

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Joshua: God's Faithful Giving Of The Promised Land To Israel

Part III: God's Dividing The Land For Israel's Inheritance, Joshua 13:1-21:45

E. The Inheritance Of The Remaining Seven Tribes, Joshua 18:1-19:48

1. Dividing Canaan For The Remaining Tribes: Exchanging Harmful Selfish Interests For God's Helpful Will (Joshua 18:1-10)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

We live in an era of personal interests, and though Scripture strongly teaches the value of the individual, if many individuals selfishly promote their own interests, they broadly harm human institutions, a fact we can illustrate:

(1) The editorial, "Government by the Pizza Slice," in The Wall Street Journal, July 13, 2015, p. A14 told how the Food and Drug Administration recently "delayed rules requiring chain restaurants to post calorie counts on menus to help you make the hard call between a Whopper and double cheeseburger." These rules were "mandated by the Affordable Care Act" to influence the general public to ingest fewer calories and so to lower obesity and national health care costs, but "(a) 2010 study by Stanford University researchers of Starbucks calorie labels in New York reported that consumers ordered 6% fewer calories, to an average 232 calories, a transaction from 247" with their "food," but "not beverages: Patrons still wanted their Java Chip Frappuccinos (470 calories)."

Meanwhile, "the FDA . . . claims to lack the resources to do its main jobs of monitoring the safety of the food supply or approving new drugs," so the selfish interests of politicians as well as that of the public hinders the FDA from being able to concentrate on its original and most important duties as an agency!

(2) Personal interests affects our institutions at the local level, too: in recent months, I have heard several local radio talk show hosts complain about the intense anger they often hear from callers over current events and conditions in the country and world, but few of them effectively consider **WHY** such an atmosphere exists! It is true that many people feel that their personal rights and interests are being pushed aside by elitists who rule over them, and there is a lot of anger about that fact, but even talk show hosts seem more concerned about their own agendas than showing concern for matters that deeply affect various segments of people throughout society!

Need: *Accordingly, we ask, "What is the solution to selfish interests that negatively impact human institutions?!"*

- I. **The selfish interests of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh seen in their Joshua 17:14 complaint of their inheritances, threatened to spread to the other tribes, leading each to disregard their various allotments and go their separate ways, disintegrating the nation, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 360-361.**
- II. **Joshua thus countered this threat by leading a national, token application of his charge to these tribes:**
 - A. Joshua had responded to the complaint of Ephraim and Manasseh by telling them to clear their hills of woods and Canaanites and to defeat the Canaanite chariots in the lowlands for room to settle there, Joshua 17:15-18.
 - B. To keep the nation unified, Joshua led all Israel to apply this instruction in their own respective allotments by having everyone in Israel move their nation's hub, God's tabernacle, up to Shiloh in the hill country of the tribe of Ephraim, Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, v. Five, p. 402.
 - C. In so doing, all Israel *together* had to subdue that area around Shiloh of its Canaanite dwellers and clear its woods in a token application of heeding Joshua's initial directive to Ephraim and to Manasseh, Joshua 18:1.
 - D. This event became a practical teaching tool to influence all of the tribes to do the same in their respective lots!
- III. **However, the seven remaining tribes were selfishly content to remain nomadic in the lifestyle they had known the last forty years in the wilderness (Ibid., Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 361), so Joshua rebuked them for not heeding God's interests and possessing the Promised Land He was giving them, Jos. 18:2-3:**
 - A. His phrase "How long . . . ?" (v. 3), *ad-'an*, "Up to where . . . ?" in the Hebrew exposes Joshua's frustration at the slackness of these tribes, Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 350; B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 723-725, 33.
 - B. His use of the KJV verb "slack" (v. 3), *rapah*, is in the intensive reflexive Hithpael stem, and translates "show yourselves [to be] slack," Ibid., p. 951-952 as Joshua chided them for their **obvious, long-term** slackness.
- IV. **Since they were exhibiting their own brand of selfishness in being so irresponsibly slack, to insure that these seven tribes would avoid selfish division once they sought to acquire and possess their allotments, Joshua organized them to divide up the land in great fairness and in God's will, Ibid.; Joshua 18:4-10:**
 - A. To influence Israel unto unifying decisiveness in determining the various tribal lot bounds, Joshua organized the tribal representatives into a 21-man committee of 3 men from each tribe, odd numbers at the tribal and national levels that would influence more decisiveness relative to every tribal boundary matter, Joshua 18:4a.

- B. Joshua then planned to direct this 21-man committee to pass through the entire land, surveying it and writing a record of seven tribal plot boundaries that needed to be allotted to the seven remaining tribes, Joshua 18:4b-5a.
- C. This plan would insure fairness in dividing up the land, for each man on this committee knew that he had to be fair in setting *each* tribal allotment because any allotment might later become what God assigned to **his** tribe!
- D. Joshua omitted every man from this 21-man committee who already had an inheritance (Judah, Ephraim, Manasseh, the 2 1/2 Transjordan Tribes and the Levites who were to have no lot), including himself (!), that there be no external influence on the representatives of these tribes in setting their boundaries, Joshua 18:5b 7.
- E. Joshua then told this committee that he would place the tribes and the boundaries set by them in writing (KJV "describe it" translates *katab*, "write down, describe in writing," Ibid., p. 507-508) for God to assign which tribe would get which lot, Jos. 18:6. This was done to avoid future complaints like Joshua received from Ephraim and Manasseh (Jos. 17:14) about what lot each of the remaining tribes got, for everyone on the committee would have given his personal approval in writing regarding each of the tribes' land boundaries!
- F. Then, before sending the 21-man committee out, Joshua repeated his plan to them all, telling all involved what their job was and how it would be used of God to determine their respective tribes' land allotments, Josh. 18:8.
- G. Finally, in line with that communication, the 21-man committee did their survey work, and when they returned to Joshua in Shiloh, he cast lots before God and assigned the lands to these remaining tribes, Joshua 18:9-10.

Lesson: *Joshua led Israel to replace potentially nationally divisive self-interests relative to their land inheritances with God's edifying will, providing a token application of his unifying directive to subdue their lands by moving the tabernacle to Shiloh and organizing Israel to make fair, decisive decisions toward gaining their land allotments.*

Application: *If facing a threat of the division of an important Biblical human institution (marriage, family, etc.) due to selfish interests, (1) may we believe in Christ for salvation from such selfish sin (John 3:16) and be indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God who unifies believers in Christ, Romans 8:9b; 1 Corinthians 12:13. (2) As believers, may we rely on the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16) to strive to preserve the unity God provides in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3) by (a) putting the needs of others ahead of our selfish interests (Philippians 2:3-4) and (b) putting God's interests over all other interests, Philippians 2:5-8. (3) God will then bless, Philippians 2:9-11; 1 Peter 5:6.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

(1) The "Bookshelf" column by Melanie Kirkpatrick in the July 14, 2015 issue of The Wall Street Journal, p. A11, gave a book report on Joseph Kim's book, Under the Same Sky (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 274 pp.) in which Mr. Kim told of his escape from the trials he had faced in North Korea.

The author wrote, "Everyone in the West talks about the oppressive, invasive government of North Korea . . . but what I experienced then was more frightening to a child: a complete absence of authority of any kind," Ibid.

The selfish interests of North Korea's atheistic, ruling elite with its extensive corruption at all levels has so afflicted the common people that, to survive, they often turn to selfishness at the price of one's relationship with his neighbor and the loss of civil order. Joseph Kim told how his "daily existence was focused on food -- working for it, begging for it, stealing it. Friendships broke up over competition for 'something as small as a cornmeal cake,'" Ibid.

When he fled from North Korea to China, Mr. Kim met Christians there, and contrary to what he had known in North Korea, they sacrificially helped him at the risk of their own welfare because the Chinese government was opposed to helping North Korean refugees, and these believers helped him flee to freedom in another land, Ibid.

(2) The day after I typed up this illustration, I had driven to a local post office and was about to enter its main lobby when I spotted a woman who was approaching the glass door from the inside. I was deep in thought at the time, so I unconsciously heeded my boyhood training and opened the door for her to exit the building before I went through the door. The woman started to exit the building, glanced at me, and said, "Thank you, sir!" as though it was an unusual deed on my part, and it startled me out of my deep thinking to where I found myself feeling unnerved!

I suddenly realized how such a simple courtesy has become increasingly unusual in today's society where it really should be commonly practiced. When I also considered this event in light of the book report on Joseph Kim's work about his escape from North Korea with its social decadence wrought by self-centeredness, I decided it would be a good idea to make opening the door for a strange woman I happen to meet in public a regular practice, even if it seems unusual! It is a small way for me to be a contributor to the social order by showing some consideration for other people!

May we trust in Christ as Savior, and may we heed God's interests and the needs of others above selfish interests to the contrary for God's great blessing.