

Joshua Chapters 12-21: The Division of the Promise Land

Ricardo Campos, Elder Grace Chapel, Orange, CA March 29, 2009

INTRODUCTION

What happens when you obey and believe God, when you take Him at His word, as He says to you, "I will deliver you!"? Moses obeyed and believed God and God delivered him through 10 plagues in the land of Egypt, through 38 challenging years in the wilderness, and against two the Amorite kings, Sihon and Og (Num 21:21-35). Caleb and Joshua obeyed and believed God and God delivered them at Kadesh Barnea when the children of Israel were ready to stone them to death (Num 14:6-10), through 38yrs in the wilderness, and through 7yrs of battle against the Canaanite nations. The nation of Israel obeyed and believed God and He delivered the land of Canaan to them in spite of the mighty and powerful nations that occupied it. Do you have confidence that God will deliver you.....today?

ISRAEL'S HISTORY PRIOR TO THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

- God frees Israel from Egypt (Ex. 12:29-41).
- God leads Israel to the Promise Land, but they refuse to enter (Num. 13:1-14:12).
- Israel is cursed to wonder in the wilderness for 40yrs (Num. 14:20-35).
- Moses is not allowed to enter the Promise Land (Num. 20:5-12, 24; 27:14).
- Joshua is appointed by God to replace Moses (Num. 27:15-23; Deut. 31:14).
- God delivers two Amorite kings into Israel's hands. (Num. 21:21-35; Deut 2:24-3:10).
- God brings Israel back to the Promise Land (Num. 33:40-56).

JOSHUA CHAPTERS 1-11: *Conquest of the Promise Land*

Joshua Chapter 1: *Victory before Entering the Land: guaranteed victory but must obey*

Joshua Chapter 2: *The Two Spies Confirm God's Word about the Promise Land.*

Joshua Chapter 3 & 4: *The Parting of the Jordan River, Israel's Crossing, and the Stones of Remembrance*

Joshua Chapter 5: *A Tuning Point in Israel's History*

Joshua Chapter 6: *The Lord Delivers Jericho into Israel's Hands*

Joshua Chapter 7: *Israel's Sin and their Subsequent Defeat at Ai*

Joshua Chapter 8: *Israel's Victory Over Ai*

Joshua Chapter 9: *Failure to Seek the Lord's Counsel, Treaty with the Gibeonites*

Joshua Chapter 10: *"The Lord God of Israel Fought for Israel" (10:42)*

Joshua Chapter 11: *The Lord Fulfills His 600yr Promise Concerning the Land*

JOSHUA CHAPTERS 12-21: *The Division of the Promise Land*

Chapter 12 *The 33 Kings Israel Defeats East and West of the Jordan*

12:1-6, Israel defeats two kings East of the Jordan River and Moses divides their land for the 2 ½ tribes: Reuben, Gad and ½ Manasseh.

12:7-24, Israel defeats 31 kings West of the Jordan River and Joshua divides their land for the 9 ½ tribes: Judah, Ephraim, ½ Manasseh, Benjamin, Simeon, Zebulon, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan.

Chapter 13 *The Historical Record begins with the Land Division East of the Jordan*

13:1-7, though Israel will begin to possess their Promise Land, much land remains to be conquered. But notice the One will do the conquering in 13:6.

13:8-33,¹ the historical record of the land division begins in 13:8, but it begins with the land Moses gave to the 2 ½ tribes, to Reuben (13:15-23), to Gad (13:24-28), to ½ of Manasseh (13:29-31). However, these tribes failed to drive out the Geshurites & Maachathites. The tribe of Levi did not get its own land, 13:14, 33.²

Chapter 14 *The Historical Record of the Land Division West of the Jordan begins with Caleb's Portion, who is of Judah*

14:1-5, the land West of the Jordan is divided between the 9 ½ tribes, which include Ephraim and Manasseh, but not Levi. Levi will not get land East or West of the Jordan.

14:6-15, God keeps Caleb alive for the past 45yrs so that He can fulfill His promise of a personal land inheritance because of his faithfulness at Kadesh Barnea, Num 13-14.

¹ In 13:22 Balaam's death is mentioned. The reason why Israel killed him is in Numbers 22. He was willing to curse Israel (for money) after God told him not to.

² The fact that Levi got no land is repeated several times, 13:14, 33; 14:3-4; 18:7. There are two reasons why: (1) God told them that He would be their inheritance, Num 18:20-24, and (2) it has to do with how Israel is numbered when it comes to the Promise Land. The clue to this is in 14:3-4. There are always 12 tribes that make up the nation of Israel. However, in 14:3-4 there are 13. So what's the solution? When it comes to the Promise Land, Israel consists of 12 tribes, including Ephraim and Manasseh, but not Levi. When it comes to the nation of Israel as a whole, Israel consists of 12 tribes, including Joseph and Levi.

Chapter 15 Judah's Land Inheritance

15:1-19, Judah's land inheritance is mentioned according to its southern, eastern, northern, and western borders.

15:13-19, Caleb's inheritance is repeated but with more detail.

15:20-63, Judah's inheritance is made up of 112 cities. Though they possessed all this land, they failed to drive out the Jebusites.

Chapter 16 & 17 Ephraim and ½ Manasseh's Land Inheritance

Chapter 16: Ephraim gets its land, but fails to conquer it all.

16:1-4, the total land that both tribes received is given.

16:5-10, Ephraim's Land Inheritance: its southern, eastern, and northern borders are given. Some of Ephraim's cities actually belonged to Manasseh, like Tappuah, 17:8. Like Judah, Ephraim failed to conquer all its territory. However, they made the Canaanites who remained their *forced laborers*, 16:10.

Chapter 17: ½ Manasseh gets its land, but fails to conquer it all.

17:1-6, ½ Manasseh's land inheritance comes by way of Gilead, who was Machir's son and Manasseh's grandson. The land goes to the children of Gilead's six sons, one of whom (Hepher) gets it by way of five granddaughters, 17:3-4—this was the Lord's command in Num 27:1-11.³

17:7-13, ½ Manasseh's Land Inheritance: its southern, western, northern, and eastern borders are given and again it's stated that Ephraim has cities that belong to ½ Manasseh. Likewise, ½ Manasseh too has cities that do not belong to him, 17:11. Like Judah and Ephraim, ½ Manasseh fails to drive out the Canaanites. However, like Ephraim, they too make the remaining Canaanites their forced laborers, 17:13.

17:14-18, because they are numerous, Ephraim and ½ Manasseh ask for more land. Joshua agrees and tells them to take more land from the Canaanites. But they fear they cannot defeat the Canaanites who have iron chariots.

³ The ½ tribe of Manasseh West of the Jordan River got 10 land shares through Gilead, who was Machir's son and Manasseh's grandson. Gilead had 6 sons: Abiezer, Helek, Asriel, Shechem, Hepher, and Shemida. Each of these sons, except Hepher, got a land share. Hepher got his land share through his only son Zelophehad, whose five daughters (Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah) each got a land share, making a total of 10 land shares. The ½ tribe of Manasseh East of the Jordan got 2 land shares: Gilead and Bashan. Thus, the whole tribe of Manasseh got 12 total land shares.

Chapters 18 and 19 *Benjamin, Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan's Land Inheritance*

Chapters 18 *Joshua's Command to Possess the Land and Benjamin's Land Inheritance*

18:1-10, the remaining seven tribes neglect their duty to take their land (five tribes have theirs: 2 ½ on East and 2 ½ on West). So Joshua commands them to send three men from each tribe to survey the land in seven parts. Once Joshua has the survey, he divides the land before the Lord at Shilo, where the tabernacle was.

18:11-28, Benjamin's Land Inheritance: its northern, western, southern, and eastern borders are listed. It's made up of 26 cities.

Chapter 19 *Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan's Land Inheritance*

19:1-9, Simeon's Land Inheritance: it's made up of 17 cities and was taken from Judah's land because Judah's land was too much for them.

19:10-16, Zebulun's Land Inheritance: its southern, eastern, and northern borders are given. It consists of 12 cities.

19:17-23, Issachar's Land Inheritance: it's made up of 16 cities; its northern border is mentioned.

19:24-31, Asher's Land Inheritance: its western, southern, eastern, and northern borders are described. It's made up of 22 cities.

19:32-39, Naphtali's Land Inheritance: its southern border to the East and West is described and it's made up of 19 cities.

19:40-48, Dan's, Land Inheritance: their original land was bordered by Ephraim, Benjamin, and Judah and it consisted of 17 cities. But as 19:47 indicates they moved up next to Naphtali (Jd 18) because they could not defeat the Philistines (Jd 1:34).

19:49-51, once the land division was complete, the children of Israel give Joshua a city of his choice, which was according to the word of the Lord.

Chapter 20 *The Lord Commands Cities of Refuge, Six are Appointed*

20:1-6, the Lord commands that cities of refuge be appointed for anyone who kills accidentally/unintentionally, which He originally mandated in Num 35:9-15.

20:7-9, six cities of refuge are appointed: three West of the Jordan River, in Naphtali, Ephraim, and Judah, and three East of the Jordan, in Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh.

Chapter 21 *Cities and their Common-lands are given to the Levites*

21:1-8, the Levites request their cities and common-lands according to God's Word, Num 35:1-8. Levi had three sons: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. The Kohathites received 23 cities. The Gershonites received 13 cities. Merarites received 12 cities.⁴

21:9-26, 23 cities to the Kohathites: Aaron's descendants get 13 (including Hebron, but Caleb keeps the fields and villages, ch 14) and the rest of the Kohathites get 10.

21:27-33, the 13 cities given to the Gershonites are listed.

21:34-40, the 12 cities given to the Merarites are listed.

21:41-42, the Levites received a total of 48 cities with their common-lands.

21:43-45, the Land division is complete. Not a word failed which the Lord spoke to Israel, everything God promised their forefathers came to pass.

WILL YOU TRUST AND OBEY GOD?

1. 13:1, Joshua Cannot Lead Israel Anymore: since Joshua cannot lead Israel any more, does it mean that God let Israel down? Why not appoint another leader to lead them into battle like Joshua? They don't need one. Enough land has been taken to begin dividing it and possessing it and they still have God's guarantee, 13:6.
2. 14:6-15, Caleb's Individual Inheritance: God promised Caleb that He would bring him into the Land, Num 14:24. Does Caleb need a human leader to lead him to victory? Who preserved his strength? How's he able to defeat the Anakim at 85yrs of age, 15:13-14?
3. Failure to Conquer, (1) Reuben, Gad, and ½ Manasseh failed, 13:13. Judah, Ephraim, and ½ Manasseh failed, 15-17, (2) Ephraim & Manasseh want more land, but fear they cannot take it, 17:16. What does Joshua say in 17:18 and God in 13:6?

CONCLUSION

We should have absolute confidence in God's deliverance. When He said to Joshua and the nation of Israel, *I will not leave you nor forsake you* (Jos 1:5), He wasn't just speaking to him. He was speaking to you and me (Matt 28:20). When we are faithful to God, when we obey Him, we have every right to expect His deliverance (1Jn 3:22). His deliverance may be *by life or by death* (Phil 1:19-21), but He will deliver and you will know His deliverance. Joshua and the nation of Israel obeyed God and trusted Him as they battled the Canaanites for 7yrs. At the end of the fighting, though there were still pockets of resistance and land yet to be taken, Israel had control of the entire Promise Land and they were able to divide the land to the 9 ½ nations West of the Jordan River whom had yet to receive their inheritance.

⁴ Aaron's family tree: **Levi** had three sons: Gershon, **Kohath**, and Merari. Kohath has four sons: **Amram**, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. Amram had two sons: **Aaron** and Moses. Aaron had four sons: Nadab, Abihu, **Eleazar**, and Ithamar. Eleazar had one son: **Phinehas**.