

Lesson 6 – Joshua 13-19

Text: Joshua 13-19

Key Passage:

- Joshua 13:1-7 – God instructed Joshua to divide up the inheritance, but promised that He would help the Israelites drive out the remaining Canaanites from their land.

Main Storyline:

With the main battles in Canaan having been won, it was time to for Israel begin dividing the land and to separate into their tribes. God told Joshua that though he was old, there were many Canaanites remaining in the land that would need to be driven out. God reassured Joshua that He would drive out the rest of the Canaanites, but first the land was to be divided by lot, as He had commanded earlier (Numbers 33:54). Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh had already received their share of the land (recall they had been given the land east of the Jordan River), but the land west of the Jordan River still needed to be apportioned to the remaining tribes. The only tribe that would not receive any land was the tribe of Levi, because God was to be their inheritance (Numbers 18:20). Note that the Levites would be given cities to live in throughout the land, however. At that point, Joshua, Eleazar, and the heads of the tribes worked together to distribute the land of Israel

Judah received the largest portion of the inheritance, the southern lands. This portion included Jerusalem, Hebron, and the Philistine cities. Caleb told Joshua about an oath Moses had made to him back when they had spied out the land of Canaan. Moses had sworn that the land that Caleb had spied out would be his and his children's forever because of his devotion to the Lord. Caleb asked Joshua to honor that oath, and Joshua did so by giving him Hebron. Caleb proceeded to take control of his inheritance, including driving out three sons of Anak and others in the area.

The tribes of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, received another large portion of the land. Ephraim's share was in the center of Israel, and it contained Shiloh, the city where the Tent of Meeting (Tabernacle) was to permanently remain. Manasseh received, in addition to the land east of the Jordan River, another portion in the central region of Israel that was west of the Jordan River. This was due to the oath that had been made to Zelophehad's daughters (Numbers 27).

After the land had all been apportioned, all of the Israelites gathered at Shiloh, where the tabernacle was to be permanently located. After the meeting, seven of the tribes did not leave to go and take their inheritances, apparently content to remain living as nomads. Joshua rebuked them, instructing them to survey the land so it could be divided (perhaps for the second time). Following the return of the surveyors, Joshua cast lots to divide up the land. The tribes of Benjamin, Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan then received their inheritances.

As discussed in Joshua 11-12, the land of Canaan had not been completely purged of all of its inhabitants in the initial military campaigns. It would be up to each of the individual tribes to go into their assigned land and drive out/destroy the remaining Canaanites there. Unfortunately, many of the tribes were unable to fully eliminate the Canaanites from their land. The Jebusites, for example, were not driven out by the tribe of Judah from Jerusalem. The children of Joseph did not drive out all of the Canaanites from their land because the opposition had chariots of iron. Ultimately, all of these failures to obey the commandments of God would come back to haunt the Israelites.

Lessons/Applications:

- 1.) God keeps the promises He makes to us, no matter how long ago they were made.
- 2.) While it is good to be righteous with others, we must learn to stand alone (Philippians 2:12).
- 3.) We cannot be complacent, but instead we must work to grow and obey the Lord.