

## Joshua 13:1-24:33

### Dividing up and Serving the Lord in the Land

The **Conquest** has been an **overwhelming victory** for Israel as the **Lord** has gone **before them** and **none** of their **enemies** have been **able** to **stand**. The **mighty hand** of **Yahweh** has been **evident** through the **Conquest** as He **miraculously intervened** in many **battles**, supernaturally guiding Israel **step by step** through the Land of Promise. **God** has been **faithful** to **bring them into the land**, and now they have **conquered** their **enemies** and **taken most** of the land. What the Lord promised to **Abraham**, to bring them **into the land** and give it to them for an everlasting possession has **been fulfilled**. And through **Moses** God **promised** that none of their **enemies** would be **able** to **stand**, and they would indeed be victorious.

**Deuteronomy 7:1-6** - 7 "When the Lord your God brings you into the land where you are entering to possess it, **and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and stronger than you, 2 and when the Lord your God delivers them before you and you defeat them, then you shall utterly destroy them.** You shall make no covenant with them and show no favor to them. 3 "Furthermore, you shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons. 4 "For they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods; then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you and He will quickly destroy you. 5 **"But thus you shall do to them: you shall tear down their altars, and smash their sacred pillars, and hew down their Asherim, and burn their graven images with fire.** 6 "For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

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Now what **remains** is to **finish taking** the land and then **apportion** out the land and **divide it** among them as **their inheritance** from the **Lord**. The next **9 chapters** are packed full of **geographical details** which shows the **careful allocation** of all the **sections** of land to **9 and a half tribes** dwelling on the **west side** of the **Jordan**.

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### **Dividing the Land ([13:1-21:45](#))**

#### **It's yours, now take it! ([13:1-33](#))**

It is important to **note** that **job** of **taking the land** is **not yet completed**, and there remains **much land** to **possess**, especially **along the coast** and in the **far north**.

**Joshua 13:1-7** - 13 Now Joshua was old and advanced in years when the Lord said to him, **"You are old and advanced in years, and very much of the land remains to be possessed.** 2 "This is the land that remains: **all the regions of the Philistines** and all those of the Geshurites; 3 from the Shihor which is east of Egypt, even as far as the border of Ekron to the north (it is counted as Canaanite); the five lords of the Philistines: the Gazite, the Ashdodite, the Ashkelonite, the Gittite, the Ekronite; and the Avvite 4 to the south, all the land of the Canaanite, and Mearah that belongs to the Sidonians, as far as Aphek, to the border of the Amorite; 5 and the land of the Gebalite, and all of Lebanon, toward the east, **from Baal-gad below Mount Hermon as far as Lebo-hamath.** 6 **"All the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon as far as Misrephoth-maim, all the Sidonians, I will drive them out from before the sons of Israel;** only allot it to Israel for an inheritance as I have commanded you. 7 **"Now therefore, apportion this land for an inheritance to the nine tribes and the half-tribe of Manasseh."**

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You may recall the **familiar names** of many of **Israel's enemies** here, (like the **Philistines**), that actually **still remained** in the **land** some **200-300 years** later during the times of **Saul** and **David**. During the times of the Judges and later, they will become a **real thorn** in their side. This was a problem, whereas they actually never did **fully conquer** all the **Canaanite nations** but some of them remained and it became a **real stumbling block** for them in later years.

**Joshua 13:13** - 13 But the sons of **Israel did not dispossess the Geshurites or the Maacathites; for Geshur and Maacath live among Israel until this day.** NASU

**Verses 8-33** recount **Moses' victories** over the **lands** on the **east** of the **Jordan**, and how they were portioned out.

**Joshua 13:32-33 - 32** **These are the territories which Moses apportioned for an inheritance in the plains of Moab, beyond the Jordan at Jericho to the east.** 33 But to the tribe of Levi, Moses did not give an inheritance; the Lord, the God of Israel, is their inheritance, as He had promised to them.  
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This **launches** them into what follows as the **seek** to **complete** the **taking** of the **land**, and **portioning** it out to the **tribes**.

### **Western territories (14:1–19:51)**

These **6 chapters** give very detailed **geographical information** about the **careful allotments** given to the **9 and half tribes** on the **west side** of the **Jordan**.

**Joshua 14:1-5 - 14** Now **these are the territories which the sons of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the households of the tribes of the sons of Israel apportioned to them for an inheritance,** 2 by the lot of their inheritance, as the Lord commanded through Moses, **for the nine tribes and the half-tribe.** 3 For Moses had given the inheritance of the two tribes and the half-tribe beyond the Jordan; but he did not give an inheritance to the Levites among them. 4 For the sons of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim, and they did not give a portion to the Levites in the land, except cities to live in, with their pasture lands for their livestock and for their property. 5 Thus the sons of Israel did just as the Lord had commanded Moses, and **they divided the land.** NASU

It is also worth **noting** the **blessing** of land that **God gave** to **Caleb** and **Joshua**, the two **faithful former spies**, who **survived** as the only **living remnants** from the first **Exodus generation**. Caleb's portion was **promised** to him by **Moses**.

**Joshua 14:6-15 - 6** Then **the sons of Judah drew near to Joshua in Gilgal, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, "You know the word which the Lord spoke to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh-barnea. 7 "I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land, and I brought word back to him as it was in my heart. 8 "Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt with fear; but I followed the Lord my God fully. 9 "So Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land on which your foot has trodden will be an inheritance to**

you and to your children forever, because you have followed the Lord my God fully.' 10 "Now behold, the Lord has let me live, just as He spoke, these forty-five years, from the time that the Lord spoke this word to Moses, when Israel walked in the wilderness; and now behold, I am eighty-five years old today. 11 "I am still as strong today as I was in the day Moses sent me; as my strength was then, so my strength is now, for war and for going out and coming in. 12 "Now then, give me this hill country about which the Lord spoke on that day, for you heard on that day that Anakim were there, with great fortified cities; perhaps the Lord will be with me, and I will drive them out as the Lord has spoken." 13 So Joshua blessed him and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance. 14 Therefore, Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite until this day, because he followed the Lord God of Israel fully. 15 Now the name of Hebron was formerly Kiriath-arba; for Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim. Then the land had rest from war. NASU

And Joshua was given a city in the hill country of Ephraim.

**Joshua 19:49-50** - 49 When they finished apportioning the land for inheritance by its borders, the sons of Israel gave an inheritance in their midst to Joshua the son of Nun. 50 In accordance with the command of the Lord they gave him the city for which he asked, Timnath-serah in the hill country of Ephraim. So he built the city and settled in it. NASU

Now in the middle of these important chapters describing the allotment of land, we see a very profound event take place. They have finally settled the Tabernacle with the presence of the Lord in a central place, that of Shiloh. It will be there for some 369 years. Because the people are no longer nomadic, but have settled in the land, it was important for the Tabernacle to be located in a central place, and Shiloh is smack dab in the middle of the land. So the presence of the Lord has come to rest with the people in the land, where they can have their rest, and more importantly, the true worship of the Lord. Also worth noting is the careful mapping out of the allotments that took place after Joshua commands them to section the land off, divide it up, and take possession of it.

**Joshua 18:1-10** - 18 Then the whole congregation of the sons of Israel assembled themselves at Shiloh, and set up the tent of meeting there; and the land was subdued before them. 2 There remained among the sons of Israel seven tribes who had not divided their inheritance. 3 So Joshua said to the sons of Israel, "How long will you put off entering to take possession

of the land which the Lord, the God of your fathers, has given you? 4 **"Provide for yourselves three men from each tribe that I may send them, and that they may arise and walk through the land and write a description of it according to their inheritance; then they shall return to me. 5 "They shall divide it into seven portions;** Judah shall stay in its territory on the south, and the house of Joseph shall stay in their territory on the north. 6 **"You shall describe the land in seven divisions, and bring the description here to me. I will cast lots for you here before the Lord our God. 7 "For the Levites have no portion among you, because the priesthood of the Lord is their inheritance. Gad and Reuben and the half-tribe of Manasseh also have received their inheritance eastward beyond the Jordan, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave them." 8 Then the men arose and went, and Joshua commanded those who went to describe the land, saying, "Go and walk through the land and describe it, and return to me; then I will cast lots for you here before the Lord in Shiloh." 9 So the men went and passed through the land, and described it by cities in seven divisions in a book; and they came to Joshua to the camp at Shiloh. 10 And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the Lord, and there Joshua divided the land to the sons of Israel according to their divisions.** NASU

### **A land of justice and worship (20:1–21:45)**

The allotment of lands to the tribes is not complete until the cities of refuge are appointed and the Levites also receive their cities, since they have no given allotment of land. The land of God's people has provisions for justice to be carried out and also for the priests to have jurisdiction in the various areas of the tribes, so they can minister to the people. There are six cities of refuge appointed here.

**Joshua 20:1-2 - 20 Then the Lord spoke to Joshua, saying, 2 "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'Designate the cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses, 3 that the manslayer who kills any person unintentionally, without premeditation, may flee there,** and they shall become your refuge from the avenger of blood. NASU

**Joshua 20:7-8 - 7 So they set apart Kedesh in Galilee in the hill country of Naphtali and Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the hill country of Judah. 8 Beyond the Jordan east of Jericho, they designated Bezer in the wilderness on the plain from the**

**tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead from the tribe of Gad, and Golan** in Bashan from the tribe of Manasseh. NASU

They also appointed **48 cities** and their surrounding **pasture lands** for the Levites.

**Joshua 21:1-4 - 21 Then the heads of households of the Levites approached Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of households of the tribes of the sons of Israel. 2 They spoke to them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying, "The Lord commanded through Moses to give us cities to live in, with their pasture lands for our cattle." 3 So the sons of Israel gave the Levites from their inheritance these cities with their pasture lands,** according to the command of the Lord. NASU

**Joshua 21:41-42 - 41 All the cities of the Levites in the midst of the possession of the sons of Israel were forty-eight cities with their pasture lands. 42 These cities each had its surrounding pasture lands;** thus it was with all these cities. NASU

It is here at the **end of chapter 21** where we see this **summary statement** concerning **God's faithfulness** to His promises to the Patriarchs.

**Joshua 21:43-45 - 43 So the Lord gave Israel all the land which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they possessed it and lived in it. 44 And the Lord gave them rest on every side, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers, and no one of all their enemies stood before them; the Lord gave all their enemies into their hand. 45 Not one of the good promises which the Lord had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass.** NASU

The **ESV Study Bible** comments, "*Josh. 21:43–45 Just as the account of the taking of the land drew to a close with generalizing summaries, so the account of the dividing of the land ends with a summary section. It picks up on key motifs such as "land," "rest," and "victory" as the Lord's "gifts". As seen later in Joshua, this section should be understood as a broad summary statement emphasizing the Lord's decisive action on behalf of Israel, rather than as a comprehensive assertion that all of Israel's enemies had been eradicated from the land. Although Israel did, in fact, take possession of the land and settled there (21:43), much work still remained to be done (see 23:5). But the key point is that the Lord has been utterly true to his good promises: none has failed, and all came to pass.*" **End quote.**

**Serving the Lord in the Land (22:1–24:33)**

**One nation, under God (22:1–34)**

Now that the **Conquest** of the **western side** of the **Jordan** is mostly complete, Joshua releases the **trans-jordan tribes** to return home to the **east side** of the **Jordan**.

**Joshua 22:1-6** - 22 Then Joshua summoned the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, 2 and said to them, "You have kept all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, and have listened to my voice in all that I commanded you. 3 **"You have not forsaken your brothers these many days to this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the Lord your God.** 4 **"And now the Lord your God has given rest to your brothers, as He spoke to them; therefore turn now and go to your tents, to the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you beyond the Jordan.** 5 **"Only be very careful to observe the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, to love the Lord your God and walk in all His ways and keep His commandments and hold fast to Him and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul."** 6 So Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their tents. NASU

As they go, they **erect an altar** on the **bank** of the **Jordan** which causes no small **controversy**, and **almost starts a civil war**. Thinking they had become **apostate** and begun worshipping **other gods**, the **whole assembly** pursues them down to the **Jordan**. After quite an exchange of words, the **trans-Jordan tribes** reveal their **motive**.

**Joshua 22:24-31** - 24 "But truly we have done this out of concern, for a reason, saying, 'In time to come your sons may say to our sons, "What have you to do with the Lord, the God of Israel? 25 "For the Lord has made the Jordan a border between us and you, you sons of Reuben and sons of Gad; you have no portion in the Lord." **So your sons may make our sons stop fearing the Lord.'** 26 **"Therefore we said, 'Let us build an altar, not for burnt offering or for sacrifice; 27 rather it shall be a witness between us and you and between our generations after us, that we are to perform the service of the Lord before Him with our burnt offerings, and with our sacrifices and with our peace offerings, so that your sons will not say to our sons in time to come, "You have no portion in the Lord."**" 28 "Therefore we said, 'It shall also come about if they say this to us or to our generations in time to come, then we shall say, "See the copy of the altar of the Lord which our fathers made, not for burnt offering or for sacrifice; rather it is a witness between us and you.'" 29 "Far be it from us that we

should rebel against the Lord and turn away from following the Lord this day, by building an altar for burnt offering, for grain offering or for sacrifice, besides the altar of the Lord our God which is before His tabernacle." **30 So when Phinehas the priest and the leaders of the congregation, even the heads of the families of Israel who were with him, heard the words which the sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad and the sons of Manasseh spoke, it pleased them.** NASU

The answer **pleases both sides** and the **crisis is averted**.

### **Joshua's charge to Israel's leaders (23:1-16)**

As Joshua is now **old** and **advanced** in years and is **concerned** to **pass on** the **leadership** to the **next generation** of leaders. **Chapter 23** records **his charge** to them. See here in the several **faith lessons** are here for us to **apply** to **our walk** with the **Lord**.

**Joshua 23:6-16 - 6 "Be very firm, then, to keep and do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, so that you may not turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left,** 7 so that you will not associate with these nations, these which remain among you, or mention the name of their gods, or make anyone swear by them, or serve them, or bow down to them. **8 "But you are to cling to the Lord your God, as you have done to this day.** **9 "For the Lord has driven out great and strong nations from before you; and as for you, no man has stood before you to this day. 10 "One of your men puts to flight a thousand, for the Lord your God is He who fights for you, just as He promised you. 11 "So take diligent heed to yourselves to love the Lord your God.** 12 "For if you ever go back and cling to the rest of these nations, these which remain among you, and intermarry with them, so that you associate with them and they with you, 13 know with certainty that the Lord your God will not continue to drive these nations out from before you; but they will be a snare and a trap to you, and a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good land which the Lord your God has given you. NASU

As **Moses** had **charged them** from the **plains of Moab** before they **entered** the **land** with the **blessings** and the **curses**, (Deut 28) so here **Joshua** gives them **stern warnings** even as He reminds them of the **faithfulness** of the **Lord**.

**Joshua 23:14-16 - 14 "Now behold, today I am going the way of all the earth, and you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one word of all the good words which the Lord your God spoke concerning you**



**has failed; all have been fulfilled for you, not one of them has failed.** 15 "It shall come about that just as all the good words which the Lord your God spoke to you have come upon you, so the Lord will bring upon you all the threats, until He has destroyed you from off this good land which the Lord your God has given you. **16 "When you transgress the covenant of the Lord your God, which He commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them, then the anger of the Lord will burn against you, and you will perish quickly from off the good land which He has given you."**

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Sadly, as they enter the **period** of the **Judges**, they will surely **find themselves** in many **sins, transgressions** and **judgments** from the **Lord**.

### **Covenant renewal at Shechem (24:1–33)**

Once more **Joshua** assembles the **tribes** at **Shechem** to call **Israel** to a **renewal** of the **covenant**. It was his **final official act** as the Lord's servant. Here he gives a **revealing summary** of **Israel's history**. Notice in the account how **God** is seen with His **sovereign hand** leading and **guiding them** all along the way!

**Joshua 24:1-13** - 24 Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel and for their heads and their judges and their officers; **and they presented themselves before God.** 2 Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River, namely, Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods. **3 'Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River, and led him** through all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac. 4 **'To Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau, and to Esau I gave Mount Seir to possess it;** but Jacob and his sons went down to Egypt. **5 'Then I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagues Egypt by what I did in its midst; and afterward I brought you out.** 6 **'I brought your fathers out of Egypt,** and you came to the sea; and Egypt pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea. 7 'But when they cried out to the Lord, He put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them and covered them; and your own eyes saw what I did in Egypt. And you lived in the wilderness for a long time. **8 'Then I brought you into the land of the Amorites who lived beyond the Jordan,** and they fought with you; and **I gave them into your hand,** and you took possession of their land **when I destroyed them before you.** 9 'Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and fought

against Israel, and he sent and summoned Balaam the son of Beor to curse you. **10 'But I was not willing to listen to Balaam. So he had to bless you, and I delivered you from his hand.** 11 'You crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho; and the citizens of Jericho fought against you, and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Girgashite, the Hivite and the Jebusite. **Thus I gave them into your hand. 12 'Then I sent the hornet before you and it drove out the two kings of the Amorites** from before you, **but not by your sword or your bow. 13 'I gave you a land on which you had not labored, and cities which you had not built, and you have lived in them; you are eating of vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant.'** NASU

As the **book ends** we are told of **Joshua's death**. There is also a very encouraging account that **under his leadership** Israel was **faithful to serve the Lord**.

**Joshua 24:29-31** - 29 It came about after these things **that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being one hundred and ten years old.** 30 And they buried him in the territory of his inheritance in Timnath-serah, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, on the north of Mount Gaash. **31 Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, and had known all the deeds of the Lord which He had done for Israel.**

Lastly, as **Joseph** had **requested** some **300+ years earlier** (Gen 50:25), they carried his **bones** up from **Egypt** and **buried them** in the land in the **tomb** of his **fathers**.

**Joshua 24:32-33** - 32 Now they **buried the bones of Joseph, which the sons of Israel brought up from Egypt, at Shechem, in the piece of ground which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem** for one hundred pieces of money; and **they became the inheritance of Joseph's sons.** 33 And Eleazar the son of Aaron died; and they buried him at Gibeah of Phinehas his son, which was given him in the hill country of Ephraim. NASU