**Joshua**

Chapter 18

*Division of the Rest of the Land*

**The whole assembly of the Israelites gathered at Shiloh and set up the Tent of Meeting there. The country was brought under their control, 2 but there were still seven Israelite tribes who had not yet received their inheritance. 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? 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. 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. 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. 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.” 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.” 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. 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.**

**Chs 18–19** This section begins and ends with the mention of the tabernacle at Shiloh (18:1; 19:51). Remaining tribal allotments are ordered around the mothers of the tribal patriarchs: Rachel (Jacob’s favorite wife) had Benjamin; Leah had Simeon, Zebulun, and Issachar; Zilpah had Asher; Bilhah had Naphtali and Dan. (TLSB)

**18:1–19:51** Seven tribes remained to be assigned land: Benjamin, Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali and Dan. Their lots were cast at Shiloh, after which a special portion was awarded to Joshua. (CSB)

**18:1** *Shiloh.* About ten miles northeast of Bethel, a little east of the main road from Bethel to Shechem. (TLSB)

Located in territory of Ephraim, 20 mi N of Jerusalem, between Shechem and Bethel. After the tribes of Joseph settled all the issues of their allotment at Gilgal, the process shifted to this new location. Shiloh was accessible to the rest of Israel. (TLSB)

*Tent of Meeting.* The tabernacle (see note on Ex 27:21) with its sacred ark of the covenant. It would remain at Shiloh until the time of Samuel (1Sa 4:3). (CSB)

*subdued*. Israel had sufficient control of the country, and specifically of this area, so this location was free from Canaanite threat. (TLSB)

**18:3** *take possession.* Conquest had to be followed by settlement, which required a survey, then a fair distribution, and then a full occupation of the land. A distinction must therefore be made between the national wars of conquest (Joshua) and the tribal wars of occupation (Jdg 1–2). (CSB)

Some hesitation had developed concerning finishing the job of occupying the land. There was a lack of claiming and also settling on the land. (TLSB)

**18:4** *They shall write a description*. Surveys were to be taken of the quantity and quality of the land. Indicates that a significant number of Israelites were literate. (TLSB)

**18:5** *seven portions*. Surveyors were to determine how best to divide the remaining land, according to Nu 26:52–56, so more populous tribes received sufficient land. Their estimations may not have yielded exactly equal portions in terms of acreage or population capacity. (TLSB)

*north.* Relative to the territory of Judah. (CSB)

**18:6** The 21 surveyors described and divided the land. Lots were then cast to choose which tribe would receive each division. (TLSB)

*I will cast lots for you.* See note on 14:1. (CSB)

God would direct the drawing so the portion selected for each tribe matched their needs. (TLSB)

**18:7** *priestly service of the Lord is their inheritance.* See 13:14; see also Dt 18:1–8 and note on Dt 18:1. (CSB)

**18:8** *cast lots* … *before the Lord* *in Shiloh*. In vv 4–6, the charge is to all the tribes assembled. Here, Joshua repeats the task to the three representatives from each of the remaining seven tribes. (TLSB)

**18:9** *scroll.* Presumed form of the document; the Hebrew for this word is not specific. (CSB)

Scroll or tablet. Can also be translated “document” (TLSB)

*by towns*. Towns or cities would be a key defining factor to the land, indicating boundaries, water sources, and which lands went with a given town. (TLSB)

**18:10** It seems that all went according to the instructions Joshua had outlined and repeated in vv 4–8. (TLSB)

**18:1–10** Settling the land of Canaan was not an overnight event. God’s servant Joshua needed to remind, encourage, and direct the people in this matter, lest they become negligent in following God’s promises to their completion. Take heart! God will not let His promised blessings go unused or unclaimed. • When we have received abundantly from You, O Lord, help us realize the fullness of Your blessings. Fill our borders with the peace and protection Your mercy provides through Your Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. (TLSB)

*Allotment for Benjamin*

**11 The lot came up for the tribe of Benjamin, clan by clan. Their allotted territory lay between the tribes of Judah and Joseph: 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 18 It continued to the northern slope of Beth Arabah and on down into the Arabah. 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. 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. 21 The tribe of Benjamin, clan by clan, had the following cities: Jericho, Beth Hoglah, Emek Keziz, 22 Beth Arabah, Zemaraim, Bethel, 23 Avvim, Parah, Ophrah, 24 Kephar Ammoni, Ophni and Geba—twelve towns and their villages. 25 Gibeon, Ramah, Beeroth, 26 Mizpah, Kephirah, Mozah, 27 Rekem, Irpeel, Taralah, 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.**

**18:11–28** *Benjamin*. The other son of Jacob’s favorite wife. These 26 cities are located between Ephraim and Judah. (TLSB)

**18:11** *lot … for … Benjamin.* A buffer zone between Judah and Ephraim, the two dominant tribes. Its northern line was the same as Ephraim’s southern border (see note on 16:1), and its southern line the same as Judah’s northernmost boundary (see note on 15:5). (CSB)

**18:16** *Valley of the Son of Hinnom*. On the south and west of Jerusalem. “Son of” is later dropped, and name is later transliterated “Gehenna,” a place where children were sacrificed to Molech by fire (Jer 7:31; 19:4–6; 32:35). (TLSB)

**18:23** *Avvim.* The people of Ai. (CSB)

**Ch 18** Benjamin, one of the smallest tribes, receives its allotment between Judah and Ephraim, the two most powerful tribes. Benjamin’s land would become the heartland of the kingdom of Israel. No matter how small we may seem to others in the Church or the world, we can take confidence, because the Lord makes plans for us and promises our salvation. • Lord, teach me my place in the service of Your kingdom, and strengthen me for greater service. Amen. (TLSB)