

# CHAPTER 18

## INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA 18

This chapter informs us of the setting up of the tabernacle at Shiloh, (<sup><0680></sup>Joshua 18:1); of the notice Joshua took, that seven tribes had not received their inheritance, (<sup><0680></sup>Joshua 18:2); of the instructions he gave them to send three men out of each tribe, and describe the land not yet disposed of, and bring the account to him, which was accordingly done, (<sup><0680></sup>Joshua 18:3-9); and then he cast lots for them, and the first lot came up for Benjamin, (<sup><0680></sup>Joshua 18:10,11); the borders of whose lots are described, (<sup><0680></sup>Joshua 18:12-20); and the several cities in it enumerated, (<sup><0680></sup>Joshua 18:21-28).

**Ver. 1.** *And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh*, etc.] The whole body of the people, men, women, and children, as well as the camp, (<sup><0680></sup>Joshua 18:9); at least all that had not received their inheritances in the land. Hither they came from Gilgal, where the camp and tabernacle had been ever since their passage over Jordan; but now the land being in the main subdued, that was too far off both for the camp and tabernacle, and therefore they moved further into the land, and nearer Jerusalem, where in time the tabernacle was to be placed. The place they assembled at, Shiloh, was in the tribe of Ephraim, of which tribe Joshua was, and whose lot and inheritance was now fixed, and it was not far from Jerusalem, about two leagues. Jerom says <sup>f398</sup> it was ten miles from Neapolis or Shechem, in the country of Acrabatena; and that there were scarce any ruins of it to be seen in his day, only an altar demolished was shown <sup>f399</sup>. It seems to have its name from the peaceable condition the land was now in, and very likely was now given it on that account:

*and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there*; no doubt by the appointment and direction of God, signified to Eleazar the high priest, either by a voice, or by Urim and Thummim; and the removal of it seemed necessary, partly that because several camps which surrounded it were now broken up and settled in their cities, as Reuben, Judah, and Ephraim; and partly that it might be near where Joshua, the governor of Israel, resided, Ephraim being his tribe; and also since Gilgal, on the borders of the land,

was too far off for the people to resort to the tabernacle, and therefore it was, proper it should be more in the heart of the country: when this was done, cannot certainly be determined; Kimchi says it was fourteen years after the Israelites came into the land of Canaan; and so says <sup>f400</sup> their chronology; but it is highly probable it was before that time, and not longer than seven or eight years at most; here the tabernacle continued, according to the Jewish writers <sup>f401</sup>, three hundred sixty nine years, even unto the times of Samuel, when for the sins of the sons of Eli it was removed. Eupolemus <sup>f402</sup>, an Heathen writer, speaks of the holy temple being fixed at Shiloh by Joshua:

*and the land was subdued before them:* the far greater part of it, and all so as to have no disturbance from, or war with, the inhabitants.

**Ver. 2.** *And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes,* etc.] Which were those of Benjamin, Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan:

*which had not yet received their inheritance;* and for which the lots were not cast.

**Ver. 3.** *And Joshua said unto the children of Israel,* etc.] To those of the seven tribes:

*how long [are] you slack to go to possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you?* not that they might have taken possession of it of themselves, without having it assigned to them by lot; that they did not do this, is not what is complained of, and they stand reproved for; but that when two tribes and a half had received their inheritance, these seemed indifferent to it, showed no inclination and disposition towards it, and much less eagerness to have a settlement, and did not apply to the court for it; which dilatoriness might arise from the present affluence of all good things they enjoyed through the spoils of the enemy; and partly through slothfulness, being tired of the war, and perceiving that they must be involved in it again to dispossess the Canaanites of some of the cities that would fall to their lot; and, perhaps, their slackness might be the more increased, by observing the dissatisfaction of the tribes with the lot they had received, and therefore waited till things were adjusted to greater satisfaction.

**Ver. 4.** *Give out from among you three men for [each] tribe,* etc.] That is, for each of the seven tribes, in all twenty one; though some think they were

to be taken out of all the nine tribes and a half, and were thirty six; and so Josephus<sup>f403</sup> seems to understand it; but then he makes but one out of each tribe to be sent, and but ten in all, which is a great oversight in that historian:

*and I will send them*; Joshua would not take upon him to name the persons, but left it to their own choice for their greater satisfaction; but when chosen and presented to him, he would give them a commission and directions what to do:

*and they shall rise*; gird themselves, and prepare for their journey, and set out:

*and go through the land*; of Canaan; not the whole of it, but that part which as yet was not disposed of; though some think they were to go through and describe the whole land; but I see no reason for that, for what was described was to be divided into seven parts only, and what belonged already to Judah and Joseph, seem plainly to be excepted in (~~Joshua~~ Joshua 18:5):

*and describe it according to the inheritance of them*; take the dimensions of it, and divide it into seven parts, according to the number of the tribes that had not received their inheritance. Jarchi thinks this description and division were not to be made equally, but according to the largeness and smallness of the tribes; but this could not be done by the measurers, since the inheritance of each depended on the lot that was afterward to be cast, which by this means would have been rendered needless:

*and they shall come [again] to me*; which seems to be not only a precept or instruction to them, that when they had done their business, they should come to Joshua and give him an account of it; but an assurance also of their safety, that they should receive no disturbance nor hurt from the remaining Canaanites, but should return safe and well.

**Ver. 5.** *And they shall divide it into seven parts*, etc.] According to the number of the seven tribes not yet settled; and this they were to describe and divide was all the land subdued, or not subdued, only the following excepted:

*Judah shall abide in their coast on the south*; on the south of the land of Canaan, where their lot fell, so that needed not to be measured and described; and this tribe was to retain what they were possessed of, unless

it should appear they had too much, and others wanted, and they willing to part with some of it to their brethren, as they afterwards did to the tribes of Simeon and Dan:

*and the house of Joseph shall abide in their coast on the north;* on the north of the tribe of Judah; not of the land of Canaan, for some other tribes lay more northerly.

**Ver. 6.** *Ye shall therefore describe the land [into] seven parts,* etc.] Or ye shall describe the land, even the seven parts of it when divided; it seems as if they were first to describe in general all the land not disposed of, and then divide it into seven parts, and make a particular description of each part, or form a plan, or draw a map of every part:

*and bring [the description] hither to me;* not by word of mouth, but as written in a book, or marked out in a map, and laid before him, (see ~~6689~~ Joshua 18:9);

*that I may cast lots for you here before the Lord your God;* in Shiloh, at the door of the tabernacle, and so before the Lord who dwelt in it, at whose disposal the lot was, and by which everyone of the seven tribes would have their part and portion assigned them most fitting and convenient for them, according to the will and counsel of God, in which it became them to acquiesce.

**Ver. 7.** *But the Levites have no part among you,* etc.] And so needed not to send any men out of their tribe to measure the land on their account, and is a reason why the remaining part of the land was to be divided into seven parts only:

*for the priesthood of the Lord [is] his inheritance;* not only the office, but what appertained to it, all the perquisites of it, the tithes, firstfruits, parts of the sacrifices, etc. (see ~~6634~~ Joshua 13:14);

*and Gad, and Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh, have received their inheritance beyond Jordan on the east, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave them;* and so had no share in the division of the land of Canaan, being sufficiently provided for.

**Ver. 8.** *And the men arose, and went away,* etc.] The seven tribes took the advice of Joshua, chose three men out of each tribe, and presented them to him, who gave them their commission and instruction to go and describe

the land of Canaan, not yet disposed of, and whether subdued, or not subdued; upon which they prepared for their journey, and took it, after he had given them the following charge:

*and Joshua charged them that went to describe the land;* before they departed from him:

*saying, go and walk through the land;* and take particular notice, and an exact survey of it, both of the quality and the quantity of it:

*and describe it;* its cities and towns, hills and dales, the goodness and badness of the soil, and put it down in a book, or lay it out in a map, that it may be discerned by the eye what number of cities, and what space of ground it contains, and what parts are hilly and woody, and what otherwise:

*and come again to me;* to make a report of it:

*that I may cast lots for you before the Lord in Shiloh;* that is, for the several tribes which they belonged to, and by whom they were chosen for this purpose.

**Ver. 9.** *And the men went and passed through the land,* etc.] Undisturbed by the inhabitants that remained; the fear of the Israelites being still upon them, and the providence of God restraining them, so that the men passed through the whole country, and took a survey of it without any molestation:

*and described it by cities, into seven parts, in a book;* or map, or rather made seven maps of it, and set down the several cities in each division, with the places adjacent, hills and vales, and marked out a plain and exact chorography of the whole, by which it appears they must be men well skilled in geometry. Josephus <sup>f404</sup> says, that Joshua added to them some that understood geometry; but doubtless the persons each tribe chose and sent were such whom they knew were well versed in that art, and so fit for the business; and which they had, no doubt, learned in Egypt, this being one part of the wisdom and learning of the Egyptians; who boasted of it as an invention of theirs, as Diodorus Siculus <sup>f405</sup> relates; and indeed they were obliged to study it, their country being divided into several homes, and these into lesser districts, and which also were subdivided, and according thereunto were the king's taxes levied upon them; and what with the confusion frequently made by the overflowings of the Nile, they were

frequently obliged to measure their land over again; and hence they became expert in this science, which is commonly believed took its rise from them, and passed into Greece, as Herodotus <sup>f406</sup>, and Strabo <sup>f407</sup>, and other authors relate; however, it is certain from this instance in the time of Joshua, that geometry was not the invention of Anaximander, about five hundred years before Christ, as some have asserted <sup>f408</sup>:

*and came [again] to Joshua to the host at Shiloh*; where the camp, as well as the people in common, and the tabernacle, were; they returned, as Josephus <sup>f409</sup> says, at the end of seven months; and to measure so much land, and make such divisions of it, and give the plans and maps of each division, must take up a considerable time.

**Ver. 10.** *And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the Lord*, etc.] For the seven tribes, as he had for the two tribes and a half at Gilgal; of the manner of casting lots, (see Gill on “<sup><0055></sup>Numbers 26:55”);

*and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel according to their division*: the land that was divided into seven parts, he distributed to the seven tribes, as the lot came up for them, and then divided these several parts according to the families and households in each tribe.

**Ver. 11.** *And the lot of the tribe of the children of Benjamin came up according to their families*, etc.] This was the first lot of the seven that came up; it was but a small lot, and therefore called “little Benjamin”, (<sup><0027></sup>Psalm 68:27); but the land was very pleasant and fruitful. Josephus <sup>f410</sup> says, this lot was very strait, because of the goodness of the soil, for it took in Jericho, and the city of Jerusalem:

*and the coast of their lot came forth between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph*; having Judah on the south, and Joseph on the north; this was so ordered by the providence of God, that Benjamin should lie close to Joseph, being own brothers, and the only children of Rachel, Jacob’s beloved wife; and that it should be next to Judah, with whom it was to unite, both in religious and civil affairs, and both met in and had a part of Jerusalem, the metropolis of Israel; and this lot fell exactly according to the prediction of Moses, and the order of it, who places Benjamin between Judah and Joseph, the tribe of Levi having no share in the division of the land, (<sup><0013></sup>Deuteronomy 33:7,12,13).

**Ver. 12.** *And their border on the north side was from Jordan*, etc.] Which was the eastern boundary of the tribe, and hence proceeded from east to

west, and formed its northern border, which is described in like manner as the lot of the children of Joseph, (<sup><666></sup>Joshua 16:1,2);

*and the border went up to the side of Jericho on the north side*; from Jordan it went to the north of Jericho, and so took in that place, which was within the tribe of Benjamin, (<sup><682></sup>Joshua 18:21);

*and went up through the mountains westward*; the mountains that were on the north of Jericho; for, as Strabo says <sup>f411</sup>, Jericho was surrounded with mountains, (see <sup><626></sup>Joshua 2:16,22); through these mountains the coast went on towards the western border of the tribe:

*and the goings out thereof were at the wilderness of Bethaven*: a place near Bethel and Ai, to which there was a wilderness adjoining, (see <sup><682></sup>Joshua 7:2 8:20); here ended the northern border.

**Ver. 13.** *And the border went over from thence towards Luz*, etc.] From Bethaven, where the northern border ended, the western began, and went on to Luz:

*to the side of Luz, which is Bethel, southward*; that is, passed along, leaving that city to the south, which formerly was called Luz, but now Bethel, which though distinct places formerly, yet being very near, might in process of time be joined; (see Gill on “<sup><662></sup>Joshua 16:2”);

*and the border descended to Atarothadar*, the same with Archiataroth, (see Gill on “<sup><662></sup>Joshua 16:2”), and (see Gill on “<sup><665></sup>Joshua 16:5”):

*near the hill that [lieth] on the south side of the nether Bethhoron*; so called to distinguish it from Bethhoron the upper, situated on an hill or mountain, (<sup><665></sup>Joshua 16:5); this was rebuilt by Solomon, (<sup><1097></sup>1 Kings 9:17).

**Ver. 14.** *And the border was drawn [thence]*, etc.] From Bethhoron:

*and compassed the corner of the sea southward*; it is hard to say what sea is meant, or what by it. Fuller <sup>f412</sup> conjectures, that as the Hebrews call any confluence of water a sea, as we call such a “mere”, the great waters in Gibeon may be meant, (<sup><2412></sup>Jeremiah 41:12); for it cannot mean the Mediterranean sea, for Dan lay between Benjamin and that; and yet if a sea is meant, no other can be; wherefore it is best to render it the “west quarter”, as it is in the latter part of this verse; and so the same word is translated, (<sup><682></sup>Joshua 18:12); the “west”, and not the “sea”, as it

sometimes is; for the border of Benjamin did not reach the sea any where; though Josephus <sup>f413</sup> makes it to extend to it, and says, that the length of it was from the river Jordan to the sea:

*the hill that [lieth] before Bethhoron southward*; the hill that lay to the south of nether Bethhoron, as in (<sup><f683></sup>Joshua 18:13):

*and the goings out thereof*, the end of the western coast,

*were at Kirjathbaal, which [is] Kirjathjearim, a city of the children of Judah*; of which (see <sup><f659></sup>Joshua 15:9,60);

*this [was] the west quarter*; as thus described.

**Ver. 15.** *And the south quarter [was] from the end of Kirjathjearim, etc.]* Where the western quarter ended:

*and the border went out on the west*; not directly south, but somewhat westerly. It is, in the original, “the sea”, and should be rendered, “from the sea”, or “from the west” <sup>f414</sup>; and Jarchi confesses his ignorance, and says, I know not what sea it is; and well he might, for there was no sea here; but the Mediterranean sea, being to the west of the land of Israel, it is often used for the west in the Hebrew language, and so here:

*and went out to the well of waters of Nephtoah*; (see Gill on <sup><f659></sup>Joshua 15:9”);

**Ver. 16.** *And the border came down, etc.]* In the description of the border of Judah, hereabout, it is said to go up, (<sup><f655></sup>Joshua 15:5); because there, as Jarchi observes, the measure was from east to west, but here from west to east:

*to the end of the mountain that [lieth] before the valley of the son of Hinnom*; this south border of Benjamin is the same with the north border of Judah; and the same places are mentioned in the description of the one as of the other, (see <sup><f658></sup>Joshua 15:8). The mountain is Mount Moriah,

*[and] which [is] in the valley of the giants on the north*; on the north of the valley of Rephaim:

*and descended to the valley of Hinnom*; the border from the end of Mount Moriah to that valley:



*to the side of Jebusi on the south*; to the south side of Jerusalem, having that city on the south;

*and descended to Enrogel*; of which (see Gill on “<sup><6857></sup>Joshua 15:7”).

**Ver. 17.** *And was drawn from the north*, etc.] Turning northward, and looking that way from the west to the east:

*and went forth to Enshemesh*; or the fountain of the sun, (see <sup><6857></sup>Joshua 15:7);

*and went forth toward Geliloth*; called Gilgal, (<sup><6857></sup>Joshua 15:7);

*which [is] over against the going up to Adummim*; a place between Jerusalem and Jericho, (see <sup><6857></sup>Joshua 15:7);

*and descended to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben*; (see <sup><6856></sup>Joshua 15:6).

**Ver. 18.** *And passed along toward the side over against Arabah northward*, etc.] The same with Betharabah, (<sup><6856></sup>Joshua 15:6); and so it is called here in the Greek version:

*and went down unto Arabah*; the same as before, and included it, for it is mentioned among the cities of this tribe, (<sup><6822></sup>Joshua 18:22).

**Ver. 19.** *And the border passed along to the side of Bethhoglah northward*, etc.] Inclining somewhat toward the north, but not leaving the city to the north, for it is included in the lot of Benjamin, (<sup><6821></sup>Joshua 18:21); of which place (see <sup><6856></sup>Joshua 15:6);

*and the outgoings of the border were at the north bay of the salt sea*; here ended the southern border of Benjamin, even at the bay or creek of the salt sea, which looked northward, as the southern border of Judah began at that bay of it, which looked southward, (<sup><6852></sup>Joshua 15:2);

*at the south end of Jordan*; where it fell into the salt sea:

*this [was] the south coast*; as before described.

**Ver. 20.** *And Jordan was the border of it on the east side*, etc.] It had Jordan on the east, Dan on the west, Judah on the south, and Joseph or Ephraim on the north:

*this [was] the inheritance of the children of Benjamin, by the coasts thereof round about, according to their families*; this is the general description of the limits of this tribe, the particular cities in it follow.

**Ver. 21.** *Now the cities of the tribe of the children of Benjamin, according to their families, were Jericho*, etc.] Which though destroyed, and not to be rebuilt as a city, was yet a place inhabited, and in future times was rebuilt, and in great splendour, and continued to the time of Christ; of which (see <sup><4100></sup>Joshua 2:1);

*and Bethhoghlah*, where or near to which was the threshing floor of Atad, at which lamentation was made for Jacob, (see Gill on <sup><4000></sup>Genesis 1:10”), and (see Gill on <sup><4156></sup>Joshua 15:6”);

*and the valley of Keziz*; or Emekkeziz; so the Greek version calls it Amecasis: it is highly probable it was in the valley or plain of Jericho, and perhaps might have its name from the incision of the balsam tree there; which, as Pliny <sup>f415</sup> says, was cut with glass or a stone, or with knives made of bone; if cut with iron, it kills it.

**Ver. 22.** *And Betharabah*, etc.] Of the first of these, (see Gill on <sup><4156></sup>Joshua 15:6”);

*and Zemaraim*; one of the sons of Canaan was named Zemira, (<sup><4008></sup>Genesis 10:18); by whom this city Zemaraim might be built, or however have its name given it, in memory of him; there was a mountain of this name in the tribe of Ephraim, near to which this city might be, (<sup><4130></sup>2 Chronicles 13:4).

*and Bethel*; of the last of these, (see Gill on <sup><4002></sup>Joshua 7:2”).

**Ver. 23.** *And Avim, and Parah*, etc.] Of the two first of these we read nowhere else;

*and Ophrah* is not the same with Ophrah in (<sup><4061></sup>Judges 6:11); that belonged to the tribe of Manasseh, but rather that which was in the land of Shuah, (<sup><4037></sup>1 Samuel 13:17). Jerom calls this place Aphrah, in the tribe of Benjamin, and says <sup>f416</sup>, in his time there was a village called Effrem, five miles from Bethel to the east, which very probably is the same with this.

**Ver. 24.** *And Chepharhaammonai, and Ophni*, etc.] Of the two first of these no mention is made elsewhere;

*and Gaba* is the same with Gibeah, a well known place, because of the foul fact committed there, which had like to have been the ruin of this tribe, (<sup><0794></sup>Judges 19:14-30); and for being the native place of King Saul, hence called “Gibeah of Saul”, (<sup><0910></sup>1 Samuel 11:4 15:34 <sup><1206></sup>2 Samuel 21:6 <sup><2309></sup>Isaiah 10:29); it was about six or seven miles from Jerusalem, (see Gill on “<sup><2308></sup>Hosea 5:8”); twelve cities with their villages; which agrees with the account of them.

**Ver. 25.** *Gibeon*, etc.] Gibeon is the place from whence the Gibeonites came, who deceived Joshua, (<sup><0603></sup>Joshua 9:3-6). Jerom says <sup>f417</sup>, in his time there was a village shown of this name, four miles from Bethel to the east, near Ramah, next mentioned;

*and Ramah*, which Jerom relates <sup>f418</sup> was six miles from Aelia or Jerusalem to the north, against Bethel. Rauwolff, a traveller in those parts, says <sup>f419</sup>, that the town of Rama is situated on an ascent, in plain fields, which extend themselves for two leagues to the hill of the city of Jerusalem; these fields are very fruitful and well tilled, and sown with corn, cotton, and Indian millet; the town is pretty large, but very open, like unto a village, very pitifully built, where one may still see here and there some signs of old buildings;

*and Beeroth* was a city that belonged to the Gibeonites, (<sup><0607></sup>Joshua 9:17); and Jerom says <sup>f420</sup>, in his time was shown the village, seven miles from Aelia or Jerusalem, as you go to Neapolis or Shechem.

**Ver. 26.** *And Mizpeh*, etc.] Frequent mention is made of Mizpeh in Scripture; according to Fuller <sup>f421</sup>, it was about eight miles from Gibeah; it was near Ramathon, which Josephus says <sup>f422</sup> was forty furlongs from Jerusalem;

*and Chephirah* was one of the cities subject to Gibeon, (<sup><0607></sup>Joshua 9:17).

*and Mozah*; there was a place called Motza, near to Jerusalem, where they used to go to get willows at the feast of tabernacles <sup>f423</sup>.

**Ver. 27.** *And Rekem, and Irpeel, and Taralah.*] Of these cities there is no mention made elsewhere.

**Ver. 28.** *And Zelaheath*, etc.] Zelah was the buryingplace of Saul and his family, (<sup><1214></sup>2 Samuel 21:14).

*Eleph* is nowhere else mentioned; some join it with Zelah, and make one city of it, but then the number of cities given could not be completed; both Jarchi and Kimchi say they were two cities, as doubtless they were;

*and Jebusi, which [is] Jerusalem*; of Jerusalem being called Jebusi, (see ~~6156~~ Joshua 15:63); it belonged partly to the tribe of Judah, and partly to the tribe of Benjamin; Mount Zion belonged to Judah, and Moriah to Benjamin;

*Gibeath* was a distinct city both from Gaba and Gibeon; by its being mentioned with Jerusalem, it should seem to be near it. Jerom<sup>f424</sup> speaks of Gabaatha in the tribe of Benjamin, twelve miles from Eleutheropolis, where the grave of the Prophet Habakkuk was shown;

*[and] Kirjath* signifies a city, but what city is meant is not known:

*fourteen cities with their villages*; and just so many are mentioned by name:

*this [is] the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their families*; these cities, with others perhaps not mentioned, were allotted to the tribe of Benjamin for their families to dwell in.