

Joshua

Lesson 15

Chapter 18

Have you ever noticed how some things just take time? You cannot rush them. Have you ever noticed that with those things, the learning curve is what slows you down? Such is the case the division of the land after finishing the war campaigns. Because the kings united to fight against the Nation of Israel, the nation was not in the country long enough to survey and map the land for the purpose of gifting it to each tribe. Some of the land they Israel army never walked across. A survey will need to happen. But, in the meantime, Gilgal was not a suitable home for the Tabernacle complex, so the whole congregation needed to pack and move like they did crossing the Jordan River.

4. The Tribal Move from Gilgal to Shiloh

After the initial gifting of the inheritance of the land to the two tribes for which Moses had pre-promised specific areas, Hebron for Caleb and Shechem for Joseph's Ephraim and Manasseh, the division of the rest of the land paused for the tribal move from Gilgal to Shiloh. Chapter 18, verse 1. *"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."* (18:1)

Shiloh was the fitting place for the Tent of Meeting, which housed the Tabernacle, which sat in the Tabernacle complex, because the name means *rest*. Shiloh was the symbolic place of rest for the complex for the next four hundred years, until it fell into the hands of the Philistines (1 Samuel 21:2). Shiloh was where the priest Eli lived and where Samuel spent his early years in training.

When the text says, *"the land was subdued before them"* it just means that the land in Shiloh was *tread under the foot*. Translation in modern-day language, it became the home "stomping grounds" for the High Priests and the Tabernacle complex. It was just where they lived.

Let us note one more thing before we move on. The verse opens with *"Then the whole congregation."* Even though Judah and the sons of Joseph had been gifted their inheritance, their families had not moved to their lands yet. They were still with the whole congregation at Gilgal and they moved with the nation to Shiloh.

a) Order to Survey the Remaining Land

Seven of the tribes had not received the details of their inheritance. There was a reason why Joshua and Eleazar had not divided the land. They did not know enough about the land to divide it. So, the order to survey the remaining land was given by Joshua. Verse 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.'" (18:2-4)*

The seven remaining tribes knew where their inheritance would be divided from, but they did not know which part of the land would become theirs. There twenty-one men were sent to survey the land and bring back the map and details for the leaders to work with in their decisions.

b) Order to Divide the Remaining Land

In the process of surveying the land, the twenty-one men were ordered to divide the remaining land into seven portions. Verse 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."* (18:5-6a)

The writer is careful to let us know that the land of Joseph's descendants and Judah had already been assigned.

c) Order to Assign the Remaining Land

Then, Joshua gave the order to assign the remaining land by lot when the survey was returned. Verse 6b. *"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."* (18:6b-10)

The land was divided into seven portions by the surveyors, but it was Joshua who would make the decision of who would receive each specific portion of land by lot. This was done by drawing the stones with the names of each of the seven tribes out of the sack or pot and relying on the LORD to direct the pulling of each stone for each partial of land being offered in order.

5. The Tribal Area Assigned to Benjamin (18:11-28)

a) Benjamin's Borders (18:11-21)

Once the survey book was returned to Joshua, the drawing of the lots began. The first went to the tribal area assigned to Benjamin. The writer details Benjamin's borders first. Verse 11. *"Now the lot of the tribe of the sons of Benjamin came up according to their families, and the territory of their lot lay between the sons of Judah and the sons of Joseph. ¹² Their border on the north side was from the Jordan, then the border went up to the side of Jericho on the north, and went up through the hill country westward, and it ended at the wilderness of Beth-aven. ¹³ From there the border continued to Luz, to the side of Luz (that is, Bethel) southward; and the border went down to Ataroth-addar, near the hill which lies on the south of lower Beth-horon. ¹⁴ The border extended from there and turned round on the west side southward, from the hill which lies before Beth-horon southward; and it ended at Kiriath-baal (that is, Kiriath-jearim), a city of the sons of Judah. This was the west side. ¹⁵ Then the south side was from the edge of Kiriath-jearim, and the border went westward and went to the fountain of the waters of Nephtoah. ¹⁶ The border went down to the edge of the hill which is in the valley of Ben-hinnom, which is in the valley of Rephaim northward; and it went down to the valley of Hinnom, to the slope of the Jebusite southward, and went down to En-rogel. ¹⁷ It extended northward and went to En-shemesh and went to Geliloth, which is opposite the ascent of Adummim, and it went down to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben. ¹⁸ It continued to the side in front of the Arabah northward and went down to the Arabah. ¹⁹ The border continued to the side of Beth-hoglah northward; and the border ended at the north bay of the Salt Sea, at the south end of the Jordan. This was the south border. ²⁰ Moreover, the Jordan was its border on the east side. This was the inheritance of the sons of Benjamin, according to their families and according to its borders all around."* (18:11-21)

Benjamin's land was sandwiched in between the land of Ephraim and Judah. We might notice that the *slope of the Jebusite* citadel was in Benjamin's land but the City of Peace (Jeru-Salem) was in Judah's land. Also, when giving the land to Judah, the writer mentioned the *stone of Bohan the son of Reuben*. It was mentioned here again in verse 17. The stone was set as a boundary marker by Bohon, or one of his descendants, as a permanent landmark for the border of the tribal area of Reuben and Benjamin.



b) Benjamin's Cities (18:21-28)

After describing Benjamin's borders, the writer names Benjamin's cities. Verse 21. *"Now the cities of the tribe of the sons of Benjamin according to their families were Jericho and Beth-hoglah and Emek-keziz,²² and Beth-arabah and Zemaraim and Bethel,²³ and Avvim and Parah and Ophrah,²⁴ and Chephar-ammoni and Ophni and Geba; twelve cities with their villages.²⁵ Gibeon and Ramah and Beeroh,²⁶ and Mizpeh and Chephirah and Moza,²⁷ and Rekem and Irpeel and Taralah,²⁸ and Zelah, Haeleph and the Jebusite (that is, Jerusalem), Gibeah, Kiriath; fourteen cities with their villages. This is the inheritance of the sons of Benjamin according to their families."* (18:21-28)

Important cities in Benjamin's allotment are Bethel, Gibeon, Jebusite, and Gibeah. Much biblical history will be lived in these cities in the future.

Chapter 19

6. The Tribal Area Assigned to Simeon (19:1-9)

a) Simeon's Cities (19:1-8)

With the beginning of chapter 19, the tribal area assigned to Simeon is given. This time, the writer starts with Simeon's cities. Chapter 19, verse 1. *"Then the second lot fell to Simeon, to the tribe of the sons of Simeon according to their families, and their inheritance was in the midst of the inheritance of the sons of Judah.² So they had as their inheritance Beersheba or Sheba and Moladah,³ and Hazar-shual and Balah and Ezem,⁴ and Eltolad and Bethul and Hormah,⁵ and Ziklag and Beth-marcaboth and Hazar-susab,⁶ and Beth-lebaoth and Sharuhen; thirteen cities with their villages;⁷ Ain, Rimmon and Ether and Asban; four cities with their villages;⁸ and all the villages which were around these cities as far as Baalath-beer, Ramah of the Negev. This was the inheritance of the tribe of the sons of Simeon according to their families."* (19:1-8)

If you will remember, the inheritance of Judah was enormous. It covered about one hundred and forty square miles from north to south. The widest width of the Nation of Israel is found in Judah's territory. Now, Joshua selected Simeon's land by the name of the cities. As we discovered in verse 1, the cities were in the middle of Judah's territory. The mere mention of the first city of Beersheba tells us the general location. Then the addition of Ziklag, and Ramah of the Negev, define the general area also. Simeon received seventeen of the cities in Judah's territory. Each of those cities had outlying villages that looked to those cities for support.

b) Simeon's Borders (19:9)

After naming Simeon's cities, the writer states Simeon's borders. Verse 9. *"The inheritance of the sons of Simeon was taken from the portion of the sons of Judah, for the share of the sons of Judah was too large for them; so the sons of Simeon received an inheritance in the midst of Judah's inheritance."* (19:9)

We must wonder, and we do not know how this was decided. The twenty-one surveyors were sent north to divide the remaining land into seven parts. They were told that Judah already had its land assigned. Then, back at Shiloh, Joshua and Eleazar and the leaders saw fit to carve Simeon's land out of Judah's territory. What did they do with the seven portions of the northern land that were surveyed? If we only had the survey book they drew. We do not. Joshua and Eleazar must have altered the book and divided the northern land into six portions instead.

7. The Tribal Area Assigned to Zebulun (19:10-16)

After Simeon, we come to the tribal area assigned to Zebulun. Verse 10. *"Now the third lot came up for the sons of Zebulun according to their families. And the territory of their inheritance was as far as Sarid.¹¹ Then their border went up to the west and to Maralah, it then touched Dabbeshbeth and reached to the brook that is before Jokneam.¹² Then it turned from Sarid to the east toward*



the sunrise as far as the border of Chisloth-tabor, and it proceeded to Daberath and up to Japhia.¹³ From there it continued eastward toward the sunrise to Gath-hepber, to Eth-kazin, and it proceeded to Rimmon which stretches to Neab.¹⁴ The border circled around it on the north to Hannathon, and it ended at the valley of Iphtabel.¹⁵ Included also were Kattab and Nabalal and Shimron and Idalah and Bethlehem; twelve cities with their villages.¹⁶ This was the inheritance of the sons of Zebulun according to their families, these cities with their villages.” (19:10-16)

Do not be misled by the mention of the city of Bethlehem. Two Bethlehem’s exist in Israel. One in the tribe of Judah, where Jesus was born, and one in the tribe of Zebulun.

8. The Tribal Area Assigned to Issachar (19:17-23)

The writer was short with Zebulun and he is even shorter with the tribal area assigned to Issachar. Verse 17. “The fourth lot fell to Issachar, to the sons of Issachar according to their families.¹⁸ Their territory was to Jezreel and included Chesulloth and Shunem,¹⁹ and Hapharaim and Shion and Anaharath,²⁰ and Rabbith and Kishion and Ebez,²¹ and Remeth and En-gannim and En-haddah and Beth-pazzez.²² The border reached to Tabor and Shabazumah and Beth-shemesh, and their border ended at the Jordan; sixteen cities with their villages.²³ This was the inheritance of the tribe of the sons of Issachar according to their families, the cities with their villages.” (19:17-23)

Issachar’s land was east of Zebulun, above Manasseh and below Naphtali. Its eastern border was the Jordan River.

9. The Tribal Area Assigned to Asher (19:24-31)

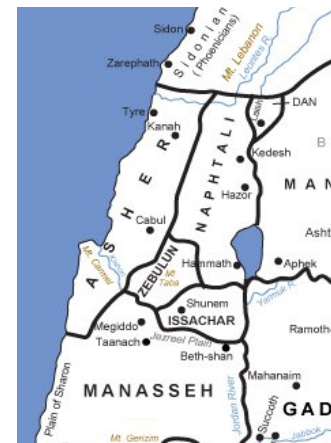
The tribal area assigned to Asher did not take much more description than that of Issachar. Verse 24. “Now the fifth lot fell to the tribe of the sons of Asher according to their families.²⁵ Their territory was Helkath and Hali and Beten and Achsbaph,²⁶ and Allammelech and Amad and Mishal; and it reached to Carmel on the west and to Shibor-libnath.²⁷ It turned toward the east to Beth-dagon and reached to Zebulun, and to the valley of Iphtabel northward to Beth-emek and Neiel; then it proceeded on north to Cabul,²⁸ and Ebron and Rebob and Hammon and Kanah, as far as Great Sidon.²⁹ The border turned to Ramah and to the fortified city of Tyre; then the border turned to Hosah, and it ended at the sea by the region of Achzib.³⁰ Included also were Ummah, and Aphek and Rebob; twenty-two cities with their villages.³¹ This was the inheritance of the tribe of the sons of Asher according to their families, these cities with their villages.” (19:24-31)

Asher’s land ran next to the coast of the Great Sea, west of Manasseh to the south and Zebulun and Naphtali to the east.

10. The Tribal Area Assigned to Naphtali (19:32-39)

The tribal area assigned to Naphtali followed the same formula as the previous tribes. Verse 32. “The sixth lot fell to the sons of Naphtali; to the sons of Naphtali according to their families.³³ Their border was from Heleph, from the oak in Zaanannim and Adami-nekeb and Jabneel, as far as Lakkum, and it ended at the Jordan.³⁴ Then the border turned westward to Aznoth-tabor and proceeded from there to Hukkuk; and it reached to Zebulun on the south and touched Asher on the west, and to Judah at the Jordan toward the east.³⁵ The fortified cities were Ziddim, Zer and Hammath, Rakkath and Chinnereth,³⁶ and Adamah and Ramah and Hazor,³⁷ and Kedesb and Edrei and En-hazor,³⁸ and Yiron and Migdal-el, Horem and Beth-anath and Beth-shemesh; nineteen cities with their villages.³⁹ This was the inheritance of the tribe of the sons of Naphtali according to their families, the cities with their villages.” (19:32-39)

Naphtali’s land was east of Asher and its northern border stopped at Lebanon, with Asher on the north. Its eastern border was the Arabah of the river that fed the Sea of Chinnereth (Galilee).



Issachar, Asher and Naphtali Borders

11. The Tribal Area Assigned to Dan (19:40-48)

a) The Southern Allotment (19:40-46)

The tribal area assigned to Dan was last for the tribe's allotments. Verse 40. *"The seventh lot fell to the tribe of the sons of Dan according to their families. ⁴¹ The territory of their inheritance was Zorah and Eshtaol and Ir-shemesh, ⁴² and Sbaalabbin and Aijalon and Ithlah, ⁴³ and Elon and Timnah and Ekron, ⁴⁴ and Eltekeh and Gibbethon and Baalath, ⁴⁵ and Jehud and Bene-berak and Gath-rimmon, ⁴⁶ and Me-jarkon and Rakkon, with the territory over against Joppa.*

The southern allotment for Dan sat west of the territories of Ephraim and Benjamin with the Great Sea on the east.

b) The Northern Allotment (19:47-48)

But Dan also had a northern allotment. Verse 47. *"The territory of the sons of Dan proceeded beyond them; for the sons of Dan went up and fought with Leshem and captured it. Then they struck it with the edge of the sword and possessed it and settled in it; and they called Leshem Dan after the name of Dan their father. ⁴⁸ This was the inheritance of the tribe of the sons of Dan according to their families, these cities with their villages."* (19:40-48)

This entry into the Scripture in this location in Joshua is proof positive that the book of Joshua was finished, if not completely written, long after the death of Joshua. Why? The campaign of Dan against the city of Leshem does not occur until Judges 18:1 – at least three hundred years into the future, during the days of Samson, the last judge of Israel in the book of Judges, not including Samuel who was just a boy at the time.

The original land given to Dan while the camp was at Shiloh was only the southern area. This new northern area for Dan was captured long after the death of Joshua, Eleazar and all the leaders who approved the divisions at Shiloh.

12. The Tribal Gift to Joshua

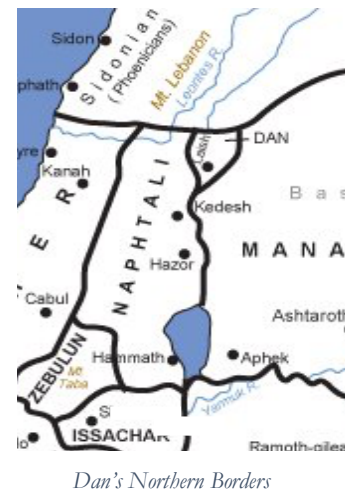
The last division of land was the tribal gift to Joshua as the leader. Verse 49. *"When they finished apportioning the land for inheritance by its borders, the sons of Israel gave an inheritance in their midst to Joshua the son of Nun. ⁵⁰ In accordance with the command of the LORD they gave him the city for which he asked, Timnath-serah in the hill country of Ephraim. So he built the city and settled in it."* (19:49-50)

The way the division of the land worked was by tribes. The twelve tribes were assigned their tribal areas. Then, each tribe divided their land according to the divisions of the number of patriarchal heads in each tribe according to the number of families under each patriarchal head. After each patriarch received the land division, the patriarch divided it among each family. The result was about twelve acres per family.

When it came to Joshua, things were different. Joshua asked for area of Timnath-serah in the tribal area of his heritage, Ephraim. Timnath-serah means *remaining portion*. The area was given to Joshua. It is ten miles south-west of Shechem.

13. The Tribal Conclusion of the Division of the Promised Land

The writer gives the tribal conclusion of the division of the Promised Land in verse 51. *"These are the inheritances which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the households of the tribes of*



the sons of Israel distributed by lot in Shiloh before the LORD at the doorway of the tent of meeting. So they finished dividing the land.” (19:51)

The work of dividing the Promised Land was completed. More work remained at the Tent of Meeting in Shiloh. The cities of refuges needed to be identified as well as all the forty-eight places the LORD would choose for His name to receive offering and tithes.