

# JOSHUA

## CHAPTER 18

### *Allotment of the Remaining Land*

**Then the whole congregation of the people of Israel assembled at Shiloh and set up the tent of meeting there. The land lay subdued before them. 2 There remained among the people of Israel seven tribes whose inheritance had not yet been apportioned. 3 So Joshua said to the people of Israel, “How long will you put off going in to take possession of the land, which the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you? 4 Provide three men from each tribe, and I will send them out that they may set out and go up and down the land. They shall write a description of it with a view to their inheritances, and then come to me. 5 They shall divide it into seven portions. Judah shall continue in his territory on the south, and the house of Joseph shall continue in their territory on the north. 6 And you shall describe the land in seven divisions and bring the description here to me. And I will cast lots for you here before the LORD our God. 7 The Levites have no portion among you, for the priesthood of the LORD is their heritage. And Gad and Reuben and half the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance beyond the Jordan eastward, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave them.” 8 So the men arose and went, and Joshua charged those who went to write the description of the land, saying, “Go up and down in the land and write a description and return to me. And I will cast lots for you here before the LORD in Shiloh.” 9 So the men went and passed up and down in the land and wrote in a book a description of it by towns in seven divisions. Then they came to Joshua to the camp at Shiloh, 10 and Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD. And there Joshua apportioned the land to the people of Israel, to each his portion.**

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

**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** *a book.* 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)

*The Inheritance for Benjamin*

**11** The lot of the tribe of the people of Benjamin according to its clans came up, and the territory allotted to it fell between the people of Judah and the people of Joseph. **12** On the north side their boundary began at the Jordan. Then the boundary goes up to the shoulder north of Jericho, then up through the hill country westward, and it ends at the wilderness of Beth-aven. **13** From there the boundary passes along southward in the direction of Luz, to the shoulder of Luz (that is, Bethel), then the boundary goes down to Ataroth-addar, on the mountain that lies south of Lower Beth-horon. **14** Then the boundary goes in another direction, turning on the western side southward from the mountain that lies to the south, opposite Beth-horon, and it ends at Kiriath-baal (that is, Kiriath-jearim), a city belonging to the people of Judah. This forms the western side. **15** And the

southern side begins at the outskirts of Kiriath-jearim. And the boundary goes from there to Ephron, to the spring of the waters of Nephtoah. 16 Then the boundary goes down to the border of the mountain that overlooks the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, which is at the north end of the Valley of Rephaim. And it then goes down the Valley of Hinnom, south of the shoulder of the Jebusites, and downward to En-rogel. 17 Then it bends in a northerly direction going on to En-shemesh, and from there goes to Geliloth, which is opposite the ascent of Adummim. Then it goes down to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben, 18 and passing on to the north of the shoulder of Beth-arabah it goes down to the Arabah. 19 Then the boundary passes on to the north of the shoulder of Beth-hoglah. And the boundary ends at the northern bay of the Salt Sea, at the south end of the Jordan: this is the southern border. 20 The Jordan forms its boundary on the eastern side. This is the inheritance of the people of Benjamin, according to their clans, boundary by boundary all around. 21 Now the cities of the tribe of the people of Benjamin according to their clans were Jericho, Beth-hoglah, Emek-keziz, 22 Beth-arabah, Zemaraim, Bethel, 23 Avvim, Parah, Ophrah, 24 Chephar-ammoni, Ophni, Geba—twelve cities with their villages: 25 Gibeon, Ramah, Beeroth, 26 Mizpeh, Chephirah, Mozah, 27 Rekem, Irpeel, Taralah, 28 Zela, Haeleph, Jebus (that is, Jerusalem), Gibeah and Kiriath-jearim—fourteen cities with their villages. This is the inheritance of the people of Benjamin according to 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. (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)