

KEY TEXT

JOSHUA 19:49-50 (NKJV)

V49- When they had made an end of dividing the land as an inheritance according to their borders, the children of Israel gave an inheritance among them to Joshua the son of Nun.

V50- According to the word of the LORD they gave him the city which he asked for, Timnath Serah in the mountains of Ephraim, and he built the city and dwelt in it.

INTRODUCTION

(1) Opting for the easier and broader way

(2) Background of Key Text

A dramatic landscape with a person in the foreground looking out over a valley at sunset. The person is seen from behind, wearing a long, dark robe with a fur collar and a sash. They are standing on a rocky outcrop, looking out over a vast valley. In the distance, a large crowd of people is gathered on the valley floor, silhouetted against the bright light of the setting sun. The sky is filled with golden clouds, and the mountains on either side of the valley are rugged and steep. The overall mood is one of awe and contemplation.

Title

'POSSESSING OUR TIMNATH-SERAH'

Outline:

- **Joshua's Character**
- **Joshua's Inheritance – Timnah Serah and its implications**
- **How do we get to this City, Timnah Serah?**
- **Living in this City, Timnah Serah**

MAIN POINTS

(I) JOSHUA'S CHARACTER

➤ CHARACTER OF HUMILITY

V49- When they had made an end of dividing the land as an inheritance according to their borders, the children of Israel gave an inheritance among them to Joshua the son of Nun.



"Joshua waits until all the other inheritances are assigned before taking any for himself. Thus, he preserves his right to share of land without any suggestion of an abuse of his leadership responsibilities."

Joshua waited until **EVERYONE else had received their portion.**

He didn't ask to go first.

He didn't even get on the bandwagon when Caleb asked for his special portion.

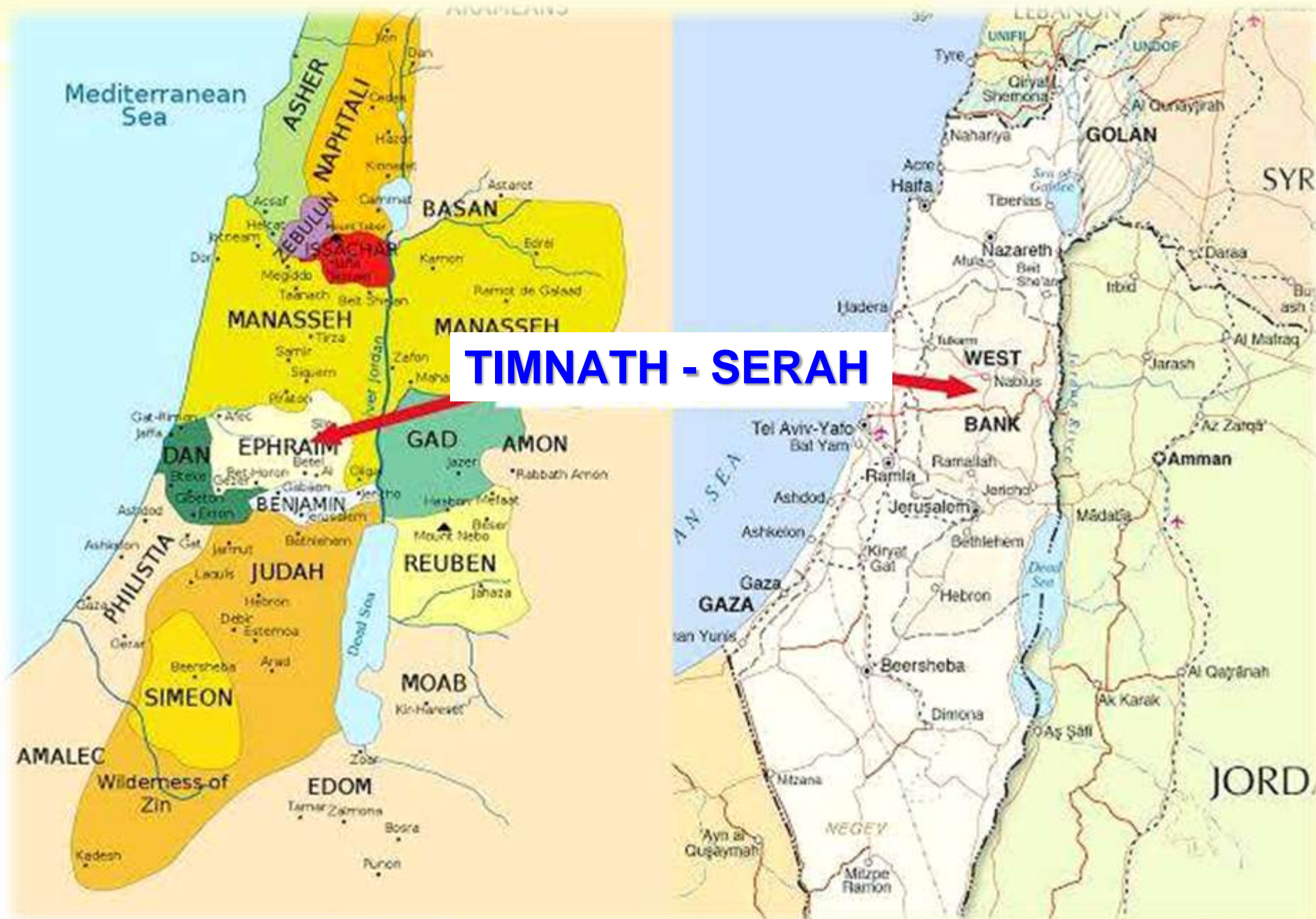
Joshua gave Caleb his reward for faithfulness – Hebron.

But Joshua would **NOT give himself a reward. He was a humble leader.**

He received the land “according to the word of the **LORD” (verse 49).**

He waited for Israel to give to him according to what the LORD had promised him.

**And when Israel asked him about his choice, he chose
Timnath Serah.**



TIMNATH - SERAH

The map of Timnath Serah

➤ CHARACTER OF RESOLUTENESS



V50 - “he asked for, Timnath Serah in the mountains of Ephraim.....”

Being from the tribe of Ephraim, it was appropriate for Joshua to receive his inheritance **IN THE GENERAL TERRITORY OF THAT TRIBE.**

Instead, he went to the SAME, DIFFICULT, HILLY DISTRICT OF EPHRAIM that the tribes of Joseph had previously complained about in Joshua 17:14-18.

The complaint of Ephraim and the charge of Joshua to them.

Now when his opportunity came, he acted for himself on the advice he had given.

To that very hill country he went, and there is a splendid ring of RESOLUTENESS in his character in this statement, "He built the city and dwelt in it (verse 50).



Application: He walked the talk. Are you like this too?

➤ CHARACTER OF GRATITUDE



GRATITUDE is the opposite of **ENTITLEMENT**.

Joshua waited for the children of Israel to **GIVE** him his inheritance.

He didn't demand it like the tribe of Ephraim.

The spirit of entitlement of Ephraim in Joshua 17.

Joshua 17:14, 16 -Then the children of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, "Why have you given us only one lot and one share to inherit, since we are a great people, inasmuch as the LORD has blessed us until now?"
..... "The mountain country is not enough for us; and all the Canaanites who dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both those who are of Beth Shean and its towns and those who are of the Valley of Jezreel."

The arguments for more land were:

- **They were a numerous people**
- **They were abundantly blessed (they thought they were special)**
- **The people who lived in the valley were too strong.**

The tribe of Ephraim and Manasseh (tribe of Joseph) were given a very large lot of land.

Map of the 12 tribes



Entitlement in the Christian community

God does bless.

God does perform miracles.

However, there are people all around the world who are more faithful than we are and yet materially they have very little.

These people do not feel entitled to worldly blessings.... they have discovered the blessings of intimacy with God which is better than anything the world can give us.

Joshua exhibited the opposite spirit of tribe of Joseph – GRATITUDE.

And the land that he asked in accordance to the promise of God was not a beautiful land.

He was just grateful for whatever God gave him.

➤ CHARACTER OF A BUILDER



Verse 50b – “he asked for, Timnath Serah in the mountains of Ephraim, and he built the city and dwelt in it.”

When Joshua received Timnath Serah, a rugged mountain, he “built the city and dwelt in it.”

He didn't complain like the tribe of Joseph about the ugliness and the difficulty of such mountain.

When he RECEIVED IT, HE USED IT TO ITS FULLEST.

He didn't hide this gift away like the man with the one talent.

He REBUILT THE CITY.

He made a home for himself and his family.

The rebuilt City of Timnath Serah





The Eastern terraced slope of Timnath Serah



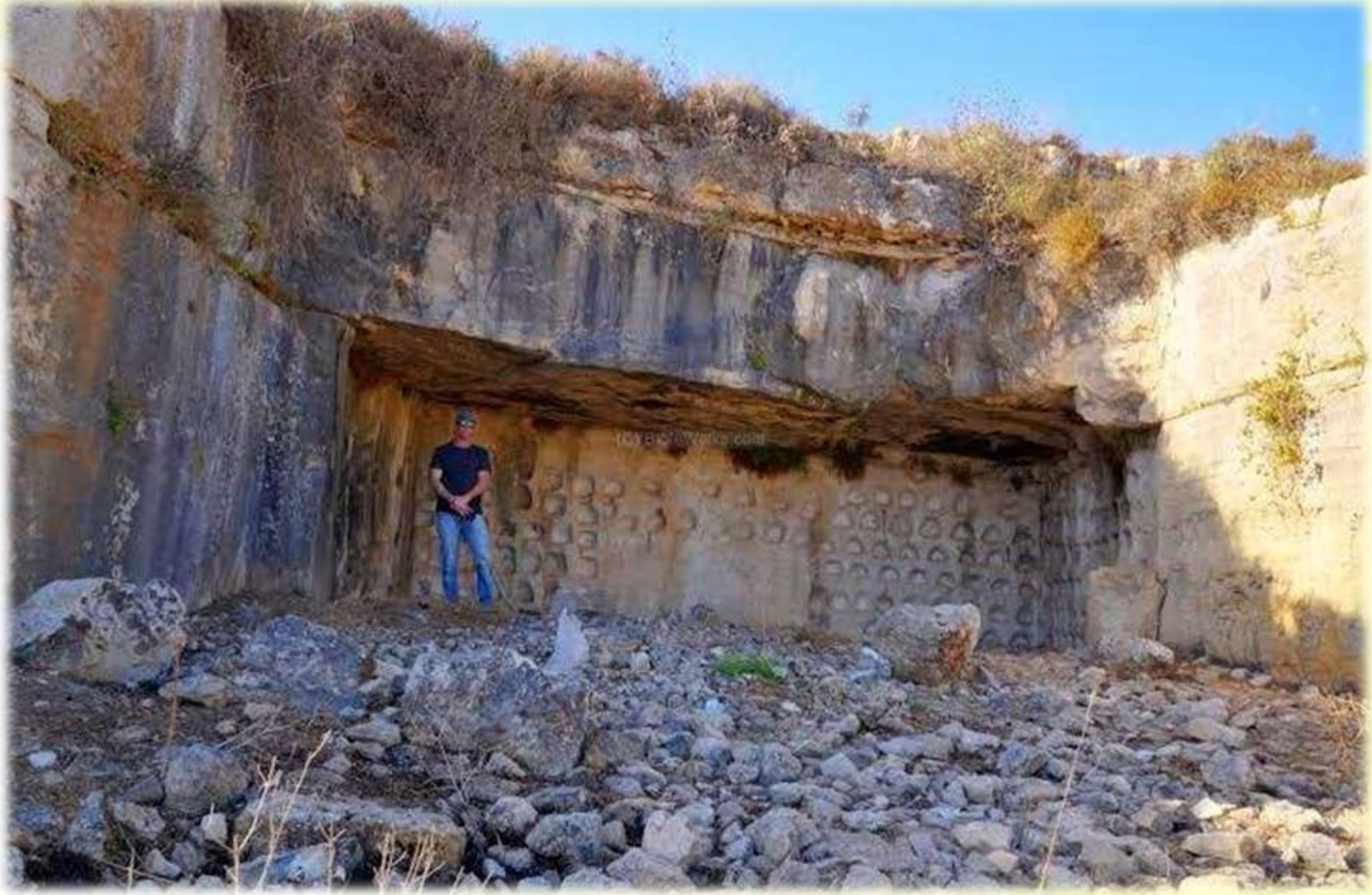
Application: God gives each of us gifts too. Are you using it to the fullest?

(II) JOSHUA'S INHERITANCE – TIMNAH SERAH AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

Joshua asked for Timnath-Serah.

What was this inheritance like?

"Joshua's choice of land further reveals his humility. He asked for Timnath Serah, a city in the rugged, infertile, mountainous district of his own tribe (Ephraim), when he could have appropriated land in the fairest and most productive area of Canaan."



Rugged, infertile and mountainous Timnath Serah

Why did Joshua choose such an unbecoming inheritance – a rugged, infertile mountainous area?

In order to know the reason, we have to understand the MEANING OF TIMNATH-SERAH.

Its NAME is suggestive of its value and significance.

A)TIMNATH-SERAH AT MOUNT EPHRAIM MEANS **“THE CITY OF THE SUN”**

The city that Joshua chose was named Timnath Serah, meaning **THE CITY OF THE SUN** because a representation of the **SUN** was affixed to the tomb of Joshua in memory of Joshua's command to the sun to stand still (**Joshua 10:1-15**).



Tomb of Joshua



Joshua commanding the sun to stand still

Timnath Serah speaks to us of the highest and best possibilities of our own Christian life.

As the **City of the Sun**, it implies:

• SPIRITUAL JOY



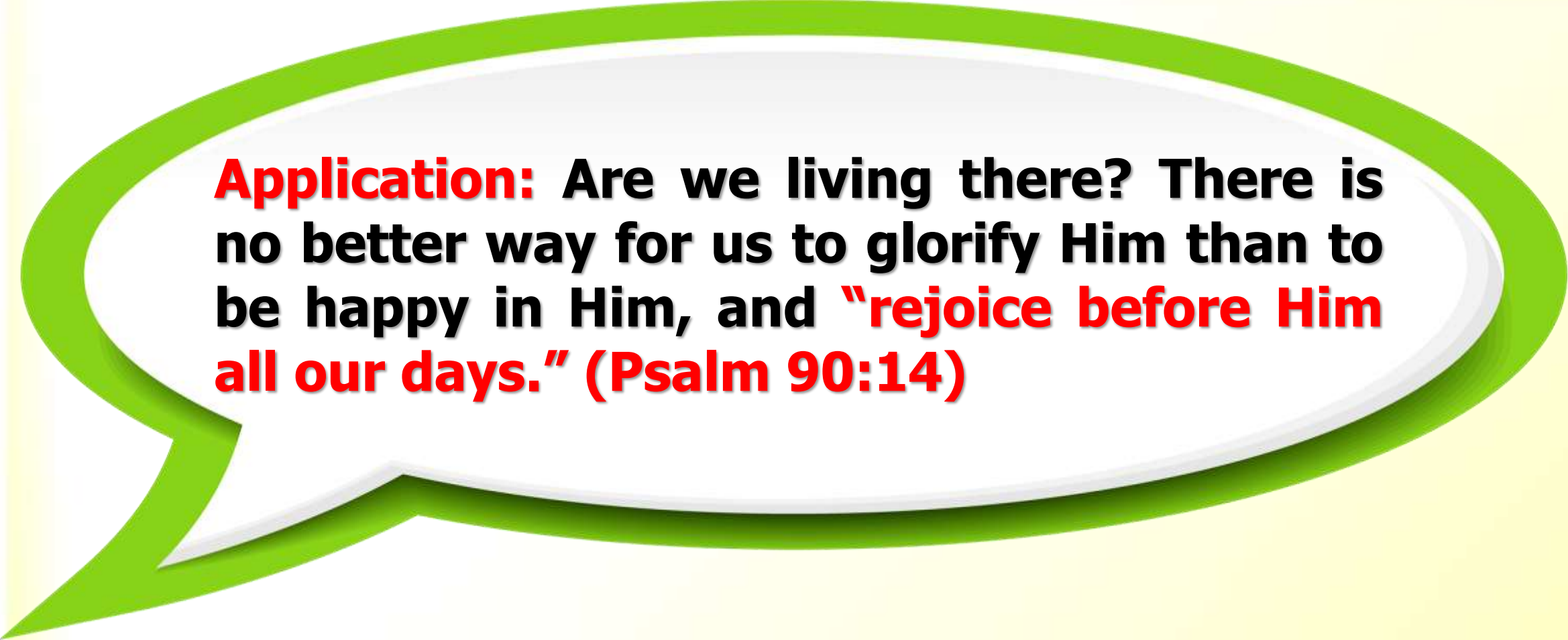
The City of the Sun is a place of delightful happiness, for the sun is the type of the Lord Himself, our **Light and our Salvation**.

"in His presence there is fulness of joy, and at His right hand there are pleasures forevermore." (Psalm 16:11)

**"Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound;
they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Your
Countenance, in Your name shall they rejoice all the
day, and in Your righteousness shall they be exalted."
(Psalm 89:15)**

**The figure speaks of
GLADNESS AND SUNSHINE.**





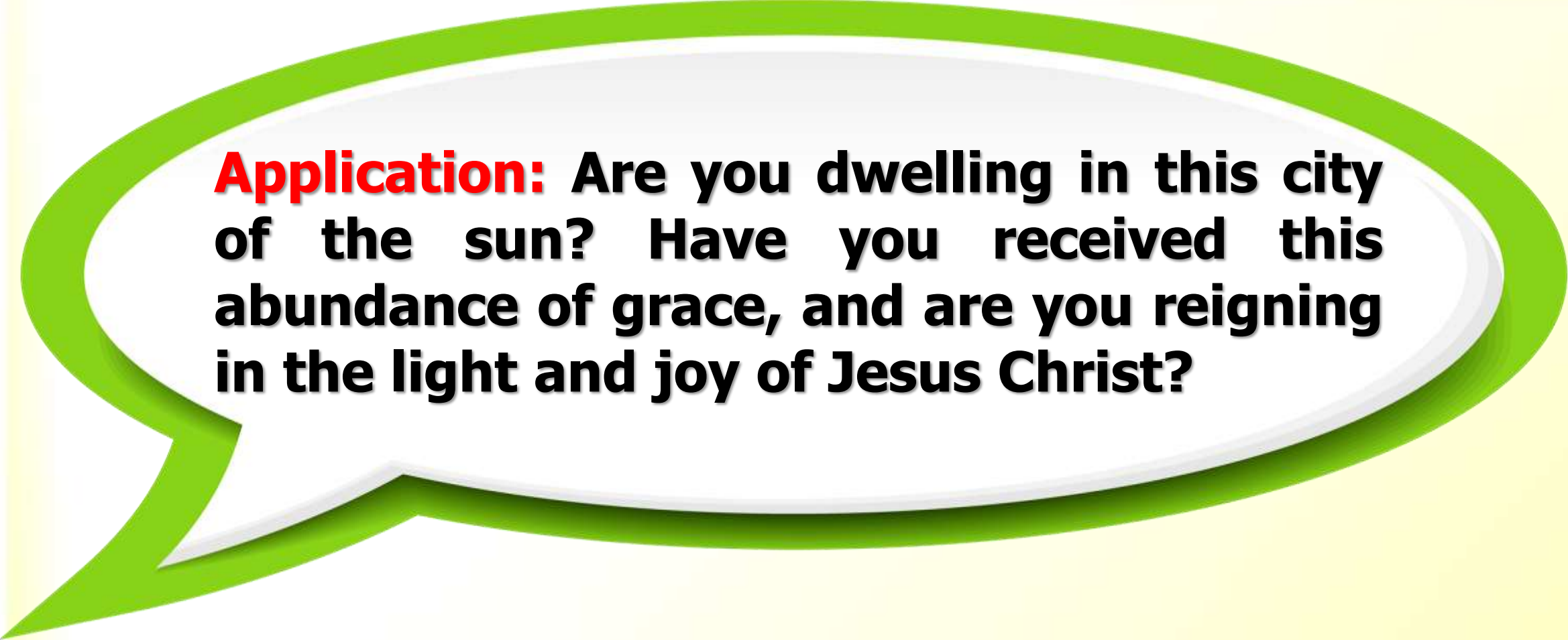
Application: Are we living there? There is no better way for us to glorify Him than to be happy in Him, and **"rejoice before Him all our days."** (Psalm 90:14)

• GLORIOUS GRACE



The City of the Sun is a place of abundant and glorious grace, for "the Lord God is a Sun and Shield; the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will be withheld from them that walk uprightly." (Psalm 84:11)

He gives them not only His grace, but His glory, and withholds from them no good thing.



Application: Are you dwelling in this city of the sun? Have you received this abundance of grace, and are you reigning in the light and joy of Jesus Christ?

• CHRIST'S PRESENCE



The City of the Sun is the place of Christ's manifested presence.

John 14:21, "He that has My Commandments and keeps them is he that loves Me, and he that loves Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself unto him."

“Manifest” means.....

➤ **the brightest sunlight,**



➤ **the outshining of the sun**



➤ the glory of Christ's inward revelation of Himself to the trusting and obedient heart.

➤ Revelation of Christ [light] in the inner sanctuary [heart of communion] of the consecrated soul.



➤ Shekinah glory



2 Corinthians 4:6- “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Application: The Holy Spirit is spoken of as “shedding abroad,” (Romans 5:5) or shining abroad, the love of God in our hearts. Do you know the vision of His glorious face? Have you seen Him in the revelation of His inward glory, “whose countenance is as the sun shining in his strength,” (Revelation 1:16) and of whom you can truly say, “He is the chief among ten thousand, yes, He is altogether lovely”? (Song of Solomon 5:10)

• DIVINE LIGHT



The City of the Sun is a place of light and guidance.

"I am the light of the world; he that follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8:12)

The light of life is the light that shines upon our daily life.

Habitual guidance from the Lord

Direction in great crisis

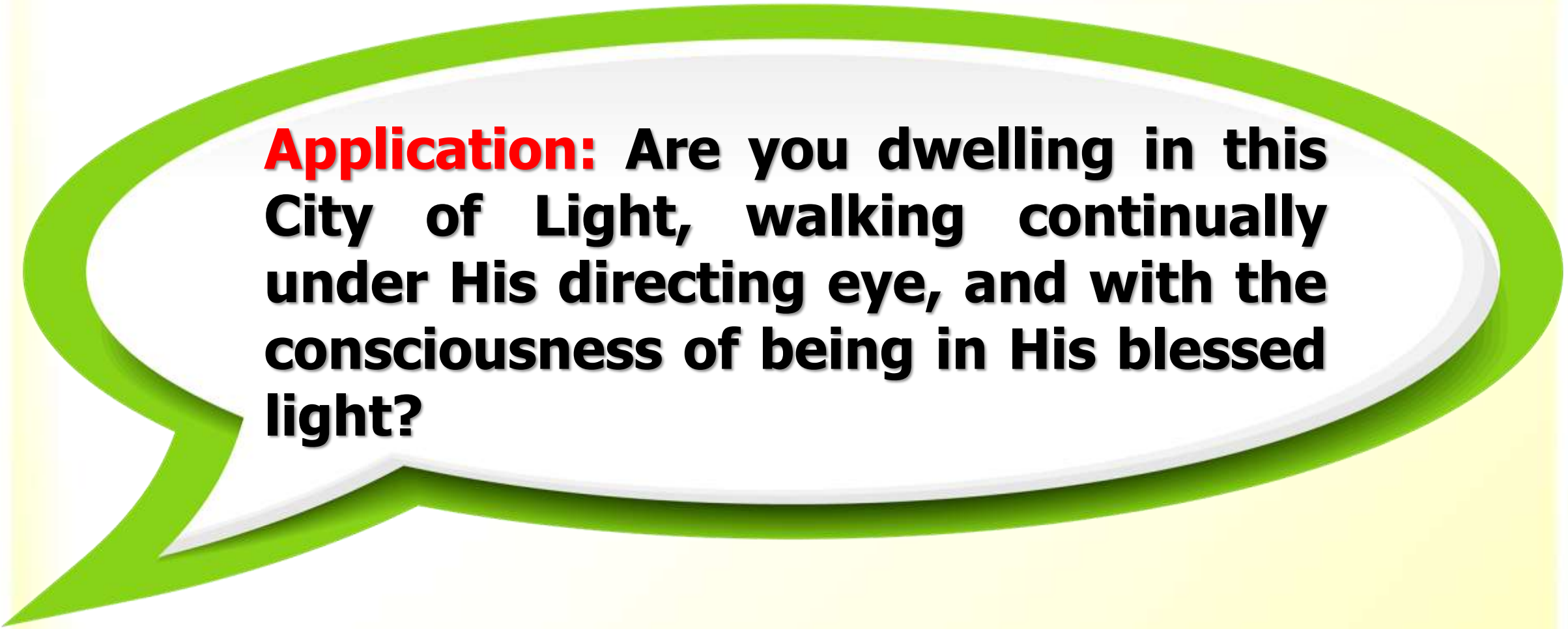
**Control of the Holy Spirit in our thoughts through
illumination by the Holy Spirit**

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. I will guide you with My eye." (Psalm 32:8)



"Your ear shall hear a word behind you saying, This is the way, walk you in it, when you turn to the right hand or to the left." (Isaiah 30:21)





Application: Are you dwelling in this City of Light, walking continually under His directing eye, and with the consciousness of being in His blessed light?

• LIFE AND POWER



The City of the Sun is a place of quickenning life and power.

The sun is the source of **life and force**.

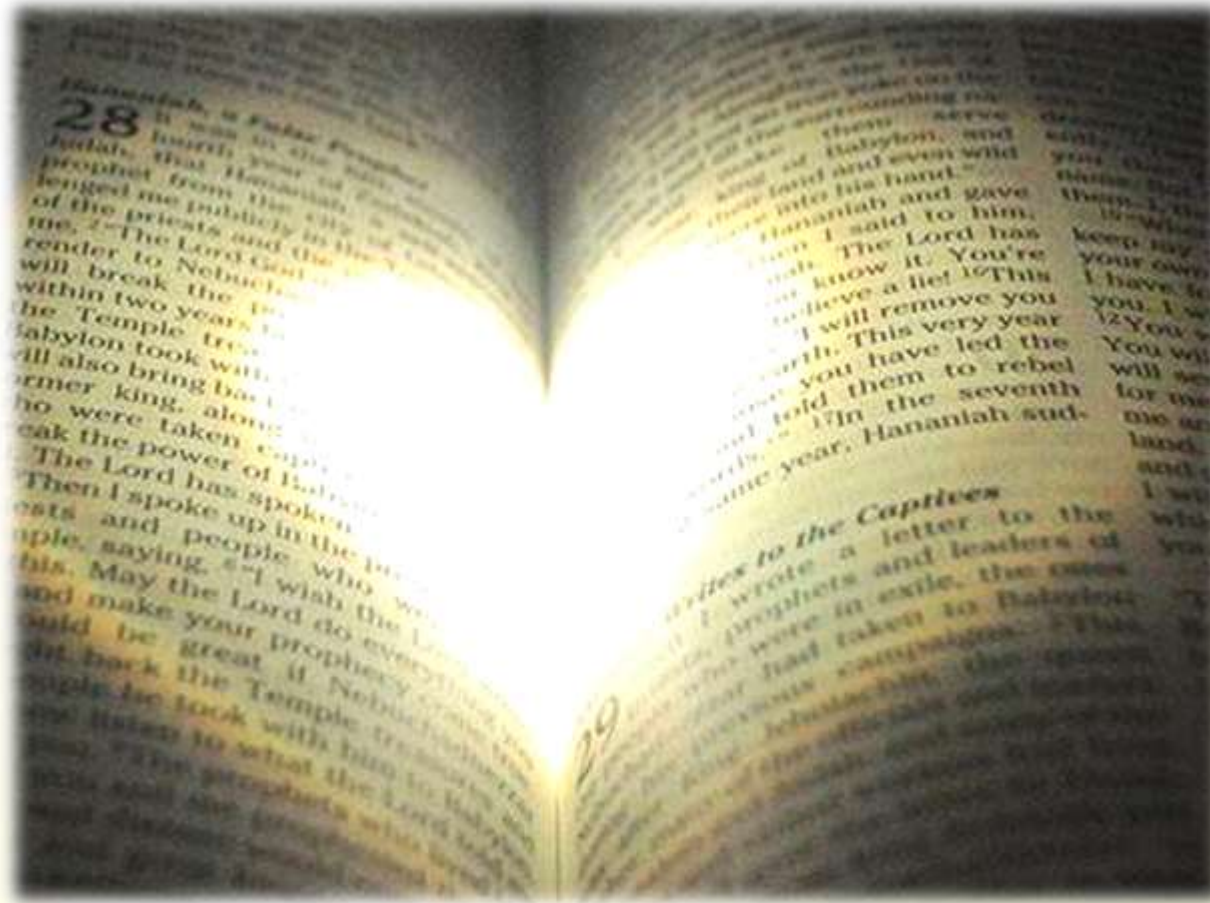
Christ is our **Sun and Source of life and Power**, and as we dwell in His Presence, we are quickened into **resurrection life** and empowered with His own **Almighty power**.

The joy of the Lord is our strength, and they who dwell above the clouds and mists of earth's lower planes know "the exceeding greatness of His power towards us who believe," (Ephesians 1:19) and are used by His Spirit as the instruments and vessels of His mighty plans.



Application: Are we dwelling in this city of life and working in His All-Sufficiency?

• LOVE



The City of the Sun is a place of warmth and love.

During summer.....

- the frosts and chills of ***selfishness and bitterness*** can never come near,
- melts every ***icy bond***, dissolves the ***wintry chains***,
- brings all hearts into the family relationships of the heavenly kingdom, and we are ***"one, even as the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father," (John 17:21)***

Application: We cannot know anything about love unless we dwell in God and God in us. All true love must come from Him, and as we live in the light of His presence and the warm atmosphere of His fellowship; we shall love even as He loves, and we shall reflect on others the radiance which is shining in our hearts from His.

• DIVINE HEALING



The City of the Sun is a place of Divine Healing.

**"Unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise, with healing in His wings, and you shall go forth and grow like calves of the stall."
(Malachi 4:2)**

In the natural world sunlight is essential to health

Still more is the life and joy of the Lord essential to spiritual health.

The light of Christ is the true source of physical strength and the joy of the Lord is the best of all medicines.

Application: If you would rise above the depressing influence of climate, diseases and sicknesses, build your house in Timnath-Serah, and dwell continually in the loving presence and cloudless communion of the Holy Ghost.

• COMMUNION



The city of the sun is a place of cloudless (clear) and unbroken communion [friendship].

**“Your sun shall no more go down, neither shall your moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be your everlasting light and the days of your mourning [sorrow] shall be ended.”
(Isaiah 60:20)**

There are good human friendships that are intimate, unclouded and unbroken.

Friendship with Christ:

- **no severance or interruption,**
- **no breach or suspension.**
- **everlasting, infinite, unconditional, and capable of no separation.**
- **"I have sworn that I will never be angry with you, nor rebuke you." (Isaiah 54:9).**



Application: Have you come into this
high place of unclouded [clear] light
and love?

B) TIMNATH-SERAH AT THE MOUNT OF EPHRAIM **MEANS "THE PORTION THAT REMAINS"**

Joshua's allotment was the **LAST ALLOTMENT** made in the whole distribution of his conquest.

Thus, **Timnath Serah** also means '**THE PORTION THAT REMAINS**'.

And this '**portion that remains**' was not as big or beautiful as other allotment.

Joshua may have received but a **SMALL INHERITANCE in the Promised land but this was just and **EARNEST (DEPOSIT/DOWNPAYMENT)** of his future glorious inheritance in eternity.**

Application: The saints of God have the **BEST PORTION SAVED FOR THE LAST** whereas those of the world have their best portion **NOW; THEIR WORST IS YET TO COME**. So, Christians, do not be dismayed if your portion on earth now is the *"last remaining portion that looks small and unattractive"*. Your bigger, better and ultimate eternal inheritance is yet to come. Do not complain about this last remaining lot. Do not compare it with those who are not Christians. We **look forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God (Hebrews 11:10)**.

C) TIMNATH-SERAH AT THE MOUNT OF EPHRAIM **MEANS "THE PORTION OF ABUNDANCE"**

When the tribe of Joseph complained about their "one lot", Joshua advised them to clear the hill country which is Timnah Serah:

Joshua 17:18 (KJV) – But the hill country shall be thine, for though it is a wood [ESV-forest], thou shalt cut it down: and the outgoings [ESV farthest borders] of it shall be thine.....

The tribe of Joseph couldn't see the potential of Timnah Serah.

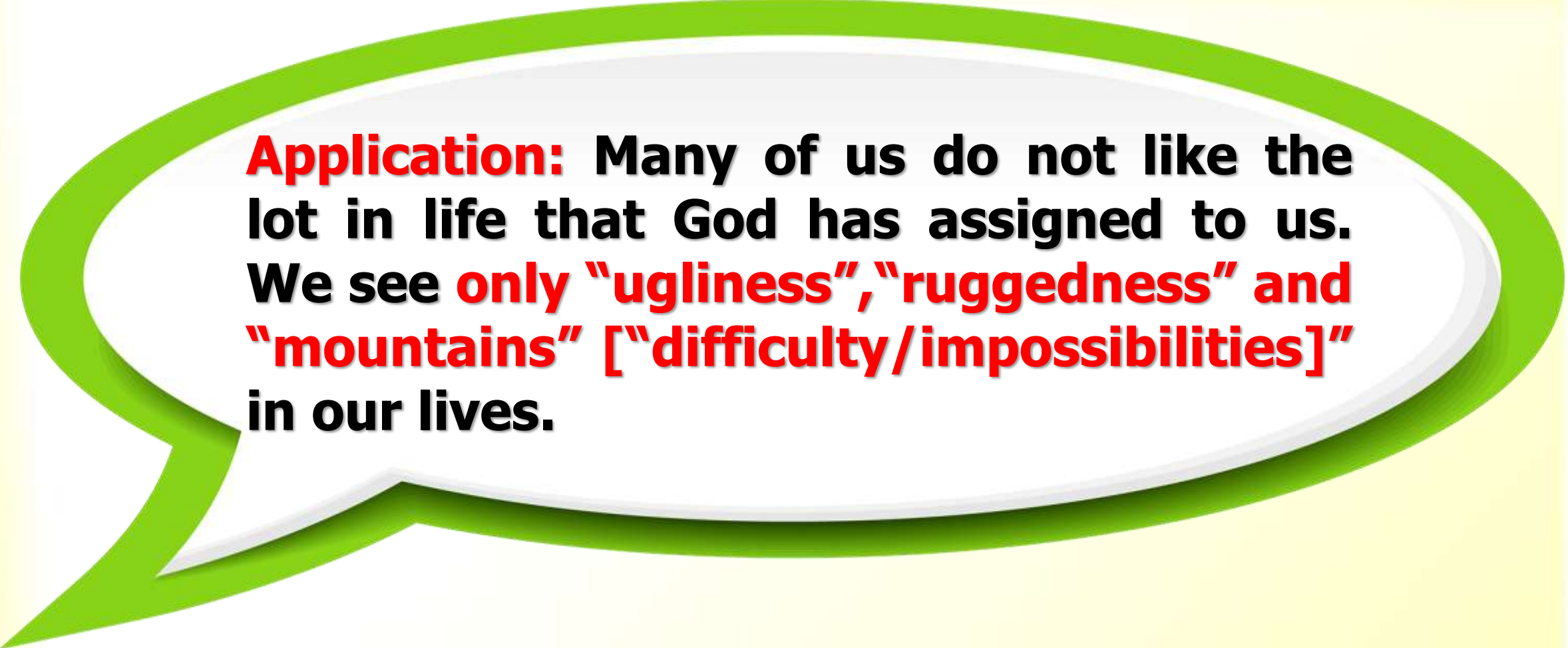
But not Joshua. He entered in, chopped down the trees, cleared the forest and lo and behold, the land turned out to be a spacious expanse of land – stretched to the furthest border.

On that cleared land, Joshua began to rebuild and turned it into a beautiful **city of the sun as well as a **city of abundance**, despite it being the **last [remaining] portion** allotted to Joshua.**



Beautiful Timnath Serah

Joshua also named the city a “portion of abundance” because he had finally seen all the good promises of God fulfilled for him.



Application: Many of us do not like the lot in life that God has assigned to us. We see **only “ugliness”, “ruggedness” and “mountains” [“difficulty/impossibilities”]** in our lives.

But God wants us to have the eyes of faith to see that this “Timnath Serah – this ugly, rugged mountainous terrain” hides great potential. If you are willing to be resolute and build upon it by clearing all the woods, it can be transformed into the city of the sun and become a portion of abundance for you.

But how many of us have been rebuilding this lot of Timnath Serah which God has assigned to many?

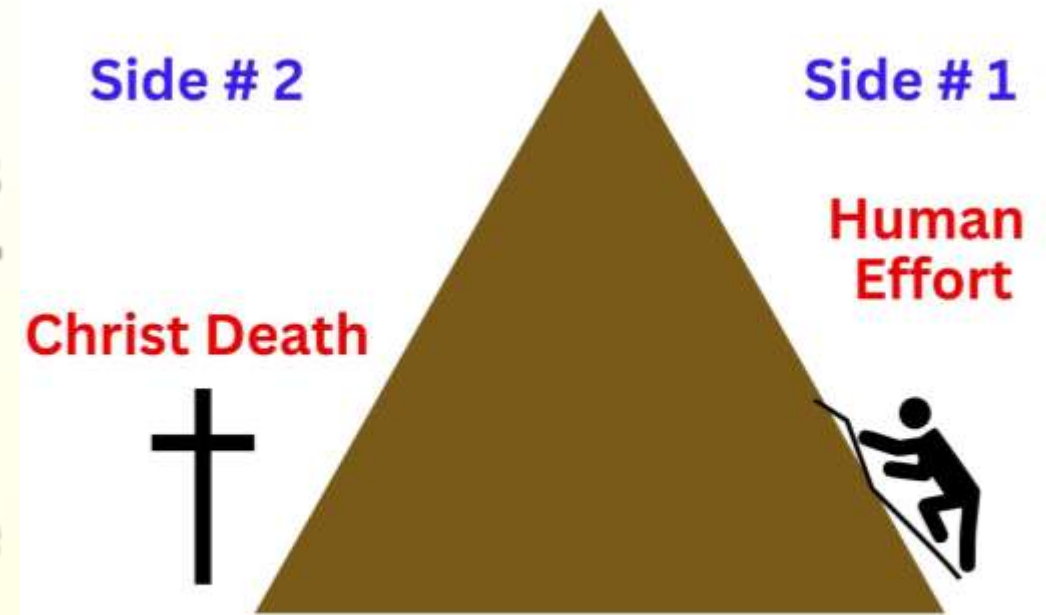
It is an almost impossible job for us.

(III) HOW DO WE GET TO THIS CITY OF THE SUN, TIMNAH SERAH?

There are **two sides** to a mountain.

**Side # 1 – Slippery and dangerous
= mere research, human wisdom or
moral righteousness**

**Side # 2 – A cleared path – The
WAY which Jesus had cleared**



"I am the Way; no man comes unto the Father but by Me. No man has seen God at any time, but the Only Begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." (John 14:6)

How did Jesus become **THE WAY for us to ascend to Timnah Serah?**

The tribe of Joseph rejected this Timnah Serah.

Not Joshua.

Joshua = "God is salvation"

Joshua foreshadows, Jesus, our Greater Joshua, who ascended "Tinnah Serah" known as Calvary Hill.

Calvary Hill was rugged and ugly because it was apportioned only for the ugliest criminals to be crucified there.



Calvary Hill

Timnah Serah would remain an ugly, mountainous and ragged terrain unless one was willing to clear the wood.

It was a tedious task for the Ephraim, which points to our failure and inability to clear “the woody mountainous terrain” as the general human race.

But only man Joshua dared to undertake this expedition to cut down the woods.

Our greater Joshua, Jesus, is known as the TREE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. He became the WOOD (TREE) THAT WAS CUT DOWN, so as to clear the RUGGED AND IMPOSSIBLE WAY TO GOD THE FATHER.



His cut down body has opened a way for us to ascend our Calvary Hill like that of the ancient Mount, when Moses took the elders of Israel up to meet God, and they carried in their hands the atoning blood; and as they went up into that glorious Presence-Chamber, we are told with exceeding beauty, "They did eat and drink, and they saw God, and there was under His feet, as it were, the paved work of a sapphire stone, and, as it were, the body of heaven in His clearness." (Exodus 24:11).

This is the way to Timnath-Serah. "Having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way He has consecrated for us through the veil, that is His face, let us draw near" (Hebrews 10:19); and we shall find ourselves in the city of the sun.

Our Key text also revealed two more ways we may obtain this blessed portion.

The first is, Joshua received this inheritance “according to the word of the Lord.”

God provided it for him in His Word and so He has provided it for each of us.

It is not only God’s promise, but His command for us, that we shall rise to the fulness of His blessing. “Let us, therefore, fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.” (Hebrews 4:1)

But there is another word. We are told that Joshua also asked it.

God gave it and Joshua asked it; and we shall receive what we ask for, and take.

There are many things in the commands of God for you, which are missing by simple default.

“You have not because you ask not.” (James 4:3)

How sorry you would be if you found, after spending a lifetime of poverty and toil, a will had been left by a friend providing you with wealth, and you had simply neglected to prove it and claim it!

The tribe of Joseph failed to cut down the woods in the mountain.

Why?

LAZINESS

**TOO LAZY
TO DO**

**TOO LAZY
TO BECOME**

Till we see the **hard work our Greater Joshua had put in by carrying the rugged cross down Golgotha and up the rugged Calvary hill and the hard work of Him suffering the crucifixion, we will unite with His death to crucify our **LAZINESS** and to do something about the talent God has given us and the calling God has placed upon our life.**

We are not called to live unto ourselves.

We are called to unite with Christ in His death on the cross, like our laziness, so that we can rise to become part of the plotline of God.

We are saved for God and others.

And the motivation to identify and unite with the death of Christ is to see the **GRACE OF GOD IN CHRIST - how Christ took our sin of laziness by working hard for us even though we don't deserve it.**

**HE BECAME THE CUT-DOWN WOOD (TREE) SO
THAT HE IS THE CLEARED PATH FOR YOU TO
ASCEND TO GOD.**



JESUS - THE CUT-DOWN ONE

When our Greater Jesus was cut down on the wooden rugged cross, the **SUN failed and there was **DARKNESS** in the whole land of Israel so that the light and sun of God's love would shine forth into our lives once again and forever.**



**HE BECAME DARKNESS SO THAT WE CAN
INHERIT THE CITY IN THE SUN.**

DARKNESS



CITY OF THE SUN



And the good news is He did all these willingly and unconditionally for all of us.

If you catch the essence of the gospel, it means you catch the essence of **GRACE.**

John Bunyan says,

"Run, John, run, the law commands. But gives us neither feet nor hands. Far better news the gospel brings: It bids us fly and gives us wings."

***"Grace promotes
passivity and laziness"***





**TRUE GRACE GIVES
YOU WINGS.**

“BY THE GRACE OF GOD I am what I am, and His grace to me was not without effect. No, I WORKED HARDER THAN ALL OF THEM – yet not I, BUT THE GRACE OF GOD THAT WAS WITH ME (1 Corinthians 15:10).

The grace of Jesus *inspires* you to take risks like Joshua and Jesus.

When you are basking in the grace of God, work doesn't feel like work.

It feels like fun.

There is no room for laziness to **NOT DO what God commands and to **NOT** BECOME what God wants us to become.**

(IV) BUILDING AND LIVING IN THIS CITY, TIMNAH SERAH

Let us **build there.**

Joshua not only **chose Timnath-Serah, but he **ascended** to the mountain-height, and he **built** the city.**

Many ways to build.....

- **Build so as to shut out all the warmth**
- **Build to turn the sunshine to ourselves**
- **Build to open up all the gates of praise and the walls salvation.**
- **The house of God should be of transparent glass, that the sun might shine through them every day.**

Application: We should be such temples of the Sun of Righteousness, open to Him in every avenue of our being, and filled in the inmost part with His glorious light and presence. The Sun of Righteousness will come wherever there is an opening to receive Him.



But Joshua not only built there but **dwelt there.**

He did not visit Timnath-Serah occasionally to get mountain views from the sunlit hills, but he made it his **abiding home.**



Application: Are you dwelling in Timnath-Serah? Are you abiding in the light and love of God? Have you come to that settled place where **"the sun no more goes down, and the Lord becomes our everlasting light?"** (Isaiah 60:20)

CONCLUSION

Your bountiful Father has left you a city of glory and joy. Do not let it be lost through your default, but claim your inheritance, enter upon it, build it and occupy it, and you, too, shall be able to sing:

***"I am dwelling on the mountains,
Where the golden sunlight gleams,
O'er a land whose wondrous beauty
Far exceed my fondest dreams;
Where the air is pure, ethereal,
Laden with the breath of flowers,
They are blooming by the fountains,
'Neath the amaranthine bowers.***

***"Is not this the Land of Beulah,
Blessed, blessed Land of Light,
Where flowers bloom forever
And the Sun is always bright?"***

