

## BFF386 The Portion of Jacob

**Scott Moore:** Welcome to the "Building Faith Families" podcast with Steve Demme. I'm your host, Scott Moore. Thanks for joining us today. Good morning, Steve. How are you today?

**Steve:** I'm well. How are you?

**Scott:** I'm good. It's a big voting day today.

**Steve:** It is. I'll be at the polls shortly.

**Scott:** All right.

**Steve:** Today we're going to study a portion of scripture that has caught my attention recently. I don't know how to introduce it. Let's pray, and maybe I'll come up with something good.

Father, thank You for Your word. Thank You that every word is profitable, inspired, and has meaning. We know that all scripture points to Jesus. Help us to see more of You today. Help us to understand more of Your word. Take these words that we're going to consider and write them on our hearts. In Jesus name, amen.

**Scott:** Amen.

**Steve:** One of the best habits I've ever made -- and we've talked about this, you and I -- is reading my Bible. I just finished Jeremiah. Now I have Lamentations, and some minor prophets, and of course, the big chunk of Ezekiel. Then I'll be done.

This will be 47 times through. I'm starting my 48th. Perhaps we should have a whole series of podcasts on the importance of reading the Bible because I don't really know how people function well unless you're in God's word. I just don't.

I'm part of a men's group at our church, and I'm sharing things I'm receiving from scripture. I find out that there's a whole bunch of the guys in there who are trying to get through it for the first time, and I hardly know what to say. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Father."

I want to tell them, "You need to be in that book." I think I assume too much. I assume that people are reading the Bible. Perhaps I need to go back and encourage people to be in the book, because this is it.

**Scott:** I don't know how you know what you believe. There are so many beliefs that I held before I started reading the Bible that get blown out of the water when I actually read what Jesus said about stuff.

I've run into people who basically will just read the verses they like and that's all they know of the Bible. If they run across a verse that doesn't fit with their beliefs, they sweep that under the rug. That's not how it works.

**Steve:** I think that's where most of our theological debates come from, is that we focus on the things that we like and the things that are important to us, and we keep reading them, and we read what other people have written about the same passages. That's called reading books and listening to podcasts according to what you like, instead of reading the whole Bible to get the whole counsel of God. I think that's what

Paul was saying when he says, "I shrank not from declaring the whole counsel of God to you." We need to know the whole counsel of God.

If I wasn't reading through the whole Bible, I wouldn't have received what we're going to learn today. Here's the passage that caught me. It's found twice in Jeremiah 10:16, and in Jeremiah 50:19. Word for word, which I think is interesting.

Now, I need to give some context. This is Jeremiah, who is watching his nation that he loves, fall apart. He's watching it go right down the drain. He is right there and he keeps telling them to change and repent. I don't know how he does it. He does it over and over. Even at the end of Jeremiah, these guys get him together. This is after the kingdom's already fallen, and they've been taken to Babylon.

There's a portion, a remnant, left in the land. These guys say to him, "OK, Jeremiah, what should we do?" He says, "Well, I'm going to seek God and hear what He has to say." 10 days later, God spoke to him, and he came back to these people and said, "You need to stay right here. Don't go down to Egypt."

This is after they had just said, "Whatever you say, we're going to do. We are bound to God. We want to do His will." Then he says, "Stay right here." Their reply is, "No, we're going to Egypt."

**Steve:** I thought to myself, "What are you guys doing? You continue to rebel." It's in their very gene pool, apparently, to rebel, to rebel, to rebel. Jeremiah continues to tell them what God says, and they continue to do the opposite. This is the book that we're talking about.

In Jeremiah 10, early in this ministry, and chapter 50, right towards the end. Here's what the verse says. "He Who is the portion of Jacob." That caught me. I stopped, and I reread it, "The portion of Jacob." I kept on reading, "For He is the one Who formed all things and Israel is the tribe of His inheritance. Jehovah of hosts is His name."

He's clearly talking about God, but I had never noticed that name before. "He Who is the portion of Jacob." Now, see if I can maybe help us understand this a little bit.

Most of the time when we read in the Bible, we read things like the second half of the verse which says, "Israel's the tribe of His inheritance and God is in charge of Israel. God has chosen Israel to be His people. God has chosen Israel to be His beloved special people."

Yet, now, not only is God saying, "I'll take care of you, and you'll be Mine," He's now defining Himself by His people. "I am the portion of Jacob." That's what caught me. Usually, you see it the other way around. "Jacob is My portion," or something like that, but He is the portion of Jacob. He is Him.

Let me back up a little bit and give some more context. The word, by the way, portion is "chalaq," which appears 267 times in the Old Testament. I'm reading through it and I'm looking up lots of the passages where it appears.

One of the passages I'm going to read from is Deuteronomy 10:8-9, "Jehovah set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of Jehovah. To stand before Jehovah, to minister to Him, and to bless in His name, to this day. Therefore, Levi has

no portion or inheritance with his brothers. Jehovah is his inheritance as Jehovah your God said to him."

I'll read another one to reinforce this. Deuteronomy 18:1-2, "The priests, the Levites, even all the tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Israel. They shall eat the offerings of Jehovah made by fire as their inheritance, and they shall have no inheritance among their brothers. Jehovah is their inheritance, as He promised them."

These dear people go back 500 years, they have been a nomadic people. They're wandering around, moving from place to place. Abraham is their father. Abraham, then Isaac, and then Jacob. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, who becomes Israel, all inherit the same promises, "I'm going to give you this land."

The land is inextricably tied to all these promises. As you were mentioning about people have certain beliefs. I met someone the other night who just listens to podcast after podcast on being a part of covenant theology and reformation theology and reform theology. They were listening to a certain speaker over and over and I said, "Yeah, I used to listen to that guy when he was alive."

Anyway, this is what we're talking about here. God made a covenant with Abraham, passed it down to Isaac, passed it down to Jacob. There's a lot of teaching still to this day about being a part of the covenant. Back in those days, it was the promise and the covenant, which included the land.

When they finally, under the leadership of Moses, came out of Egypt, and then, under the leadership of Joshua, went into the land, they conquered the tribes that were there and all the other nations, and divided up the land, and everybody had their own place.

I'm sure that to many of these people, when they were coming out of Egypt, there was a big part of them thinking, "We're going to have our own place. We're going to have our own portion. We're going to inherit a place that we can call home. We're not going to be wandering around like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did. We're not going to be slaves in Egypt. We are going to have our own place that we can call home."

If you ever watched the movie, "It's a Wonderful Life", that's what this is. That's a big theme of the movie. Everybody's got to have their own house. This is still, a huge part of the American dream, to have your own place that you can call home.

I'm sure that these tribes had that in spades because they had never had it for hundreds of years. This is being held on to them. "I'm going to give you a land of promise, a promised land, and you're going to be able to have your own place," everyone except Levi and the priests.

"I am going to be your portion. I am going to be your inheritance. Yeah, you're going to have some towns and a couple cities and stuff, but no, you're not going to have a big chunk of this promised land because I am going to be your portion. I am going to be your inheritance."

I'm going to read that verse again. "He who is the portion of Jacob, for he is the one who formed all things, and Israel is the tribe of his inheritance, Jehovah of hosts is his

name." It is flipped around. God is saying, "Not only am I your portion, I'm your inheritance, and you are My inheritance. And I love you to pieces."

Deuteronomy 32, "When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when He divided mankind, He fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God, but Jehovah's portion is His people, Jacob, His allotted heritage." This thought continues to go back and forth.

Not only do we belong to God, we are His people. We are His heritage, and He is our portion. He is our inheritance, and this is all we need. As I was sitting, studying this, I tears began to well up in my eyes. God chose us to be His people, His inheritance. Then He has said, "I am your inheritance. Not only do you belong to me, but I belong to you!"

It doesn't mean much to us today, but I'm going to continue to read in Deuteronomy 32. "Jehovah's portion is His people, Jacob His allotted heritage. He found him in a desert land and in the howling waste of the wilderness. He encircled him. He cared for him.

"He kept him as the apple of his eye, like an eagle that stirs up its nest that flutters over its young, spreading out his wings, catching them, bearing them on his pinions. Jehovah alone guided him. No foreign god was with him. He made him ride on the high places of the land, and he ate the produce of the field."

We know how God alone led them out of Egypt. God fought against their enemies. God opened the Red Sea. God gave them victory over these huge, established kingdoms with armies and chariots. God was their refuge. God was the place where they lived. Not only was He with them, they were with Him. This is such intimacy. It's a commitment. This is deep wonderful stuff.

Around the same time I was reading in Psalm 73, because I was looking up that word "portion," and I found that it's used in Psalm 73. I'm just going to read a couple verses. By the way, this is the Psalm where the author was Asaph.

Asaph is trying to figure out why sinners were preparing and the righteous were not. He said, "Until I went into the sanctuary of God." Then there's a big chunk of Scripture I left out.

Then he says, "Nevertheless, I am continually with You. You hold my right hand. You guide me with Your counsel, and afterward You will receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but You? There is nothing on earth that I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."

By the way, that word for strength is "rock." "He's the rock of my heart, and He's my portion forever. For me, it is good to be near God." Then he closes up, "I have made the Lord Jehovah my refuge that I may tell of all Your works." This is somebody who is satisfied with this arrangement.

This is someone who is telling God, "I don't need land. I don't need a house. I don't need a place that I can call my own. I need You. You're my portion. You're the strength of my heart. This is all I'm after. There's nothing on earth that I desire

besides You."It's exactly what he said. "Whom have I in heaven but You? There's nothing on earth that I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. I think it is good for me to be near God. I have made You my refuge."

I'm going to sing, so you hold your breath here because I think this is the same thing that God is telling us in the Sermon on the Mount. "You seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness, and I'll take care of everything else. You just make Me your portion, and I'll take care of providing all your needs."

That's a longer passage, and most of us have heard many sermons on the Sermon on the Mount. I don't need to reiterate or add to them, but if we make God first and if we make Him our refuge, and tell Him, "I am satisfied with just You. Then You can give me anything You want. If You don't want to give me it, that's OK because my portion is You. Thank You that You are my portion and that I am Your portion. You are the portion of Jacob."

OK, you ready for the song now?

**Scott:** Sure.

**Steve:** I belong to the King. I'm a child of His love. I shall dwell in His palace so fair. For He tells of its bliss in yon Heaven above, and children in splendor shall share. I belong to the King, I'm a child of His love, and He never forsaketh His own. He will call me some day to His palace above, I shall dwell by His glorified throne.

That's the song that came to me when I was preparing this. I belong to the King, and He loves me I know -- this is the second verse -- for His mercy and kindness so free are unceasingly mine wheresoever I go, and my refuge unfailing is He. I belong to the King, and His promise is sure, that we all shall be gathered at last, in His kingdom above, by life's waters so pure, when this life with its trials is past.

The chorus again. I belong to the King, I'm a child of His love, and He never forsaketh His own. He will call me some day to His palace above, I shall dwell by His glorified throne.

God is our portion, and we are His portion. Personally, it makes my heart burn with gratefulness and thankfulness that we belong to Him. Amen. What do you think about the portion of Jacob?

**Scott:** I think maybe that was meant for me. It seems like a very appropriate thing to think about now in life. Our world, we've been so focused on the American dream and all that for so long. In a lot of ways, it feels like that might be falling apart and things might be getting rougher. We've talked about the shaking of the world and that kind of stuff. God is the only thing we can count on, the only one we can count on.

**Steve:** Yes, we have Him, and He has us. "We are His people and the sheep of His pasture." From Psalm 100.

Father, thank You that we belong to You and You belong to us. Not only do You love us and care for us, and have called us to be with You, we joyfully say, "Yes, we want to be with You. We want to dwell in Your presence. We're like Asaph. We are content to

make You our refuge. Whether we get houses or cities, or possessions or not, we have You, and You have us. There are other scriptures where it says that You've engraved Your names on Your hands, our names.

It's amazing the love that You have for us. It's amazing that You've chosen us because we know we're not much to look at. We're not the greatest people, but yet we have been chosen. In fact, according to Paul, we're the least attractive. That's OK, because You have chosen us, and You have called us to be Your portion, and we are Your portion.

You are our portion, with all our hearts, we tell you that we love You, we worship You. Let this truth be planted deep in our hearts and reverberate so that we can give thanks that we belong to You and You belong to us. Amen.

**Scott:** Amen. That's our show for this week, folks. Thanks for joining us for the Building Faith Families podcast with Steve Demme. If you have a question for the show, email Steve at [spdemme@gmail.com](mailto:spdemme@gmail.com). If you have a question for me, you can reach me at [scott@unsocializedmedia.com](mailto:scott@unsocializedmedia.com). Thanks for joining us. Have a great week.