Job persevered in his faith and said, it's not the nice things that I need, it's the relationship with God that I crave.

Think about that. What motivates your faith? Is it the blessings that God gives you? Or the ticket out of hell that you've got? Or is it the communion you have with the Father?

[19 : 18] What delights you when you're in your quiet place? His presence? Or his gifts? I hope it's his presence because that's what we're going to have for eternity.

So just as Abraham and Israel had to respond in action to God's promises and faith, we too need to respond in action as well. We are the heirs of Abraham.

We need to live like we are in fact heirs of the promise and that we've inherited a land that we were the chosen, we are the chosen children of God. We need to live a life worthy of our calling by faith.

We have an advantage over the Israelites. We've received this gift of the Spirit. And that gift of the Spirit has made us the children of God and co-heirs with Christ.

Do you realize that? You're co-heirs with Christ. What is Christ going to inherit? Where? Everything. What are you going to enjoy with him?

[20 : 26] Everything. You think about that. Everything or what little grubby things that I can hang on to now? Which one's better? Everything.

I don't care how nice your home and house and car and all that is. Everything's better than what I got now. I'll be content with a cabin on the side of a hill.

A little hut. As long as I'm there. And it's by faith that the Spirit works within us to produce the deeds of the Spirit.

To do what was Israel's task to do but they failed to. To reflect the glory of our God and His love and His salvation. to extend His kingdom to the ends of the earth.

We're called to do the works of faith as we wait for our inheritance which includes the redemption of our bodies and a home on the new earth. And that hope that we have is expressed in our sufferings and believe it or not our sufferings are important.

[21 : 38] Not something to be avoided but to be embraced. In our good works the things we do to honor Him in obedience and in our prayer.

So these things are the proof that we are inheritors of the kingdom. That we are those who are called to a new covenant in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. And we need to live faithfully whether in prosperity or in want.

Remember Paul saying that? I've learned to be content in much and in less in good times and in bad for Him and for His purposes to realize the fulfillment of all that He has established for me to do and be a part of His eternal purpose.

Now we also need to realize as God people we are divided into clans and this is sort of an aside. It dawned on me that we the church is divided the church capital C is divided into clans did you know that?

And tribes in a way. Each church is the household of God is that not right? Are we not one family? Are we not related one another brothers and sisters in the same family?

[22 : 54] We're a clan. Now we don't want to act clannish when people come in but we're a clan. That means where's our tribe then? If we're a clan where's our tribe?

I think it's the people the other churches around us formed an area. I've always believed that there's only one church in every town. It just happens to be in many different places and we form one tribe.

And we need each other. We're related to each other through the spirit. We bear his image in our communities together.

If one church fails what does the community think? Do they think oh Moncure Baptist failed in this they messed up. They say the church has messed up.

And when then they think about Leeds Chapel or they think about Haywood what did they say? Well they're just like them down there. They don't have any good. We need each other. And we need each other to bear not only his image in our community but to reflect his love and glory in the darkness that's here.

[24 : 05] Do you realize that we're in this place and right across the way we form the basics light of this community? And you move out a little further and there are other lights in the community?

What did Christ say about a light? What do you do with it? Hide it under a basket right? Put it inside a building and shut the door so no one noticed. No he said put it on a stand or put it on a hill.

Why? So it can shine its light forward. Why do we want to shine our light? Because we're arrogant people who just want to pray we got it you don't. No! to help those that are lost find their way.

God is concerned with each gathering of his people. He's concerned about each church. That's why Christ walks amongst the candlesticks. God's spirit inhabits the churches working to mature them through the maturing of his individual members but also in his form as a body.

We're the body of Christ. We have to mature. We have to grow. He empowers us to do works. Have we seen in this church God empower us to do something? Yes.

[25 : 25] Things far beyond anything we would have thought of. And he's not done with us yet. We are priests to our God. We minister to him as priests.

We mediate between the world and God. The only God that most of the people in this world are going to know is the one that we share with them. They're going to come to you.

Have you ever had any non-believer come to you and say I need help? Why did they come to you? Oh because you're the easiest going nicest guy they know. No. They come to you because they hope you have answers because they know you have Christ.

they don't know what that means but they hope it helps. And you're mediating God's love and grace to them as they come with their needs.

God's interested and cares for each church however each church has a responsibility and that is to remain faithful to him.

[26 : 31] Our obedience and faithfulness determines if and how God can use us and blesses us. God's eternal purpose extends down to each individual church and each cluster of churches that they may be faithful in serving him and the communities they're in.

bringing a bit of the kingdom into the darkness as light until we see the fulfillment of the promise God has given us. And that's in my last slide, Mark.

Revelation says, God's dwelling place is now among the people and he will dwell with them and God himself will be with them and be their God.

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and there will be no more death or mourning or crying in pain for the old order of things has passed away. Is that worth celebrating?

Is that not worth anticipating? And is that not worth sharing? Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for your grace and your love and your message, your truth, your word.

[27 : 38] I just pray, Lord, that I spoke it correctly and that it was heard well, but that also through your spirit you will change our hearts wherever we fall down.

You will mature us, Lord, as individuals and as your people in this church. Help us to stand with all the churches in the area and know that you are our God and you have a purpose for us all to fulfill.

We thank you in Jesus' name. Amen.