

# Joshua 13-17

## Breaking Strongholds

### I. Intro

Chapter 13 marks a transition in the book of Joshua

Joshua has completed the campaign of leading Israel into battle, defeating 31 kings and kingdoms

Joshua 12:7

*"And these are the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel conquered on this side of the Jordan..."*

Joshua 12:24

*"...all the kings, thirty-one."*

It is now time to divide the land giving each of the tribes their allotted territories.

The land was distributed based upon divine selection AND size of the tribe

- God chose where
- Growth in the wilderness determined how much

#### **Application point**

It is important to grow during the challenging seasons of life

When difficulties arise, instead of using all our energies trying to find a way to escape we should seek to cling to Christ and mature in our relationship with Him.

The Bible story is filled with examples of people who grew through the challenges of life

- Joseph was forged in prison
- David in the caves of Adullam
- Daniel in captivity
- Paul in obscurity

- John on Patmos

**Part of what we are facing today comes from divine allotment.**

We do not control our circumstances but we do control whether or not we will cling to the Lord and allow Him to work in our life along the way

In difficult seasons God often wants to cut things out of our lives.

We are like a lump of clay in the Potters hand and He is shaping us into a testimony of His grace

Ephesians 2:10

*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

## II. Divided by Lot

The division of the land among the 12 tribes is the main subject of Joshua 13-20

When Israel first crossed into Canaan their headquarters were located in Gilgal

Here in chapter 13 the nation gathers once again in Gilgal to divide the land

Joshua 13:7

*Now therefore, divide this land as an inheritance to the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh."*

The process of exactly how the land was distributed is not given, although we read

Joshua 14:2

*Their inheritance was by **lot**, as the Lord had commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes and the half-tribe.*

The Lot was an OT means of determining the the will of the Lord

The priest wore a breastplate that included something called the Urim and the Thummim

Urim - lights

Thummim - perfection

Little detail is given regarding how these were used but tradition holds that they were stones used by the priests to uncover the will of God

- One view describes them as stones that lit up supernaturally when the priests consulted the Lord
- Another view has the stones marked with "Yes or No" or "True or False"

It was like a divine form of drawing straws

**Israel did not see it as chance**, but believed God was in control of the decisions

Proverbs 16:33

*The lot is cast into the lap,  
But its every decision is from the Lord.*

Psalms 16:5-6

*O Lord, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You maintain my lot.*

*The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; Yes, I have a good inheritance.*

### **Application point**

In the NT we are given a different means of determining the will of God

John 3:8

*The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."*

Paul referred to this as being "Led by the Spirit"

Romans 8:14

*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*

And we see this in action in the life of Jesus

Luke 4:1

*Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,*

When trying to find our way a person can be led by;

- Intuition
- Stars
- Sexton
- Map
- Gps
- Guide

But the primary tool the Spirit of God uses to lead the child of God is the word of God

Psalms 119:105

*Your word is a lamp to my feet*

*And a light to my path.*

### III. Distributing the Land

#### **East of the Jordan**

Joshua 13:8-33 details the land given to Reuben, Gad and 1/2 of Manasseh

They chose not to trust the Lord but to take matters into their own hands and choose their own inheritance

**Like** a single person who refuses to wait on God for the right person or for things that are restricted to a marriage relationship

Or **like** a married person who wants out of a difficult marriage

Israel thought they knew better than God

Sadly the outcome for these tribes was tragic

- Ultimately they became the first to be defeated when the enemy struck
- But before that they became irrelevant to the history of Israel

#### **Joshua 14:1 - Joshua 19:51**

The remaining 9 tribes are given their allotments within the Promised Land

Rather than reading through the section a picture is worth a thousand words

Image

**Judah -**

Joshua 15:1

*So this was the lot of the tribe of the children of **Judah** according to their families: The border of Edom at the Wilderness of Zin southward was the extreme southern boundary.*

**Ephraim -**

Joshua 16:1

*The lot fell to the children of **Joseph** from the Jordan, by Jericho, to the waters of Jericho on the east, to the wilderness that goes up from Jericho through the mountains to Bethel,*

**Benjamin -**

Joshua 18:11

*Now the lot of the tribe of the children of **Benjamin** came up according to their families, and the territory of their lot came out between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph.*

**Simeon -**

Joshua 19:1

*The second lot came out for Simeon, for the tribe of the children of **Simeon** according to their families. And their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah.*

**Zebulun -**

Joshua 19:10

*The third lot came out for the children of **Zebulun** according to their families, and the border of their inheritance was as far as Sarid.*

**Issachar -**

Joshua 19:17

*The fourth lot came out to Issachar, for the children of **Issachar** according to their families.*

**Asher -**

Joshua 19:24

*The fifth lot came out for the tribe of the children of **Asher** according to their families.*

**Naphtali** -

Joshua 19:32

*The sixth lot came out to the children of **Naphtali**, for the children of Naphtali according to their families.*

**Dan** -

Joshua 19:40

*The seventh lot came out for the tribe of the children of **Dan** according to their families.*

## IV. Taking Strongholds

A few important principles are tucked away in the text

Joshua 13:13

*Nevertheless the children of Israel **did not** drive out the Geshurites or the Maachathites, but the Geshurites and the Maachathites dwell among the Israelites until this day.*

Joshua 15:63

*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.*

Joshua 16:10

*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.*

Joshua 17:12-13

*Yet the children of Manasseh **could not** drive out the inhabitants of those cities, but the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land. And it happened, when the children of Israel grew strong, that they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but did not utterly drive them out.*

Israel had some decisive victories

- Under Moses they defeated Og and Sihon
- Under Joshua they defeated 31 kings
- On their own the tribes conquered many holdouts

But there were Strongholds that they did not take because they could not

Two words are used to describe some of the Strongholds

- **Determined**
  - Resolved not to change
  - Adamant
  - Unwavering
- **Dwell** - live

Some of Israel's enemies would not easily be displaced

In particular we are told about the **Jebusites**

Joshua 15:63

*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.*

They lived in the ancient city of **Jerusalem**.

This was once a godly city ruled by the mysterious Bible character Melchizedek

But it had become a stronghold for those who resisted God

And the tribe of Judah was unable to deal with them

This stronghold will remain for hundreds of years

This city was so fortified that the Jebusites ridiculed attackers claiming they could protect their city with blind and lame guards

2 Samuel 5:6

*And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spoke to David, saying, "You shall not come in here; but the blind and the lame will repel you," thinking, "David cannot come in here."*

The Jebusite city would ultimately be conquered

1 Chronicles 11:4-7

*And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem, which is Jebus, where the Jebusites were, the inhabitants of the land. But the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, "You shall not come in here!" Nevertheless **David took the stronghold** of Zion (that is, the City of David). Now David said, "Whoever attacks the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain." And Joab the son of Zeruiah went up first, and became chief. Then David dwelt in the stronghold; therefore they called it the City of David.*

2 Samuel tells us how it was taken

2 Samuel 5:8

*Now David said on that day, "Whoever **climbs up by way of the water shaft** and defeats the Jebusites (the lame and the blind, who are hated by David's soul), he shall be chief and captain." Therefore they say, "The blind and the lame shall not come into the house."*

Jerusalem got its water from the Gihon Spring. This spring poured into the pool of Siloam and was protected by the city walls.

A natural vertical cave over 40' long would allow access to the spring from the city.

Job and his men would have to sneak up to the city walls without being seen then climb up a vertical stone shaft more than 40' high. Once inside they could open the city gates and Israel could take the city

After hundreds of years the stronghold was taken by men with enough courage and faith to go where others would not

It is interesting that instead of going himself, David enlisted others

Even men like David would exhibit giant-taking faith

What are some of the Strongholds we have trouble defeating



- Anger
- Bitterness
- Fear
- Lust
- Gossip
- Substance abuse
- Alcohol
- Smoking
- Complacency

How can we overcome these enemies that have overcome us so many times in the past?

1 John 2:14

*I have written to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning.*

*I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have **overcome the wicked one.***

John describes a group of young men who defeated the enemies Strongholds by clinging to the word of God

We know the word of God is like a light to guide us, but the word is so much more than that. It is food designed to strengthen us and when it is practiced it is like an exercise program giving us spiritual strength to overcome

Matthew 4:4

*But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"*

Like food it strengthens us from within

Ephesians 3:16

*that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,*

If you are not able to defeat Strongholds in your life increase your intake of the word of God and look for ways to put it into practice

1 Timothy 4:7

*But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness.*

Paul points out a second way whereby Strongholds can be conquered

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

*For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down **strongholds**, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,*

Paul exhorts us to bring our thoughts into captivity

Captivity - a word used of POW's taken as prisoners

NIV

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to **make it obedient to Christ**.

NLT

We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We **capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ**.

MESSAGE

We use our powerful God-tools for smashing warped philosophies, tearing down barriers erected against the truth of God, **fitting every loose thought and emotion and impulse into the structure of life shaped by Christ**.

**Paul explains that we can make our thoughts obey the word of God.**

When the devil shoots a fiery dart at our mind, we can fight back with what the Bible says and make our thoughts and our emotions obey the Word of God.

It is then that we will defeat the Strongholds

Notice one more thing

Paul refers to our weapons

2 Corinthians 10:4

*For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,*

As a believer we have been fit with all the weapons necessary to defeat the enemy and take the Land

### **Prayer is a powerful weapon**

Effective prayer life

Suppose that someone attacked you on a dark street and started wrestling with you. If he were to pull a knife, the whole battle would suddenly be centered on one thing—control of the knife. All of a sudden, you'd forget about punching him in the nose. You'd be grabbing for his wrist and trying to knock that knife out of his hand for you realize that it is the deciding factor in this battle.

Satan knows that prayer brings you victory and spells his defeat. He knows it's the deciding factor in this spiritual warfare. That's why he concentrates all his efforts against prayer. He'll do all he can to upset your prayer time, and keep you from praying.

### **Fellowship is an effective weapon**

We see it being used in our text in Joshua

Joshua 19:9

*The inheritance of the children of Simeon was included in the share of the children of Judah, for the share of the children of Judah was too much for them. Therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of that people.*

Pride is the enemy of fellowships power

Proverbs 16:18

*Pride goes before destruction,*

*And a haughty spirit before a fall.*

Don't let pride keep you from confessing your Strongholds to someone and like David with Joab, taking the walled city

## V. Conclusion

What Strongholds does the enemy still have in your life?

How can you apply the lessons learned tonight?

- Are you willing to have Joab-like faith and be willing to take down what has been a long time enemy to your walk with Christ?
- Are you willing to become trained in the weapons necessary to defeat the enemy?
  - Are you willing to enlist others to battle with you
  - Are you willing to invest in specific prayer for these things
  - Are you willing to daily ingest the word to become strong enough for the battle ahead?