

# Joshua 13 Commentary

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LAND ALLOTMENTS

(Joshua 13-21)

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**JOSHUA**  
**A BOOK ON SPIRITUAL WARFARE and REST**  
**HOW TO POSSESS YOUR POSSESSIONS**

<b>CONQUEST OF THE PROMISED LAND</b>		<b>DIVISION OF THE PROMISED LAND</b>		<b>CLOSE OF JOSHUA'S LIFE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>		<b>ALLOCATION</b>		<b>APPEAL</b>
Josh 1:1-5:15	Josh 6:1-12:24	Joshua 13:1-21:45		Josh 22:1-24:33
<b>WARLORDS IN CANAAN</b>		<b>LANDLORDS IN CANAAN</b>		
<b>ENTERING CANAAN</b>	<b>CONQUERING CANAAN</b>	<b>DIVIDING CANAAN</b>		
<b>SECURING THE LAND</b>		<b>SETTLING THE LAND</b>		
<b>Preparation</b>	<b>Conquest</b>	<b>Possession</b>		<b>Consecration</b>
ca. 1 Month	ca 7 Years	ca. 18 Years		

[See also more detailed Chart by Charles R Swindoll](#)

**Joshua 13:1** 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.

- A.M. 2560, B.C. 1444, An, Ex, Is, 47
- **Joshua:** Jos 14:10 23:1,2 24:29 Ge 18:11 1Ki 1:1 Lu 1:7
- **to be possessed:** Heb. to possess it, De 31:3
- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passages:**

Joshua 11:23+ So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had spoken to Moses, and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. **Thus the land had rest from war.**

**EXAMPLES OF VERY MUCH OF THE LAND REMAINS TO BE POSSESSED:**

Joshua 15:63 Now as for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, **the sons of Judah could not drive them out;** so the Jebusites live with the sons of Judah at Jerusalem until this day.

Joshua 16:10 But they did not drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer, **so the Canaanites live in the midst of Ephraim to this day,** and they became forced laborers.

Joshua 17:12-13 But the sons of Manasseh could not take possession of these cities (Josh 17:11), because the Canaanites persisted in living in that land. 13 It came about when the sons of Israel became strong, they put the Canaanites to forced labor, **but they did not drive them out completely.**

**NOT TOO OLD TO  
HEAR FROM THE LORD**

From the overview charts and table above note that Joshua 1–12 describe the conquest of the Promised Land and Joshua 13–19 (main section in 14-19) describe the division of Canaan among the tribes of Israel.

**Irving Jensen** gives an introduction to chapters 13-19 - This section of Joshua concerning the business of allotment may appear on the surface to be bare and uninteresting. The multitude of geographical terms contributes to the difficulty of its study. Two basic approaches to this problem will help the Bible student immeasurably. First, he must recognize that whatever is included in the biblical text—easy or difficult, colorful or mild, exhortation or history—is divinely intended for the reader's edification. In its context, small or

large, it has something to say about man or God. For example, one should see in the long listing of geographical names of allotment the blessed truth that God's promise of Canaan-rest to His people was a promise to the individual families as well as to Israel as a whole. Each family was to have its own home address, as it were. As William Blaikie has said, "On every one of the places ... faith may see inscribed, as in letters from heaven, the sweet word REST." The second approach which will make the study of this passage fruitful is the searching for the large underlying truths undergirding the numerous details, identifying the timeless universal principles involved. In the following pages of this commentary, attention is directed not so much to the details as to those large substratum truths. The reader is urged to look for other similar truths. While there is no record of any pageantry or colorful ceremony attending the drawing of lots for the land assignments for each tribe, the importance of such allotments cannot be overstated. This was the climactic moment in Israel's young life, when for the first time she could claim a land as her own, given by God. In the days of the patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph—the land was too large for total claim. When by propagation Israel grew to the size of a formidable nation, the people were dwelling in bondage in a foreign land, Egypt. The wilderness years were spent on the way to the land. The seven years of fighting after crossing the Jordan were used to conquer the land. Now the hour had come to claim the land, build homes, and live with God in peace. The day of land allotment must have been a happy day indeed! ([Joshua- Everyman's Bible Commentary: Rest-Land Won](#))

**David Howard** emphasizes the importance of the details in Joshua 13-19 to the tribes of Israel and to us today as we look back at these chapters. He asks "What is the importance of the mind-numbing detail of these lists? Why is it significant that there are certain patterns to them? There are several answers to these questions. First and foremost, as we have indicated, these lists are the heart of the book in that they "prove" to the Israelites and to the book's readers that God was being true to his promises. On one level, it was not enough simply to assert that God gave Israel the land, to state that he fulfilled his promises, and to ask the readers to take the author's word for it. For such promises as these, given so many centuries earlier, such simple assertions would have been profoundly anticlimactic. A deep sense of satisfaction would come if the reader could actually trace the fulfillment of these promises, city by city, hill by hill, wadi by wadi, border by border. It is akin to a good book that a person becomes engrossed in, which he or she is reluctant to have come to an end. The reader wants every word and detail to count. So too here." ([Joshua: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture Volume 5 The New American Commentary](#))

**Donald Campbell** - Someone has said, "Most of this long section reads like a real estate deed." And that is precisely what is found in these lengthy narrations—legal descriptions (after the manner of that ancient day) of the areas allocated to the 12 tribes. Title deeds are important documents so these should not be regarded as insignificant or superfluous....This was a climactic moment in the life of the young nation. After centuries in Egyptian bondage, decades in the barren wilderness, years of hard fighting in Canaan, the hour had arrived when the Israelites could at last settle down to build homes, cultivate the soil, raise families, and live in peace in their own land. The days of land allotment were a happy time for Israel. ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#))

**HCSB** has an instructional note - Although some of the initial descriptions of the allotments consider regions, most of the divisions of the tribal territories in these chapters appear in two forms of literature: **boundary descriptions** and **town lists**. The **boundary descriptions** normally identify themselves by using the term "border" and verbs such as "turn," "ascend," "descend," "curve" and other terms linking one town or natural feature with another along the line of the border. In defining the lands, God further extended His relationship into the particulars of the blessing of the land that He had given the Israelites. **Town lists** also appear in many tribal allotments as towns that belong to a tribe. Sometimes they are subdivided into regions of the tribe. This is true of the lengthiest **town list** in the allotment—that of Judah in Joshua 15:20-63. Such lists are common in administrative texts in the same period. These similarities suggest that this document had the importance and legal force of a treaty. As new towns were founded, they were added to the document throughout Israel's history. This procedure would retain the same boundaries but update the population centers in those tribal areas for as long as Israel possessed them. This was the literary embodiment of the physical witness that made up God's ongoing covenantal gift of the promised land to His people.

**Now Joshua was old and advanced in years when the LORD said to him-** It is good to be old and still hear from the LORD! The apportioning, as well as the subjugation, of the land had been included in the commission to Joshua (Joshua 1:6). "Joshua the aged soldier now became an administrator." (Campbell) Allotting the land would obviously be less stimulating than conquering the land, but both were part of God's marching orders to Joshua.

**THOUGHT** - It is notable that Joshua (ca 100) and Caleb (85) were both old but neither retired to plant grape vineyards and drink wine! They were spiritual men and their example should be followed by every spiritual man who is a follower of Christ! One is reminded of the words of the greater Joshua, Jesus in John 17:4 "I glorified You on the earth, **having accomplished the work** which You have given Me to do (cf Jn 4:34+)." The point being that Jesus **accomplished** God's work for Him. Joshua would now **accomplish** God's work for him (Joshua 1:6+). And by extension beloved you and I need to **accomplish** God's work He has given to each of us! (see Eph 2:10+, cf Mt 25:21, 23, Lk 19:17+). How are you doing? Are you redeeming the time, investing your life/time in eternity (Mt 6:20-21+) or are you wasting your life, toying with temporal "trinkets" and trivialities (like golf balls, fishing lures, etc), things that will pass away when this world pass away? (1Jn 2:17+).

**DON'T WASTE YOUR LIFE!  
IT IS YOUR "ONCE IN A LIFETIME" OPPORTUNITY!**

**You are old and advanced in years** - Even Yahweh thinks Joshua is old! Now that is really OLD! The table above makes an estimate that it took Israel 18 years to possess their possessions (but it was still incomplete even after Joshua's death as we learn in Judges 1:1-36+). If Joshua was 110 when he died (Josh 24:29), at this time he would be about 92 years old. I am 75 and consider that "old" but Joshua was really old! The KJV translates "**advanced in years**" as "stricken in years," which is certainly how my joints often feel!

**Rod Mattoon** - God was saying there was still unfinished business that needed to be taken care of. Is there any unfinished business that needs to be taken care of in your life? Are there any wrongs that need to be made right; someone that needs to be witnessed to; or the making of a will? The statement made in this verse reveals that age doesn't excuse us from serving God. We are to never spiritually retire. At his great age, Joshua still had more to do! Christians who stop praying, witnessing, Bible reading, and serving the Lord become cranky, critical, gripy, discouraged, depressed, and defeated. Keep going forward for Christ till you breathe your last breath! This verse also reveals that we are not to rest upon past achievements. Joshua had many victories, but there was more that needed to be done. It's better to rub out than to rust out. You may have been a Christian for years, but there is still more that needs to be done for God. There is land spiritually speaking that we need to conquer and possess. It is one thing to break down the walls of Jericho, it is another matter to enter and possess the city. It is one thing to fight a great, decisive battle with temptation. It is another matter to go on to maturity or perfection, and add to our faith knowledge, temperance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity. (see more from Mattoon below) ([Treasures From Joshua](#))

**Wiersbe** - The word inheritance is found over fifty times in these nine chapters and is a very important word. The Jews inherited their land. They didn't win their land as spoils of battle or purchase their land as in a business transaction. The Lord, who was the sole owner, leased the land to them. "The land must not be sold permanently," the Lord had instructed them, "because the land is Mine and you are but aliens and My tenants" (Lev. 25:23, NIV). Imagine having God for your landlord! The "rent" God required was simply Israel's obedience to His Law. As long as the Jewish people honored the Lord with their worship and obedience, He would bless them, make their land productive, and keep their nation at peace with their neighbors. When Israel agreed to the blessings and curses at Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal (Josh. 8:30-35), they accepted the conditions of what is called "[the Palestinian Covenant](#)" Their ownership of the land was purely the gracious act of God; but their possession and enjoyment of the land depended on their submission and obedience to the Lord. (See Lev. 26 and Deut. 27-30 for the details of the Palestinian Covenant.) The Promised Land was a gift of God's love; and if the Israelites loved the Lord, they would want to obey Him and please Him in the way they used His land (Deut. 4:37-39). Unfortunately, they eventually defied the Lord, disobeyed the Law, and defiled the land; and God had to chasten them in the land of Babylon.

**And very much of the land remains to be possessed** ([yarash](#)) - Note not just a small area, but **very much**! The point is that although Joshua had conquered and subdued the Canaanites in the Promised Land giving **the land had rest from war**, there were still Canaanites in the land. The enemy had been utterly destroyed in most of the battles, but still many Canaanites remained in the land. And so it was **land** that had to be **possessed**. The word **possessed** ([yarash](#)) means to take something from someone else and possess it for yourself (to occupy it by driving out previous tenants, and possessing in their place.) In short, the major war for the Promised Land was over, but there were still battles that each tribe must fight in order to dispossess the occupants and take full possession for themselves and their families.

**F B Meyer** - How significant the sentence, "**There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed**"! This is true of tracts of the Bible, seldom explored by ordinary Christians; of regions of experience, such as deliverance from the power of sin and dying with Christ; and of countries of the world, never yet trodden by the feet of the ambassadors of peace.

**Henry Morris** - There is no set "retirement age" for the servant of God, for there is always much land yet to be possessed for his Lord. Note Psalm 71:17-18; 92:12-14. There is still more study of God's Word, more people needing to hear about Christ, more people with whom to share God's comfort, more money to earn for His work, and certainly much yet to pray about.

**THOUGHT** - What the land was to Israel, Jesus is to us. We are to possess all of Him, and to keep pressing on to have all of Jesus (ED: WE DO THAT BY PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION ENERGIZED BY HIS WORD AND HIS SPIRIT). How much of Jesus do you have? How much of the Bible do you possess as yours? Do you walk in the blessing of leading others to Jesus Christ? Of answered prayer? Of meeting the needs of others in God's family? ([Guzik](#))

**John MacArthur** - When Joshua allotted areas to individuals and tribes, they bore the challenge to drive out lingering resisters; if not, they would disobey God's mandate to be resolute in conquest (Dt 11:22-23). Failure to do this thoroughly is a sad theme in Judges 1.

Deuteronomy 11:22-23 "For if you are careful to keep all this commandment which I am commanding you to do, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and hold fast to Him, 23 **then the LORD will drive out all these nations from before you**, and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than you.

That **very much of the land remains to be possessed** should not be a surprise, for in the book of Exodus we read God's promise to Moses and Israel...

"I will send My terror ahead of you, and throw into confusion all the people among whom you come, and I will make all your enemies turn their backs to you. 28 "I will send hornets ahead of you so that they will drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites, and the Hittites before you. 29 **"I will not drive them out before you in a single year, that the land may not become desolate and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you.** 30 **"I will drive them out before you little by little, until you become fruitful and take possession of the land.** 31 "I will fix your boundary from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the River Euphrates; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you will drive them out before you. 32 "You shall make no covenant with them or with their gods. 33 "They shall not live in your land, because they will make you sin against Me; for if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you."(Ex. 23:27-33)

In Judges we read a reason that God would drive out the enemy **little by little**...

Now these are the nations which the LORD left, **to test Israel by them** (that is, all who had not experienced any of the wars of Canaan; 2 only **in order that** (NOTE THIS PURPOSE CLAUSE) the generations of the sons of Israel **might be taught war**, those who had not experienced it formerly). 3 These nations are: **the five lords of the Philistines** and all the Canaanites and the Sidonians and the Hivites who lived in Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal-hermon as far as Lebo-hamath. 4 **They were for testing Israel, to find out if they would obey the commandments of the LORD**, which He had commanded their fathers through Moses. **(DID THEY PASS THE TEST?)** . 5 The sons of Israel lived among **(THIS IS THE ROOT PROBLEM - NOT ROOTING OUT THE PAGANS BUT LIVING AMONG THEM!)** the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; 6 and they took their daughters for themselves as wives (THEY FELL PREY TO THE LUST OF THE EYES!), and gave their own daughters to their sons, and **served their gods**. 7 The sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and **forgot the LORD their God** and **served the Baals and the Asheroth**. (Judges 3:1-4+)

**THOUGHT** - Temptations and trials detect the wickedness of the hearts of sinners; and strengthen the graces of believers today in their daily conflict with Satan, FLESH [the main, root problem], and this evil world. We must live in this world, but we are not of it and are forbidden to conform to it (Ga 6:14, 1Jn 2:15-17, Jas 4:4, Ro 12:2). **Friendship** of the world is more fatal than its **enmity**; the latter can only kill the body, but the former can kill our soul! (2Ti 4:10)!

**Believer's Study Bible** - Although Joshua had done a great work, great work remained to be done. This is always the case-**God's workers die, but His work goes on.**" As predicted in Ex. 23:27-33, the complete conquest was to be a gradual process. The area yet to be subdued by the tribes is described in Joshua 13:2-6, moving from S to N.

**Life Application Study Bible** - Joshua was getting old—he was between 85 and 100 years of age at this time. God, however, still had work for him to do. Our culture often glorifies the young and strong and sets aside those who are older. Yet older people are filled with the wisdom that comes with experience. They are very capable of serving if given the chance and should be encouraged to do so. Believers are never allowed to retire from God's service. Those past retirement age should not assume that age disqualifies or excuses them from serving God. What are our unconquered lands? They may be overseas missionary territories, new languages in which to translate the Bible, new missionary areas in our neighborhoods, interest groups or institutions that need redemptive work, unchallenged public problems or ethical issues, unconfessed sin in our lives, or underdeveloped talents and resources. What territory has God given you to conquer? This territory is your "Promised Land." Our inheritance will be a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21:1) if we fulfill the mission God has given us to do.

**Dale Ralph Davis** quips - Probably even the most stout-hearted reader of Joshua begins to crumble and nod as he enters chapters 13–21. Watching war movies always tends to be more exciting than participating in land surveys. Insomnia naturally thrives on accounts of dry riverbeds or crumbling walls. Somehow chasing a Canaanite out of the hill country is far more stimulating than plodding over his former land counting villages and tracing borders. Our problem is that we are too detached. Insofar as possible we must see this land distribution as an Israelite would have seen it...You might think these lists and descriptions terribly dull, but for the Israelite this material describes his inheritance. What's dull about that? Yahweh had promised 'to your seed I will give this land' (Gen. 12:7), and now Abraham's grandchildren (generations removed) could walk into wadis and count towns that form the particulars of that promise. ([Joshua: No Falling Words](#))

**ILLUSTRATION of old age** - The celebrated English novelist Somerset Maugham was being honored on the occasion of his eightieth birthday. After his friends had heaped praise upon him, he rose to give a speech. He began by saying, "There are many virtues to growing old," then he paused and looked down at the table. The pause grew uncomfortably long. Maugham fumbled with his notes, looked around the room, and shifted uneasily from one foot to the other as guests exchanged embarrassed glances. Then clearing his

throat Maugham said with a twinkle in his eye, "I'm just trying to remember what they are." (Cyril Barber - [Joshua: A Devotional Exposition](#))

**Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary** - Verses 1-6. At this chapter begins the account of the dividing of the land of Canaan among the tribes of Israel by lot; a narrative showing the performance of the promise made to the fathers, that this land should be given to the seed of Jacob. We are not to pass over these chapters of hard names as useless. Where God has a mouth to speak, and a hand to write, we should find an ear to hear, and an eye to read; and may God give us a heart to profit! Joshua is supposed to have been about one hundred years old at this time. It is good for those who are old and stricken in years to be put in remembrance of their being so. God considers the frame of his people, and would not have them burdened with work above their strength. And all people, especially old people, should set to do that quickly which must be done before they die, lest death prevent them, Ecclesiastes 9:10. God promise that he would make the Israelites masters of all the countries yet unsubdued, through Joshua was old, and not able to do it; old, and not likely to live to see it done. Whatever becomes of us, and however we may be laid aside as despised, broken vessels, God will do his own work in his own time. We must work out our salvation, then God will work in us, and work with us; we must resist our spiritual enemies, then God will tread them under our feet; we must go forth to our Christian work and warfare, then God will go forth before us.

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**Possessed** (03423) *yarash* to take possession of, inherit, dispossess, to drive out. Possession of the land was directly connected to a person's relationship with the Lord; breaking the covenantal relationship led to dispossession. But even in exile, Israelites awaited the day when they would repossess the land (Jer. 30:3).

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### GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 13](#)

1. **Joshua was old.** In all probability about a hundred, as he employed not far from seven years in the conquest of the land, and is supposed to have spent about one in dividing it, and he died about ten years after, aged one hundred and ten years, ch. 24:29

**Stricken in years.** Heb. בא בימים *bâ bãyâmim*, coming or entering into days. See Gen. 18:11.

**There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.** Heb. לרשתה *lerishtâh*, to possess it. This is mentioned to Joshua not as a reason for his continuing the war, but for suspending it, though to the Israelites the intimation would answer a different purpose. They were admonished by it that they were still to hold themselves in readiness for prosecuting the war in due time, and not to think of putting off the harness as long as there remained any land to be possessed. But as to Joshua, at his advanced age he could not expect to see an end of the war, and therefore it was expedient that he should lay aside other cares and make preparation at once for dividing the land among those tribes which had not yet received their inheritance. This work was to be done, and done speedily, and done, moreover, under the superintendence of Joshua. Consequently as he was now old, and not likely to continue long, he was to lose no time in setting about it. 'All people, but especially the aged, should set themselves to do that quickly which must be done before they die, lest death prevent them. Eccl. 9:10.' Henry.

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**Rod Mattoon** - God says, "There remaineth very much land to be possessed! For all of us there is much unoccupied territory in the Word of God.

- There are promises that we have not yet made our own.
- There are Biblical principles that we have not yet grasped with our minds and put into practice in our life.
- There are fields of truth the Holy Spirit is waiting to lead us.
- There are scriptural treasures yet to be discovered and dug up. Some of God's greatest treasures are not on the surface. The study of the Word of God will yield wonderful blessings.

There is also much territory in the land of Christian experience that needs to be possessed.

- The things we do know, have we fully believed?
- The things we believe, have we fully realized and understood?
- The things we realize, have we fully proved with our life?
- We have learned lessons on love, but have we the love that beareth all things, that never faileth?
- Have we learned to suffer long and be kind?
- We have received the white robes of righteousness, but have we put on the wedding robes? We have been cleansed and made holy, but have we the beauty of holiness in our life and the touch of His polishing and perfecting hand?
- We have experienced the joy of the Lord, but have we learned to count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations or do we glory in tribulations?
- We have answered prayers, but do we know a life of prayer, of asking, seeking, and knocking?
- You may have submitted to the will of God and have chosen His will, but do you delight in His will? Do you prove what is that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God?

There is land that needs to be possessed in the area of Christian service: classes need to be taught; songs need to be sung; buildings need built; rooms need to be cleaned; people need to be visited; tracts need to be passed out; Christians need to be encouraged; homes need to be opened to others; people need picked up for church; and folks need to be witnessed to. God wanted His people to go forward and claim their inheritance. In chapters 13-21, the word inheritance is used fifty times. The Jews inherited their land from the Lord. It wasn't purchased in a business transaction. The Lord leased the land to them. The Lord is the land lord of the land.

Leviticus 25:23—The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me.

The occupation of the land was a pure and gracious act of God. God was the landlord. The rent was the obedience of His people. The possession and enjoyment of the land depended upon their submission and obedience to the Lord. ([Treasures From Joshua](#))

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### **William Blaikie - The Lord said unto Joshua, Thou art old and stricken in years."**

To many men and women this would not be a welcome announcement. They do not like to think that they are old (**ED: I'M 75 AND I GET IT!**). They do not like to think that the bright, joyous, playful part of life is over, and that they are arrived at the sombre years when they must say, "There is no pleasure in them." Then, again, there are some who really find it hard to believe that they are old. Life has flown past so swiftly that before they thought it was well begun it has gone. But however much men may like to be young, and however much some may retain in old age of the feeling of youth, it is certain that the period of strength has its limit, and the period of life also, To Joshua the announcement that he was old and stricken in years does not appear to have brought any painful or regretful feeling.

Perhaps he had aged somewhat suddenly; his energies may have failed consciously and rapidly, after his long course of active and anxious military service. He may have been glad to hear God utter the word; he may have been feeling it himself, and wondering how he should be able to go through the campaigns yet necessary to put the children of Israel in full possession of the land.

**So Joshua finds that he is now to be relieved by his considerate Master of laborious and anxious service. Not of all service, but of exhausting service, unsuited to his advancing years. (ED: I UNDERSTAND, FOR AS I WRITE THESE COMMENTS AT AGE 75 LIFE IS LESS LABORIOUS AND ANXIOUS, ALBEIT NOT TOTALLY STRESS FREE). Joshua had been a right faithful servant; few men have ever done their work so well. He has led a most useful and loyal life, which there is some satisfaction in looking back on. No doubt he is well aware of unnumbered failings: "Who can understand his errors?" (Psalm 19:12KJV) **But he has the rare satisfaction — oh! Who would not wish to share it? — of looking back on a well-spent life, habitually and earnestly regulated amid many infirmities by regard to the will of God.****

Yet Joshua was not to complete that work to which he had contributed so much: **there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.**" At one time, no doubt, he thought otherwise, and he desired otherwise. When the tide of victory was setting in for him so steadily, and region after region of the land was falling into his hands, it was natural to expect that before he ended he would sweep all the enemies of Israel before him, and open every door for them throughout the land, even to its utmost borders. Why not make hay when the sun shone?

When God had found so apt an instrument for His great design, why did He not employ him to the end? If the natural term of Joshua's strength had come, why did not that God who had supernaturally lengthened out the day for completing the victory of Beth horon lengthen out Joshua's day, that the whole land of Canaan might be secured?

**Here comes in a great mystery of Providence.** Instead of lengthening out the period of Joshua's strength, God seems to have cut it short. We can easily understand the lesson for Joshua himself. Joshua must be made to feel — perhaps he needs this — that this enterprise is not his, but God's. And God is not limited to one instrument, or to one age, or to one plan. **Never does Providence appear to us so strange as when a noble worker is cut down in the very midst of his work.** A young missionary has just shown his splendid capacity for service, when fever strikes him low, and in a few days all that remains of him is rotting in the ground. "What can God mean?" we sometimes ask impatiently. "Does He not know the rare value and the extreme scarcity of such men, that He sets them up apparently just to throw them down?" But "God reigneth, let the people tremble." (Psalm 99:1KJV) All that bears on the Christian good of the world is in God's plan, and it is very dear to God, and "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." (Ps 116:15KJV) But He is not limited to single agents.

When Stephen died, He raised up Saul. For Wycliffe He gave Luther. When George Wishart was burnt He raised up John Knox. Kings, it is said, die, but the king never. The herald that announces "The king is dead," proclaims in the same breath, "God save the king!" God's workers die, but His work goes on. Joshua is super-annuated, so far as the work of conquest is concerned, and that work for a time is suspended. But the reason is that, at the

present moment, God desires to develop the courage and energy of each particular tribe. And when the time comes to extend still farther the dominion of Israel, an agent will be found well equipped for the service. From the hills of Bethlehem, a godly youth of dauntless bearing will one day emerge, under whom every foe to Israel shall be brought low, and from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, the entire Promised Land shall come under Israel's dominion. And the conquests of David will shine with a brighter lustre than Joshua's, and will be set, as it were, to music of a higher strain. Associated with David's holy songs and holy experience, and with his early life of sadness and humiliation, crowned at last with glory and honour, they will more fitly symbolize the work of the great Joshua, and there will then be diffused over the world a more holy aroma than that of Joshua's conquests, - a fragrance sweet and refreshing to souls innumerable, and fostering the hope of glory, - the rest that remaineth for the people of God, the inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. ([Blaikie's even longer introduction regarding Joshua](#))

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### **F B Meyer - Joshua 13:1 There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.**

#### **This is true in many directions:—**

Of the Bible. — How many pages of our Bibles are unpossessed! We have not underlined any verses in them, or put any marks in the margin to indicate that God has spoken through them to our souls. They are as clean as when they came from the printers. It is well sometimes to consider this, and to resolve to master some unfamiliar portions of God's Word, believing that no word of God is devoid of power. To many believers the Bible, which God intended for their possession, is yet an unexplored continent.

Of Doctrinal Truth. — Doctrine groups texts, and compares them. Doctrine is to isolated texts what natural laws are to particular facts. We should know the doctrines of the Bible. We should understand what is meant by Predestination; the unction of the Holy Ghost; and the Second Advent. How much unoccupied land there is here, which, if brought under cultivation, would yield grapes, and corn, and other produce for the refreshment and strength of the soul!

Of Spiritual Experience. — Talk with some deeply-taught saint, and you will see how little you have traversed of the good land beyond the Jordan, or know of its blessed extent. To know the length, and breadth, and depth, and height, of the love of Christ seems given to but few; but it need not be. There is no favoritism in the Kingdom which excludes some poor souls from the richer portions, and shuts them up to barrenness and a northern aspect. Rise, go through the land in the length and breadth of it; it is all yours; the gift of God in Jesus Christ; claim and possess it.

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**L E Maxwell** applies Joshua 13:1 to missions writing (excerpt) O fellow believer: "**There remains very much land yet to be possessed**" (Joshua 13:1). Let us lift up our eyes and behold the fields white unto harvest. We have dwelt at length upon the great stretches of territory untaken in our own lives. But we would fall woefully short of God's program and purpose in this chapter if we did not give our thought to the vast unoccupied fields in all the world. Oh, to get over the "civil war" that we may go into all the world and win for the Lamb the reward of His sufferings! The great Shepherd of the "other sheep" who commanded us, "Occupy till I come" must be in agony over those other sheep concerning whom He Himself said, "Them also I must bring." There is perhaps no single point upon which the church of Jesus Christ is so utterly disobedient to the command of her crucified Lord as upon the subject of "missions." The Canaanites of covetousness and laziness—the sins of omission are greater often than the sins of commission—have killed the forward march of the church. The church as a whole is "living after the flesh"—and dying, going into atrophy and death. From Dr. Glover's Progress of Worldwide Missions we would quote the following by a well-known missionary leader, the Rev. Charles R. Watson, President of the American University at Cairo:

The occupation of all the unoccupied fields is the distinctive and crowning challenge of this missionary age. Upon the church's acceptance of that challenge great issues seem to depend: issues affecting the vitality of the Christian Church, issues determining the welfare and happiness of millions of our fellow creatures, issues conditioning the lives of nations, issues upon which God Himself has been pleased to hang the unfolding of His eternal purposes in Christ. The unoccupied fields must be occupied, and what is the price of their occupation? The pathway which leads to their occupation lies across other unoccupied fields—great areas these—in our own lives and hearts, not yet surrendered to the will of Christ, not yet fully occupied by His Spirit, not yet touched by the flame of a perfect love and consecration. Only as He is permitted to fully occupy these nearer areas in our own lives will He be able to gain entrance into those more distant fields of the unoccupied world. ([Born Crucified - Chapter 11 - The Cross and Dying to the Old Nature](#))

#### **The Allotment of the Twelve Tribes"**

([Click here for another excellent map of the Tribal Allotments](#))

[Here is another excellent map of the Tribal Allotments](#)

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## Chart of the tribes of Israel/Jacob

By mother	By Jacob's blessing	By Moses' blessing	By Joshua Casting Lots
<b>Reuben by Leah</b> Gen. 29:32	Gen. 49:3-4	Deut. 33:6	Josh. 13:15-23
<b>Simeon by Leah</b> Gen. 29:33	Gen. 49:5-7	-----	Josh. 19:1-9
<b>Levi by Leah</b> Gen. 29:34	Gen. 49:5-7	Deut. 33:8-11	-----
<b>Judah by Leah</b> Gen. 29:35	Gen. 49:8-12	Deut. 33:8-11	Josh. 14:6-15:63
<b>Dan by Bilhah</b> Gen. 30:6	Gen. 49:16-18	Deut. 33:22	Josh. 19:40-48
<b>Naphtali by Bilhah</b> Gen. 30:8	Gen. 49:21	Deut. 33:23	Josh. 19:37-39
<b>Gad by Zilpah</b> Gen. 30:11	Gen. 49:19	Deut. 33:20-21	Josh. 13:24-28
<b>Asher by Zilpah</b>	Gen. 49:20	Deut. 33:24-25	Josh. 19:24-31
<b>Issachar by Leah</b> Gen. 30:18	Gen. 49:14-15	Deut. 33:18-19	Josh. 19:17-23
<b>Zebulun by Leah</b> Gen. 30:20	Gen. 49:13	Deut. 33:18-19	Josh. 19:10-16
<b>Joseph by Rachel</b> Gen. 30:24	Gen. 49:22-26	Deut. 33:13-17	Manasseh—Josh. 13:29-31; 17:1-13 Ephraim—Josh. 16:4-10
<b>Benjamin by Rachel</b> Gen. 35:18	Gen. 49:27	Deut. 33:12	Josh. 18:11-28

**Joshua 13:2 "This is the land that remains: all the regions of the Philistines and all those of the Geshurites;**

- **the land:** Ex 23:29-31 De 11:23,24 Jdg 3:1
- **all the regions:** Ge 10:14 26:1 Joe 3:4
- **Geshurites:** Jos 13:11,13 12:5 1Sa 27:8 2Sa 3:3 13:37,38 15:8
- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE LAND THAT REMAINS - Carta Bible Atlas, page 63

### THE LAND REMAINING TO BE POSSESSED/CONQUERED

**This is the land that remains** - The regions not yet **possessed** (occupied) were areas primarily on the fringes of the promised land, beginning first with a description of the areas in South and then toward the north (Josh 13:5 - [Lebo-hamath](#), is the most northern location in this description.) However, note in the map above (**THE LAND THAT REMAINS**), the unconquered territory in the coastal region which was occupied by the [Philistines](#) who would prove to be a [GIANT THORN in Israel's side](#) ( [Why were the Philistines and the Israelites always at war?](#)). While not shown on the map, the strategic city of [Jebus](#) (later [Jerusalem](#)) was not conquered and the [Jebusites](#) remained as a "thorn" (Joshua 15:63+). Finally, the area of [Geshur](#) was not conquered. Since God's promise had been given to Israel that they would occupy all the land (Ge 17:8), the failure to conquer and cast out all of the Canaanites was not so much that they "**COULD NOT**," but that they "**WOULD NOT**!"

**THOUGHT** - Beloved follower of Christ, what about your "promised land (life)"? Are you experiencing all the "land (life)" that God has promised you in Christ Jesus our Lord (Eph 1:3+, cf Col 3:4+)? What "Canaanites" (so to speak) in the "land of your heart" have yet to be conquered and cast out -- lust, anger, greed, jealousy, unforgiveness, envy, slander, drunkenness, etc (cf Gal 5:19-21+)? Whatever the "Canaanite" that is remaining in the "land of your heart," the reason you have yet to conquer it is not because you "**CAN NOT**" but because you

"**WILL NOT!**" Why do I say "WILL NOT?" Because of passages like 2 Peter 1:3-4: "seeing that His divine power ([dunamis](#) - think "dynamo, dynamite") has granted (perfect tense = given in the past and continuing into the present and future) to us **everything** (HOW MUCH?) **pertaining to life and godliness**, (DON'T MISS THE CRITICAL CONJUNCTION DESCRIBING THE MEANS OF PERTAINING EVERYTHING - IT IS) **through** the **true knowledge** ([epignosis](#)) of Him (THE BETTER WE KNOW HIM, THE BETTER WE CAN PARTAKE OF HIS PROVISIONS FOR LIFE AND GODLINESS - cf Dt 8:3+, Mt 4:4+, Dt 32:46,47+) Who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has **granted** (perfect tense) **to us His precious and magnificent promises**, so that (WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF HIS PROMISES?) by them you **may become partakers of the divine nature** (THIS IS ABUNDANT LIFE IN CHRIST - Jn 10:10b), having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust (cf 1Jn 2:17+). That said, we will always have the [fallen flesh](#) to contend with all the days of our life. However, enabled by God's Word of promise and provision of power through His indwelling Spirit, we can march through "the land of our heart" and conquer those individual "Canaanite tribes" (so to speak) one by one. But remember that although they may be defeated, unfortunately they are still "alive" and can still launch "surprise attacks" on the citadel of our heart when we least expect it (cf 1Pe 1:13+, 1Pe 2:11b+, Ro 6:11, 12, 13, 14+, Ro 13:11, 12, 13, 14+). But over time, as we avail ourselves of God's power and provision to put to death the sinful deeds of the flesh by the Spirit (Col 3:5NLT+, Ro 8:13b+), those individual "Canaanites" that were once powerful enemies, will gradually decrease in power as we continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2Pe 3:18+, that is as we progress in sanctification; see also [Expulsive Power of a New Affection](#)). And praise God that one day the "Canaanites" will be finally and fully be cast out of our heart, in that glorious moment when we see our Lord Jesus Christ face to face (1Cor 15:52+, 1Jn 3:2+, Phil 3:20-21+). Until that wonderful day we must choose daily to die to self (Mk 8:34, 35, 36+) by God's Spirit and enabled by the same Spirit (Php 2:13NLT+) to obey the command of the Captain of the host of the Lord (Joshua 5:13, 14, 15+ continued in Joshua 6:2+) to continually "agonize" and "**Fight** ([agonizomai present imperative](#)) the good fight of faith." (1Ti 6:12+) for the glory of the Lamb and the growth of the Kingdom of our God and Father. Amen.

**William MacDonald** - Joshua 13:2-6 describe portions in the southwest and in the northeast that were still inhabited by the heathen. We know also that the land eastward to the Euphrates had been promised to the Jews, but it has never yet been occupied by them. Under Solomon the kingdom did reach to that part of the Euphrates River in the northwest as far as lands under tribute were concerned, but if the entire river is meant as an eastern boundary it must still be a future event. ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**All the regions of the Philistines and all those of the Geshurites**- Both of these "-ites" were in southern Palestine. [See the discussion below](#) on the **Philistines**.

**Utley** on **Philistines** - The **Philistines** were apparently Greeks from the Aegean Islands. They were the only group of people in this part of the world who were uncircumcised. They were apparently a mercenary force who tried to attack Egypt in the twelfth century B.C. but were defeated. They then settled on the southern coast of Palestine. They had five major cities which are delineated in v. 3: Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. They were a major military problem throughout the period of the judges and even throughout the reign of Saul and David. The name "Palestine" comes from the word "Philistine."

**Constable** on **Philistines** - The **Philistines** were not native Canaanite peoples. They had migrated to Canaan from the northwest. They had by this time displaced the Canaanites in the southwest portion of the Promised Land. Because the land they occupied was part of what God had promised Israel the Israelites were responsible to drive them out too. The Israelites were not successful in doing this. The Philistines increased in power and influence over the Israelites eventually becoming the major enemy of Israel during Saul's reign. At this time, however, they were a smaller, secondary target of the Israelites.

The **Geshurites** are a bit more obscure ([SEE NOTE](#)) as there was another group referred to as Geshurites and it was in Geshur was a territory in the northern part of Bashan, which was allotted to the half-tribe of Manasseh, which settled east of the Jordan; but its inhabitants, the Geshurites, could never be expelled (Joshua 13:13). Several sources suggest this group of Geshurites is a different group located more to the South.

**Utley** has this note on **the Geshurites**" The Geshurites are mentioned in 12:5 but this is a different group with the same name. This same group appears in 13:11, 13, but it is also related to the one mentioned in 12:5. We learn from 1 Sam. 27:8 that Geshur is a tribe somewhere between Arabia and Philistia.

**Donald Campbell** - **Geshur** and **Maacah** (already mentioned in Joshua 12:5) were not defeated by the Israelites, and the reason for this is not given. These countries were located east and northeast of the Sea of Kinnereth (Sea of Galilee). ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#))

**Guzik** adds "Only two small tribes of peoples were not replaced by the Jewish tribes settling on the east side of the Jordan: the Geshurites and the Maachathites.. David later married a princess from Geshur, and his son Absalom was born of her (2 Samuel 3:3). Absalom returned to Geshur and used it as a place to plot against his father David (2 Samuel 13:37-38, 14:23, and 14:32).. The

Maachathites may have come from the Maachah mentioned in Genesis 22:24, who was a nephew of Abraham. Later, when Sheba rebelled against David, he fled and may have taken refuge in one of the cities of the Maachathites (2 Samuel 20:14–15).

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## GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 13](#)

**2. The land that yet remaineth.** That yet remaineth to be conquered.

**All the borders of the Philistines.** Lying on the southern coast of the Mediterranean. The Philistines are nowhere else mentioned among the devoted nations of Canaan, and the reason of their being enumerated here probably is, that their territories formerly belonged to the Canaanites, who were driven away and supplanted by them, Deut. 2:23. Viewed in this light, therefore, as being originally and legitimately the country of the Canaanites, the possessions of the Philistines were appointed to come into the hands of Israel.

**And all Geshuri.** There were two places of this name. The one probably intended here was situated in the half tribe of Manasseh, on the east of Jordan, and in the north-eastern quarter of the promised land. As the Geshurites were not extirpated by the Israelites they continued even in the time of Absalom to be governed by their own princes, one of whom, Talmai, had a daughter married to David, 2 Sam. 13:37.

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**Holman Bible Dictionary on Philistines** - One of the rival groups the Israelites encountered as they settled the land of Canaan. References to the Philistines appear in the Old Testament as well as other ancient Near Eastern writings. Philistine refers to a group of people who occupied and gave their name to the southwest part of Palestine. Ancient Egyptian records from the time of Merneptah and Ramses III referred to them as the "prst." Ancient Assyrian records include references to the Philistines in the terms Philisti and Palastu .

The origin and background of the Philistines had not been completely clarified. Ancient Egyptian records include the "prst" as part of a larger movement of people known as the Sea Peoples, who invaded Egypt about 1188 B.C. by land and by sea, battling the forces of Ramses III, who, according to Egyptian records, defeated them. The Sea Peoples, a massive group that originated in the Aegean area, included the Tjeker, the Skekelesh, the Denyen, the Sherden, and the Weshwesh as well as the "prst" or Pelesti, the biblical Philistines. As they moved eastward from the Aegean region, the Sea Peoples made war with people in their path including the Hittites in Anatolia and the inhabitants at sites in North Syria such as those at the site of Ugarit. According to biblical references, the homeland of the Philistines was Caphtor (Amos 9:7; Jeremiah 47:4 ). See Caphtor .

Philistines are first mentioned in the patriarchal stories (Genesis 21:32 ,Genesis 21:32,21:34 ), a reference which some suggest is anachronistic and others suggest refers to the migrations of an Aegean colony in the patriarchal period. The most dramatic phase of Philistine history begins in the period of the Judges when the Philistines were the principal enemy of and the major political threat to Israel. This threat is first seen in the stories of Samson (Judges 13-16 ). The threat intensified as the Philistines encroached on the territory of the tribe of Dan ultimately forcing Dan to move north (Judges 18:11 ,Judges 18:11,18:29 ). The threat reached crisis proportions in the battle of Ebenezer (1 Samuel 4:1-18 ), when the Israelites were soundly defeated and the ark of the covenant, brought over from Shiloh (1 Samuel 4:3-4 ), was captured. During the time of Samuel, the Israelites defeated the Philistines at times (1 Samuel 7:5-11; 1 Samuel 14:16-23 ), but, generally speaking, their advance against the Israelites continued. Saul not only failed to check their intrusion into Israelite territory but in the end lost his life fighting the Philistines at Mount Giboa (1 Samuel 31:1-13 ). David finally checked the Philistine advance at Baal-perazim (2 Samuel 5:17-25 ).

Several features of Philistine life and culture are reflected in the Old Testament. Politically, the Philistines had a highly organized city-state system comprised of five towns in southwest Palestine: Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron (1 Samuel 6:17 ). Each of the city-states was ruled by a "lord" (1 Samuel 6:18 ), a kinglike figure. Gath was perhaps the major city of this Philistine pentahypolis, and as such, served as the hub of the city-state system.

The Philistines were experts in metallurgy, the skill of processing metals (1 Samuel 13:19-23 ). Philistine expertise in this area put the Israelites at a decided disadvantage in their struggles with the Philistines (1 Samuel 13:22 ). See Minerals and Metals .

The Philistines had a highly trained military organization. Sea and land battles between the Egyptians and Sea Peoples are depicted on large panels at the temple of Ramses III at Medinet Habu in Thebes. The Philistines were in ships designed with a curved keel and the head of a bird on the bow. Philistine warriors wore a plumed or feathered headdress, a feature which added height to their physical appearance. On land, the Philistines were equipped with horses and chariots, numerous foot soldiers, and archers (1 Samuel 13:5; 1 Samuel 31:3 ). The armor of Philistine soldiers included bronze helmets, coats of mail, leg protectors, spears, and shields (1 Samuel 17:5-7 ). The story of Goliath indicates that at times the Philistines used individual combat (1 Samuel 17:1 ). Most likely, the Philistine warrior went through a cursing ritual just prior to the confrontation (1 Samuel 17:43 ). David, who recognized the military expertise of the Philistines, selected Cherethites (Cretans) and Pelethites (Philistines) (1 Samuel 20:23 ) for his palace guard or mercenary army. This segment of the army provided protection for David and his family during times of revolt. See Arms and Armor .

While our information on Philistine religion is limited, three Philistine gods are mentioned in the Old Testament—Dagon, Ashtoreth, and Baalzebub. Dagon appears to be the chief god of the Philistines. Temples of Dagon were located at Gaza (Judges 16:21-30 ) and Ashdod (1 Samuel 5:1-7 ). Ashtoreth, the fertility goddess of the Canaanites, was most likely adopted by the Philistines. Apparently, the Philistines had Ashtoreth temples at Beth-shan (1 Samuel 31:10 NIV) and, according to Herodotus, at Ashkelon (Herodotus 1:105). Baalzebub, the Philistine god whose name means “lord of the flies,” was the god of Ekron ( 2 Kings 1:1-16 ). Most likely the Philistines worshiped Baalzebub as a god who averted pestilence or plagues.

Archaeological excavations have brought to light many features of the material culture of the Philistines. The distinctive Philistine pottery which reflects styles and designs adopted and adapted from other cultures has been found at many sites. The major types of Philistine pottery are the so-called beer jug with a spouted strainer on the side, the crater bowl, the stirrup jar, and the horn-shaped vessel. The pottery was often decorated with red and black painted designs including geometric designs often consisting of circles and cross halving and stylized birds. Clay coffins were used by the Philistines for burials. These distinctive coffins, called “anthropoid coffins” because they were made in the shape of a human body, had lids decorated with the physical features of the upper part of a human being, features such as a head, arms, and hands.

Recent excavations especially at the sites of Ashdod, tel-Qasile, tel Jemmeh, and tel Mor have added significantly to our understanding of the Philistine culture. The excavations at tel Qasile revealed a Philistine iron smeltery, a Philistine temple, offering stands, and other vessels used in religious rituals as well as many other artifacts and installations. A new series of excavations is under way at Ashkelon. The current excavations will add yet a new dimension to our understanding of the Philistines. The political influence of the Philistines was most prominent between 1200,1000 B.C., but their influence continues through the use of the name Palestine, a name derived from “Philistine.” See Palestine . See Gaza , Gath , Ekron , Ashdod , Ashkelon . LaMoine DeVries

#### Related Resources:

- [Who were the Philistines? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why were the Philistines and the Israelites always at war? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Joshua 13:3 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**

- **Shihor which is east of Egypt** Jer 2:18
- **is counted:** Ge 10:15-19 Nu 34:2-14
- **five lords of the Philistines:** Jdg 3:3 1Sa 6:4,16,17 Zep 2:4,5 The Philistine were not descended from Canaan, but from Mizraim, the son of Ham; (compare Ge 10:6 with Josh 13:13;) yet they were numbered with the Canaanites in this distribution.
- **Avites:** De 2:23, Avim
- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Genesis 10:6 The sons of [Ham](#) were Cush and Mizraim and Put and Canaan.

### DESCRIPTION OF SOUTHERN REGIONS NOT FULLY CONQUERED

**From the Shihor** ([see ISBE note](#)) which is east of Egypt, even as far as the border of [Ekron](#) to the north ([see Ekron on this map](#)) - This is clearly the southern region of Palestine.

**Shihor** is used 4x in the OT and two are translated "Nile" (Jos. 13:3; 1 Chr. 13:5; Isa. 23:3; Jer. 2:18)

**It is counted as Canaanite** The Philistines were not descended from Canaan, but from [Mizraim](#), (Ge 10:6) the son of [Ham](#); yet they were numbered with the [Canaanites](#) in this distribution.

**The five lords of the Philistines: the Gazite, the Ashdodite, the Ashkelonite, the Gittite**(inhabitant of Gath), **the Ekronite; and the Avvite** - See [note above](#) on **the five lords of the Philistines**. This is the first mention of the 5 cities of the Philistines. These "**ites**" were the inhabitants of each of their respective cities ([click this map](#) and note **Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon** were on the southern coast and **Gath and Ekron** were more inland but still toward the southern portion of Palestine). The **Avvites** (Avim) are described in Dt 2:23 "And the **Avvim**, who lived in villages as far as Gaza, the Capthorim who came from Capthor, destroyed them and lived in their place."

Texas has a litter campaign called [DON'T MESS WITH TEXAS](#) ([see sign](#)). There may have been some signs at the outskirts of each of these Philistine cities saying: "Don't mess with Gath, Ekron, Ashkelon, Gaza, Ashdod. Make a move and make my day."

**The five lords of the Philistines** were composed of

- (1) [Gaza](#) ([See the map](#)), strategically located a few miles from the Mediterranean and controlling the Maritime Plain and caravan routes to Egypt and Arabia.
- (2) [Ekron](#). This was a very wealthy market in the valley of Sorek, close to Danite territory.
- (3) [Ashdod](#) was on the main road to Joppa and lay E. of Lydda.
- (4) [Ashkelon](#) was a strong fort on the coast, controlling principal caravan routes.
- (5) [Gath](#) was N.E. of Gaza and bordered on the [Shephelah](#) ([map](#)).

**Avvite** (see [Wikipedia on Avim](#)) - The early inhabitants of the southern extremity of Canaan afterward occupied by the Philistines (Deuteronomy 2:23; compare Joshua 13:3 , Joshua 13:4 , the King James Version "Avim," ā'vim ). Avvites of Philistia in the Old Testament were a people dwelling in Hazerim, or "the villages" or "encampments", on the south-west corner of the sea-coast. **All 5 mentions of Avvites** - Dt 2:23 Josh 13:3 Josh 18:23 2 Ki 17:24 2 Ki 17:31

[William Blakie](#) writes on the territory of the Philistines - This well defined country consisted mainly of a plain "remarkable in all ages for the extreme riches of its soil; its fields of standing corn, its vineyards and olive yards, are incidentally mentioned in Scripture (Judges 15:5); and in the time of famine the land of the Philistines was the hope of Palestine (2 Kings 8:2). . . . It was also adapted to the growth of military power; for while the plain itself permitted the use of war chariots, which were the chief arm of offence, the occasional elevations which rise out of it offered secure sites for towns and strongholds. It was, moreover, a commercial country; the great thoroughfare between Phoenicia and Syria on the north and Egypt and Arabia on the south. Ashdod and Gaza were the keys of Egypt, and commanded the transit trade, and the stores of frankincense and myrrh which Alexander captured in the latter place prove it to have been a depot of Arabian produce." In many respects it would have been a great boon for the Israelites if Joshua had conquered a people that were so troublesome to them as the Philistines were for many a day. What Joshua left undone, Saul began, but failed to achieve, and at last David accomplished. The Geshurites were subdued with the Amalekites while he was dwelling at Ziklag as an ally of the Philistines (1 Samuel 27:8), and the Philistines themselves were brought into subjection, and had to yield to Israel many of their cities (1 Samuel 7:14; 2 Samuel 8:1, 2 Samuel 8:12).

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#### GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 13](#)

**3. Sihor.** In all probability a name of the river Nile. Heb. שִׁיחֹר Shihor. The word in the original has the import of black, and is applied to the Nile from its color when it brings down the slime and mud by which Egypt is rendered fertile. Hence it implies the black, muddy, or turbid river. The Greeks give to the Nile the name of μέλας black, and the Latins occasionally called it Melo (Serv. ad Virg. Geor. 4. 291). It was called Siris by the Ethiopians, the affinity of which with Sihor is obvious. The version of Jerome renders the present passage, 'From the turbid river which irrigates Egypt,' and 'the seed of Sihor,' Is. 23:3, it also renders 'the seed of Nilus.' It is not to be denied that there are peculiar difficulties in making the Nile the southern boundary of Canaan, as the promised possession of the Israelites, but the difficulties in any other view are in our opinion still greater.

**Unto the borders of Ekron.** One of the five lordships—Gaza, Ashdod, Askalon, Gath, and Ekron—belonging to the Philistines, and the most northern of all the districts they possessed, its territory being the border of the land of Judah. The city of Ekron was situated about thirty-four miles west of Jerusalem, ten miles north-east of Ashdod, nine miles west by north of Gath, and ten miles east of the shore of the Mediterranean. It is particularly mentioned in Scripture as the seat of the idolatrous worship of Baalzebub, or the 'Lord of flies,' 2 Kings 1:2, but the Divine prediction against it, that 'Ekron should be rooted up,' Zeph. 2:4, has long since been accomplished, not even a single ruin of it remaining to mark the place where it stood. Am. 1:8.

**Which is counted to the Canaanites.** Because the original possessors of this country were the descendants of Canaan, the youngest son of Ham. The Philistines sprung from Misraim, the second son of Ham, and having dispossessed the Avites, or Avim, from the places they held in this land, dwelt in their stead. See Gen. 10:13, 14.

**Five lords.** Petty princes. The term is put for the lordships themselves, just as king is often used for kingdom. The original סרנאים sarnaim, princes, literally signifies axles; and so the Arab, for chief magistrate is Katbun, axis; because public affairs and the people did, as it were, revolve round and depend upon him, as the parts of a wheel upon its axis. See Note on ch. 9:4.

**Also the Aviles.** The remnant of the tribe or clan of the Avims said in Deut. 2:23, to have been expelled by the Caphthorim. The scattered relics of this people remained mixed up with the five Philistine lordships above-mentioned.

Joshua 13:4 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 [Amorit](#);

- **the land of:** Jos 10:40 11:3 12:7,8
- **Aphek:** Jos 19:30 1Sa 4:1
- **Amorites:** Jdg 1:34-36
- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DESCRIPTION MOVES FROM SOUTH TO NORTH

**To the south, all the land of the Canaanite** - This phrase actually goes better with the preceding passage which was descriptive of the southern regions that remained to be conquered. The NLT has "in the south also remains to be conquered."

The **Canaanites** are mentioned over 150 times in the Bible. They were a wicked, idolatrous people descended from Noah's grandson Canaan, who was a son of Ham (Genesis 9:18). Canaan was [cursed](#) because of his and his father's sin against Noah (Genesis 9:20–25). In some passages, *Canaanites* specifically refers to the people of the lowlands and plains of Canaan (Joshua 11:3); **in other passages, *Canaanites* is used more broadly to refer to all the inhabitants of the land**, including the Hivites, [Girgashites](#), Jebusites, Amorites, Hittites, and [Perizzites](#) (see Judges 1:9–10). The land of Canaan was the land God [promised](#) to give to Abraham's descendants (Genesis 12:7). The Canaanites are described in the Bible as a large and fierce people, not easily defeated, so the Israelites would need divine help to come against them, defeat them, and take their land away. God promised Moses and Joshua that help (Joshua 1:3).

**And Mearah** (means "cave" see [note](#)) **that belongs to the Sidonians**, (Phoenician territory) **as far as Aphek, to the border of the Amorite** - NLT has "In the north, the following area has not yet been conquered: all the land of the Canaanites, including Mearah (which belongs to the Sidonians), stretching northward to Aphek on the border of the Amorites." The NLT paraphrase is accurate because these locations are in the northern part of Palestine, as are the places described in Josh 13:5. The [Sidonians](#) lived north on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea in the location of [Sidon](#), with [Tyre](#) to the south and Lebanese capital [Beirut](#) to the north both about 25 miles away. **Aphek** is north of the city of Dor and close to the coast as well.

[Holman Bible Dictionary](#) (9x - Jos. 12:18; Jos. 13:4; Jos. 19:30; Jdg. 1:31; 1Sa 4:1; 1Sa 29:1; 1Ki. 20:26; 1Ki. 20:30; 2Ki. 13:17) on **Aphek** - Place name meaning "bed of brook or river" or "fortress." 1. City whose king Joshua defeated (Joshua 12:18 ), where Philistine armies formed to face Israel in days of Samuel (1 Samuel 4:1 ) resulting in Philistine victory and capture of Israel's ark of the covenant. Philistine armies including David and his men gathered in Aphek to fight Saul. The Philistine commanders forced Achish to send David back from battle (1 Samuel 29:1 ). Eventually the Philistines defeated Israel, bringing death to Saul and Jonathan. Aphek is located at modern Tell Ras elAin near the source of the Yarkon River in the Sharon plain northeast of Joppa. Egyptian execration texts from about 1900 B.C. apparently refer to Aphek. Aphek became known as Antipatris in the New Testament era. See Joshua 13:4 ). This may be modern Afqa, fifteen miles east of ancient Byblos and 23 miles north of Beirut, Lebanon. 3. City assigned to Asher (Joshua 19:30 ) but not conquered (Judges 1:31 ). This may be modern Tell Kerdanah three miles from Haifa and six miles southeast of Acco. 4. City east of Jordan near the Sea of Galilee where Benhadad led Syria against Israel about 860 but met defeat as a prophet predicted for Israel (1 Kings 20:26-30 ). A wall of Aphek fell on 27,000 Syrians (1 Kings 20:30 ). Also Elisha promised Joash victory over the Syrians in Aphek (2 Kings 13:17 ).

[Mearah](#) - Place name meaning, "cave." Part of the territory left unconquered following Joshua's conquest. The site is perhaps the caves called Mugar Jezzini located east of Sidon (Joshua 13:4 ).

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**4. From the south, &c.** The whole maritime country from the southern limits here mentioned, as far north as to Sidon and some of the Amoritic possessions in that quarter, is hereby made over in promise to Israel. Joshua himself does not appear to have made any conquests on the sea-coast.

Mearah. Or, Heb. 'the cave,' by which Le Clerc understands the mountainous tract of Upper Galilee, sometimes called the cave-country of the Sidonians, abounding in caves and fastnesses, which served as sheltering places in time of war, and as asylums also for roving bands of marauders. Josephus often speaks of such places in the bounds of the Holy Land; and the Maronite monks of Canobin assured M. de la Roque, that among the mountains between which the river Kadisha runs, there were not less than eight hundred caves or grottos. Others suppose it to have been a single large and remarkable cave between Sarepta and Sidon, described by William, Bishop of Tyre. This, however, is less likely.

### QUESTION - [Who were the Canaanites?](#)

**ANSWER** - The **Canaanites** were a group of ancient people who lived in the [land of Canaan](#) on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Canaan is described in the Bible as extending from Lebanon toward the Brook of Egypt in the south and the Jordan

River Valley in the east. In the Bible, notably in Genesis 10 and Numbers 34, this was called the “land of Canaan” and occupies the same area that is occupied by modern Lebanon and Israel, plus parts of Jordan and Syria.

The **Canaanites** are mentioned over 150 times in the Bible. They were a wicked, idolatrous people descended from Noah’s grandson Canaan, who was a son of Ham (Genesis 9:18). Canaan was [cursed](#) because of his and his father’s sin against Noah (Genesis 9:20–25). In some passages, *Canaanites* specifically refers to the people of the lowlands and plains of Canaan (Joshua 11:3); in other passages, *Canaanites* is used more broadly to refer to all the inhabitants of the land, including the Hivites, [Girgashites](#), Jebusites, Amorites, Hittites, and [Perizzites](#) (see Judges 1:9–10).

The land of Canaan was the land God [promised](#) to give to Abraham’s descendants (Genesis 12:7). The Canaanites are described in the Bible as a large and fierce people, not easily defeated, so the Israelites would need divine help to come against them, defeat them, and take their land away. God promised Moses and Joshua that help (Joshua 1:3).

After the Exodus, when the Lord told Moses to invade Canaan, Moses sent a group of spies into the land of Canaan to see what the people were like. The spies came back with a report that was both encouraging and daunting. The fruit of the land was huge—it took two men to carry back one cluster of grapes (Numbers 13:23)—and the land was bountiful in many other ways. However, the Canaanites were strong, and the cities were large and fortified. Also, the Israelite spies had seen what they described as Nephilim and the [descendants of Anak](#) there (Numbers 13:28, 33)—next to these fierce people, the Israelites saw themselves as “grasshoppers” (verse 33). In the end, the Israelites were so afraid of the Canaanites that they refused to go into the land God had promised to them. Only Joshua and Caleb were confident that God would help them defeat the Canaanites. Because of their unwillingness to trust God, that generation of Israelites was denied entry into Canaan (Numbers 14:30-35).

After Moses’ death, Joshua was called by God to lead the people of Israel through the Jordan River and into the Promised Land. The first city they came to was Jericho, a strong-walled city of the Canaanites. Joshua believed God and told the people that God would drive the Canaanites out of the land so that Israel could take the land of Canaan (Joshua 3:10). The fall of Jericho was a supernatural event, as God overthrew that city (Joshua 6). This victory was a sign to the people of Israel and to the people of Canaan that God had given the land of Canaan to the Israelites.

Despite a long campaign against the inhabitants of Canaan, there remained several pockets of Canaanites in Israel after the land had been divided among the twelve tribes (Judges 1:27–36). Some of the Canaanites who remained in Israel were pressed into forced labor, but many strongholds remained in the land. The partial obedience of Israel, resulting in these Canaanite citadels, caused much trouble throughout the time of [the Judges](#). ([GotQuestions.org](#))

**Canaanite** - 69x - Gen. 10:18; Gen. 10:19; Gen. 12:6; Gen. 13:7; Gen. 15:21; Gen. 24:3; Gen. 24:37; Gen. 34:30; Gen. 38:2; Gen. 46:10; Gen. 50:11; Exod. 3:8; Exod. 3:17; Exod. 6:15; Exod. 13:5; Exod. 13:11; Exod. 23:23; Exod. 23:28; Exod. 33:2; Exod. 34:11; Num. 13:29; Num. 14:25; Num. 14:43; Num. 14:45; Num. 21:1; Num. 21:3; Num. 33:40; Deut. 1:7; Deut. 7:1; Deut. 11:30; Deut. 20:17; Jos. 3:10; Jos. 5:1; Jos. 7:9; Jos. 9:1; Jos. 11:3; Jos. 12:8; Jos. 13:3; Jos. 13:4; Jos. 16:10; Jos. 17:12; Jos. 17:13; Jos. 17:16; Jos. 17:18; Jos. 24:11; Jdg. 1:1; Jdg. 1:3; Jdg. 1:4; Jdg. 1:5; Jdg. 1:9; Jdg. 1:10; Jdg. 1:17; Jdg. 1:27; Jdg. 1:28; Jdg. 1:29; Jdg. 1:30; Jdg. 1:32; Jdg. 1:33; Jdg. 3:3; Jdg. 3:5; 2 Sam. 24:7; 1 Ki. 9:16; 1 Chr. 2:3; Ezr. 9:1; Neh. 9:8; Neh. 9:24; Ezek. 16:3; Obad. 1:20; Zech. 14:21

### **Joshua 13:5 and the land of the Gebalite, and all of Lebanon, toward the east, from Baal-gad below Mount Hermon as far as Lebo-hamath.**

- **Gebalite:** 1Ki 5:18; Ps 83:7; Eze 27:9
- **Lebanon:** De 1:7; 3:25
- **Baal-gad:** Jos 12:7
- **below Mount Hermon:** Jos 11:17
- **as far as Lebo-hamath:** Nu 34:8; Isa 10:9; Am 6:2
- **[Joshua 13 Resources](#)** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**and the land of the Gebalite** (see [map and note](#)) - This describes northern Palestine along the seacoast. **Gebal** is from the word *gabal* which means to set bounds or border.

**Holman on Gebal** - Seaport known to Greeks as [Byblos](#) (on the list of one of the [oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world](#)) whose help for Tyre Ezekiel described (Ezekiel 27:9). Mentioned in Egyptian texts before 2,000 B.C. and in many Egyptian and Assyrian texts through the centuries, Gebal was located at modern Dschebel about 25 miles north of Beirut. It was the most famous of the Syrian ports. It belonged to land that remained for Joshua to conquer (Joshua 13:5).

**Utley** on “**the land of the Gebalite**” This is the city of Gebal, which later became [Byblos](#), which later became famous for its writing materials (i.e., parchment, cf. 1 Kgs. 5:18; Ezek. 27:9). We get the English terms “book” and “bible” from this city.

**TSK** note on **Gebal** - Probably the inhabitants of the country, around Gebal, (Eze 27:9,) or [Byblos](#), as the LXX. render, a city of Phoenicia, situated on the Mediterranean, between Sidon and Tripoli, on the north of the river Adonis. It is now called Gibyle, of Djebail, situated about a day's journey south of Tripoli. Its walls are about a mile in circumference, with square towers about every forty yards' distance. Anciently it must have been a place of no mean extent and of considerable beauty, from the ruins still visible.

And all of [Lebanon](#) ([map](#)), toward the east, from [Baal-gad](#) below [Mount Hermon](#) ([map](#) or [here as the most northern point](#))

As far as **Lebo-hamath** - This is the northern limit of the Promised Land. **Lebo-hamath** means “entrance to or to come to Hamath.”

**Kitto** on **Baal-gad** - Ba'al-Gad, a city 'in the valley of Lebanon under Mount Hermon' (Joshua 11:17; Joshua 12:7). We are also informed that among those parts of Palestine which were unsubdued by the Hebrews at the death of Joshua, was 'all Lebanon towards the sun-rising, from Baal-gad, under Mount Hermon unto the entering into Hamath' (Joshua 13:5).

**Utley** on “**Baal-gad**” It is obvious from the listing of these towns that fertility worship was the main religion of the Canaanites. The term “Ba'al” is a Hebrew word which means “master,” “owner,” “lord,” or “husband.” The female goddess is called Ashtaroth (cf. v. 12). See note at 11:17. For an excellent discussion of the Canaanite religion, see *Archaeology and Religion of Israel* by William F. Albright, published by Anchor Books.

**Utley** on **Lebo-hamath** - This phrase is made up of the PREPOSITION and a proper name (i.e., fortress”). Hamath was a kingdom (cf. 2Sa. 8:9) and represented the northern limit of the Promised Land (cf. 1 Kgs. 8:65; 1 Chr. 8:4).

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**The land of the Giblites.** The name of a people dwelling in Gebal, near Sidon. 1 King 5:18; Ezek. 27:9. Their land was not given to the Israelites, because it lay without the precincts of Canaan. From among this people, Solomon employed a number of artists in the erection of the temple, 1 Kings 5:18. They were also famed for ship-building, Ezek. 27:9. It is supposed by many that the modern Byblus is the same as the ancient Gebal. They were certainly situated in the same region.

**Joshua 13:6** "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.

- **Misrephoth-maim:** Jos 11:8
- **I will drive them out:** Jos 23:13 Ge 15:18-21 Ex 23:30-31 Jdg 2:21-23
- **only allot it to Israel for an inheritance :** Jos 14:1-2
- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### GOD TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

All the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon as far as [Misrephoth-maim](#), ([map of probable location](#)) all the [Sidonians](#) - [Misrephoth-maim](#) marks the southern boundary of the [Sidonians](#), who had not been driven out by Joshua. In other words it is near the boundary between the northern territory of the Tribes of Israel and the Sidonians. [Misrephoth-maim](#) is the place to which Joshua chased the various tribes, which were confederated under Jabin, after their defeat at the waters of Merom (Joshua 11:8).

**Hill country** - This areas is (1) north of the [Negev/Negeb](#), (2) east of the [Shephelah](#) ([see location on map](#)), (3) west of the wilderness of Judah and (4) south of Jerusalem ([Look at this map](#) where you will find each of the aforementioned sites - the "hill country" is in the midst of these 4 sites). The hill country became home to a large number of Judahites and includes the central mountainous tract of Palestine reaching from the plain of Jezreel on the N. to the [Negeb](#) or dry country in the S.; the [Shephelah](#) ([see location on map](#)) or lowlands of the southwest and; the midbar or moorland, and the ['arabah](#) ([see location on map](#)) or steppes of the S. E.

**Utley**- “as far as **Misrephoth-maim, all the Sidonians**” This place name seems to refer to “burning water” or “hot springs” (BDB 977). From the same root come the angels called seraphim (i.e., “burning ones”). The fact that only Sidon is mentioned and not Tyre (cf. 19:29) points to the early date for this account (cf. R. K. Harrison, Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 672).



## See excellent maps describing the regions of the Promised Land from North to South

1. [Northern Coastal Plains - Jezreel Valley, Galilee and Bashan, Mount Hermon = most northern point](#)
2. [Plain of Dor, Plain of Sharon, Samaria, Jordan Valley, and Gilead.](#)
3. [Philistine Plain, Shephelah, Judah, and the Dead Sea](#)
4. [Arabah, Negeb, Wildernesses of Zin and Paran](#)

**I will drive them out from before** ([paniym/pane](#) - in the face of) **the sons of Israel** - God's promise to drive out the enemies was not a "Carte Blanche" for the tribes of Israel, but a call to obey the LORD and walk in His laws (cf Dt 10:12-16+, Read Dt 6:1-5+ especially last part of Dt 6:1) However the "I will" promise clearly speaks of Yahweh's faithfulness to keep His covenant cut with Abram/Abraham.

Genesis 15:18-21+ On that day **the LORD made a covenant with Abram**, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates: 19 the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite 20and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the [Rephaim](#) 21 and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite."

Exodus 23:30-31+"I will drive them out before you little by little, until you become fruitful and take possession of the land. 31 "I will fix your boundary from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the River Euphrates; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you will drive them out before you."

**THOUGHT** - God is a covenant keeping God so if you are in the New Covenant by grace through faith, God will keep you in that covenant forever and ever. Amen. You can have complete assurance of salvation, not because it depends on your faithfulness (for we all sin and thus are unfaithful many times in our lives), but because it depends on the faithfulness of God! YOU CANNOT LOSE YOUR SALVATION DEAR BELIEVER. ANY TEACHING THAT SAYS YOU CAN IS A FALSE TEACHING AND AN AFFRONT THE THE OMNIPOTENCE AND FAITHFULNESS OF YAHWEH!

A corollary truth from God's promise to Israel is that while the believer's eternal security is sure, the experience of divine blessings in this short life on earth is contingent upon obedience, obedience that is now possible because of His indwelling Spirit Who continually energizes our heart giving us the desire to obey and the power to obey (cf Php 2:13NLT+).

**Utley**- "I will drive them out before the sons of Israel" YHWH takes full responsibility for the conquest of Canaan (cf. Exod. 34:24; Lev. 20:24; Num. 32:21; 33:53; Deut. 1:39; 4:38; 5:31; 9:4, 5, 6; 11:23, 31; 12:1; 15:4; 16:20; 18:12; Josh. 3:10; 13:6). The VERB (BDB 439, KB 441, Hiphil IMPERFECT) basically means "take possession of" or "dispossess."

In some of Joshua's last words to Israel, he gave a sobering (AT LEAST IT SHOULD HAVE HAD THAT EFFECT!) "prophetic warning"

For if you ever go back and cling to ([dabaq](#) = "stick like glue!" - Ge 2:24 - "joined") 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 (THE NORTHERN 10 TRIBES "PERISHED" TO ASSYRIA IN 722 BC, THE SOUTHERN 2 TO BABYLON IN 586 BC). (Joshua 23:12-13)

**Only allot it to Israel for an inheritance as I have commanded you**- In the next verse Yahweh begins to give the details of the inheritance.

Joshua 14:1-2 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.

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**Them will I drive out.** The original is emphatic; 'It is I that will do it; I who have all power, and am ever faithful; I who have promised, and can and will perform.' Chal. 'I will do it by my Word;' i. e. by my eternal Word, the Captain of the Lord's hosts. This, however, like other similar declarations, is to be understood conditionally. God never promised to put them in possession of the whole land, but upon condition of their fidelity to him. If they failed in obedience, they would fail in becoming masters of the country. Accordingly we find that they never did actually possess the whole land here assigned to them. The Sidonians were never expelled by the Israelites, and were only brought into a state of comparative subjection in the days of David and Solomon. Joshua, however, notwithstanding the cavils of

infidels, actually did all that it was promised he should do. God never said that he should conquer all the land, but simply that he should bring Israel into it, and divide it among them, both which he did, and procured them footing by his conquests sufficient to have enabled them to establish themselves in it for ever. Their failure to do so was owing wholly to themselves. So we must work out our salvation, depending upon God to work in us, and to work with us. We must resist our spiritual enemies, and look to God to trample them under our feet.

**Only divide thou it by lot.** Heb. הפילה happilēyah, cast it, cause it to fall. See Note on Gen. 25:18. A phraseology derived from the casting of the lots by which its distribution was governed. Joshua, no doubt, supposed that the land was first to be conquered, before it was divided, but here his mistake is corrected. The great Proprietor would have his people consider the country as even now theirs, and as a pledge of his purpose to give it them, directs that without further delay it be forthwith apportioned out among the tribes. This order would not only strengthen their assurance of the final possession of the land, but serve also as an incentive to prosecute the work of conquest with fresh vigor, and to keep themselves from all leagues, and every kind of entangling connexion which might obstruct the attainment of their ultimate object. So the exercise of a lively faith puts the Christian even now in possession of the heavenly Canaan, the land of his eternal inheritance. Of all such it may be truly said;—

'They view the triumph from afar,  
And seize it with their eye.'

**Joshua 13:7 "Now therefore, apportion this land for an inheritance to the nine tribes, and the half-tribe of [Manasseh](#)."**

- Nu 26:53-56 33:54 32:2-14 Eze 47:13-23 48:23-29
- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## YAHWEH GIVES NEW ORDERS TO JOSHUA

See map for details of [The Division of the Land Among the Tribes](#)

**Now** (at this time) **therefore** - Term on conclusion and a marker for God's new orders to Joshua the servant of the LORD who is to carry out His command.

**Apportion this land for an inheritance** ([nachalah](#); Lxx = [kleronomia](#)) **to the nine tribes, and the half-tribe of [Manasseh](#)** - The command to **apportion** is [chalaq](#) commonly used of parceling out shares (allotments) of land (Nu 26:53), whether by lot (Nu 26:53), inheritance (Pr 17:2), or other forms of division (Pr 29:24). The Septuagint translates [chalaq](#) with the verb [merizo](#) meaning to divide, apportion out, distribute or assign.

**THOUGHT** - Note the Hebrew word for inheritance is translated with [kleronomia](#) and in a sense the apportioning of land to Israel by Joshua (Lxx - [Iesous](#)) is a foreshadowing of the inheritance we receive in our "Joshua" Jesus ([Iesous](#)). Paul alludes to this in Ephesians describing it and praying that our eyes would be opened to the glory of our inheritance in Christ...

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 Who is given as a pledge of our **inheritance** ([kleronomia](#)) with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

15 For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His **inheritance** ([kleronomia](#)) in the saints, (Eph 1:13-18+, cf also Eph 1:3+)

**F B Meyer** - Joshua 13:7-33 A recapitulation of what Moses had allotted, m There is a great sadness in the words, which so often recur in these chapters and in the Book of Judges, "Nevertheless the children of Israel drove not out..." It is all the more terrible, when we remember the reiterated promise of God that He would settle His people. They either did not believe that God meant what He said, or did not arouse themselves from their indolent apathy to claim and use His help. We must first comprehend so far as we may what we have in Christ, and then proceed to apprehend it by faith.

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**Inheritance** (gift, heritage) ([05159](#)) [nachalah](#) from [nāḥal](#) = signifies giving or receiving property which is part of a permanent possession and as a result of succession) means Inheritance, heritage, possession. A possession is any piece of property that passes

by law to an heir on the death of the owner. It also speaks of God's promises to His people, such as the promise of the land to national (redeemed [remnant](#)) Israel. Land in Israelite society was understood as the possession of Yahweh, Who led the people into the land and conquered the territory for them. This land was then divided among the estates of the people of the day. This redistribution was understood to be permanent (Lev. 25:23). Thus, land could not permanently change hands (which explains the function of the Day of Jubilee, which insured that all land would return to those who had original access to the land). The point of this permanent division was to prevent the formation of large estates, which would necessarily create a subordinate landless peasantry. This same system reached the zenith early in the history of Babylon, its death witnessed by a genre of inscriptions known as kudurrus.

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**Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary** - Joshua 13:7-33. The land must be divided among the tribes. It is the will of God that every man should know his own, and not take that which is another's. The world must be governed, not by force, but right. Wherever our habitation is placed, and in whatever honest way our portion is assigned, we should consider them as allotted of God; we should be thankful for, and use them as such, while every prudent method should be used to prevent disputes about property, both at present and in future. Joshua must be herein a type of Christ, who has not only conquered the gates of hell for us, but has opened to us the gates of heaven, and having purchased the eternal inheritance for all believers, will put them in possession of it. Here is a general description of the country given to the two tribes and a half, by Moses. Israel must know their own, and keep to it; and may not, under pretence of their being God's peculiar people, encroach on their neighbours. Twice in this chapter it is noticed, that to the tribe of Levi Moses gave no inheritance: see Numbers 18:20. Their maintenance must be brought out of all the tribes. The ministers of the Lord should show themselves indifferent about worldly interests, and the people should take care they want nothing suitable. And happy are those who have the Lord God of Israel for their inheritance, though little of this world falls to their lot. His providences will supply their wants, his consolations will support their souls, till they gain heavenly joy and everlasting pleasures.

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**Joshua 13:8** With the other half-tribe, the [Reubenites](#) and the [Gadites](#) received their inheritance which Moses gave them beyond the Jordan to the east, just as Moses the servant of the LORD gave to them;

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- **Moses gave:** Jos 4:12 Jos 22:4 Nu 32:33-42 De 3:12-17
- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Joshua 22:1-4+ 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.

### INHERITANCE OF THE TWO AND ONE-HALF TRIBES

In the remainder of this chapter we see first, the entire territory occupied by the two and a half tribes (Joshua 13:8–13) followed by a description of the allotment to each of the individual tribes - Reuben (Joshua 13:15–23); Gad (Joshua 13:24–28); and half the tribe of Manasseh (Joshua 13:29–31), a summary statement in Joshua 13:32 and lastly the incredible "allotment" to Levi (Joshua 13:33).

**With the other half-tribe** (of [Manasseh](#)), the [Reubenites](#) and the [Gadites](#) received their inheritance which Moses gave them beyond the Jordan to the east, just as Moses the servant of the LORD gave to them - Moses had led the Israelite army in the defeat of kings of Sihon and Og, but this would be his last battle.

**Madvig** makes an interesting point - "The Transjordanian tribes receive a disproportionate amount of attention in this book that records the Conquest and division of the land west of the Jordan (cf. Joshua 1:12–15; 4:12; 12:1–6; 13:8–33; 22:1–34). The author was eager to uphold the unity of the Twelve Tribes in spite of the geographic separation and an undercurrent of feeling that only the land west of the Jordan was truly the Promised Land." ([The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

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GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 13](#)

**ith whom.** Heb. עִמּוֹ immo, with him, i. e. with the other half-tribe of Manasseh, who were to have no part in Canaan proper, as their inheritance had already fallen to them, on the other side of Jordan. The relative is put for an antecedent, which is to be supplied from

the general tenor of the narrative, as in Num. 7:89; Ps. 114:2; Is. 8:21; Jer. 1:3. The speaker here and henceforward is not God, whose words terminate with v. 7, but the historian, who takes occasion to rehearse the allotment made by Moses to the two tribes and a half on the other side Jordan, in order that the reader might understand the reason why nothing is said of them in the distribution now to be made by Joshua, but the whole land on this side the river is ordered to be given to the nine tribes and a half. The other two and a half had been already provided for; and the restatement of the fact here, in the formal record of the division of the land, would serve to ratify, in the strongest manner, the grant formerly made by Moses. As he had settled the affair, so Joshua would leave it. He would not alter what Moses had done, and the reason why he would not, is intimated in the fact that Moses was 'the servant of the Lord,' faithful in all his house, and acting in this matter by a secret direction from him.

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**QUESTION - [Why did Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh want to live on the east of the Jordan?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The Israelites were poised to enter Canaan. Before they crossed the [Jordan River](#) and moved west, God spoke to Joshua some words of encouragement. Included was a promise of even more land later (Joshua 1:4). For the time being, though, the land they would inherit would be west of the Jordan (Joshua 1:2). Yet, even before the Israelites entered the Promised Land, the tribes of [Reuben](#), [Gad](#), and the half-tribe of [Manasseh](#) had already staked out their claim—they chose to settle east of the Jordan.

Numbers 32:1 reveals one reason why these tribes wanted the land east of the Jordan: "The Reubenites and Gadites, who had very large herds and flocks, saw that the lands of Jazer and Gilead were suitable for livestock." The land east of the Jordan River was seen as a prime area for raising livestock.

At first, Moses was opposed to the idea of some tribes staying east of the Jordan. He thought these tribes were attempting to avoid helping their fellow Israelites in the military campaign to subdue and settle Canaan. However, these tribes responded with a pledge to help: "We would like to build pens here for our livestock and cities for our women and children. But we will arm ourselves for battle and go ahead of the Israelites until we have brought them to their place" (Numbers 32:16–17). These tribes kept their promise and helped their brothers in the conquest of Canaan (Joshua 22:1–4).

Upon receiving the tribes' pledge, Moses accepted their request to settle the land east of the Jordan. Numbers 32 concludes with a description of the land meted out: "Moses gave to the Gadites, the Reubenites and the half-tribe of Manasseh son of Joseph the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites and the kingdom of [Og king of Bashan](#)—the whole land with its cities and the territory around them" (Numbers 32:33). Sihon and Og, whose kingdoms were east of Jordan, had been defeated earlier, and their land was assigned to the two and a half tribes.

In his final blessing on the tribes of Israel, Moses gave this blessing to Gad, one of the tribes that settled east of the Jordan: "He chose the best land for himself; the leader's portion was kept for him. When the heads of the people assembled, he carried out the LORD's righteous will, and his judgments concerning Israel" (Deuteronomy 33:21). The land east of the Jordan was a choice area and a blessing to those who lived in it.

Moses' blessing also included positive words concerning Joseph, the father of Ephraim and Manasseh. The words apply to the lands where both tribes of these brothers would settle, including the land east of the Jordan. In Deuteronomy 33:13–16 we find, "May the Lord bless his land with the precious dew from heaven above and with the deep waters that lie below; with the best the sun brings forth and the finest the moon can yield; with the choicest gifts of the ancient mountains and the fruitfulness of the everlasting hills; with the best gifts of the earth and its fullness and the favor of him who dwelt in the burning bush."

There was a strategic reason for Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh to request the land east of the Jordan, and the Lord blessed them in their inheritance. Thus, God's blessing extended even beyond the Jordan River. [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Joshua 13:9 from [Aroer](#), which is on the edge (lip) of the [valley of the Arnon](#), with the city which is in the middle of the valley, and all the [plain of Medeba](#), as far as [Dibon](#);**

- [Aroer](#),: Jos 13:16 12:2 De 3:12,16
- **all the [plain of Medeba](#)**: Nu 21:30 Isa 15:2 Jer 48:18,22
- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DESCRIPTION OF LAND GIVEN TO REUBEN

Beginning in this next section we get an overview of all of the land before we get the specifics of the inheritance. Reuben's allotment is the furthest south, Gad's is in the middle and half-tribe of Manasseh is in the north.

from [Aroer](#), which is on the edge (lip) of the [valley of the Arnon](#), with the city which is in the middle of the valley, and all the [plain of Medeba](#), as far as [Dibon](#) - You can [locate these sites on this map](#) (I suggest opening this link in a new window to facilitate easy location as you read) - first locate the Dead Sea and then look to the right of the Dead Sea for the locations on the eastern side of the Jordan. Joshua reports here that Moses gave Dibon to the tribe of Reuben (Joshua 13:9 ,Joshua 13:17). The Arnon Gorge ([valley of the Arnon](#)) is the southern boundary of Reuben's territory on the east side of the Jordan river.

[Blaikie](#) notes that Reuben's "southern and eastern flanks were covered by the Moabites, who greatly annoyed him. "Unstable as water, he did not excel."

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#### GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 13](#)

**The city that is in the midst of the river.** For the true meaning of the expression, 'in the midst of the river,' see Note on ch. 12:2. Judging from the reports of travellers, we see no reason to believe that such an inconsiderable stream as Arnon, a mere rivulet, contained an island large enough for the site of a city. These verses, from v. 9 to 14, comprise a general description of the whole country given to the two tribes and a half. The remainder of the chapter is occupied with a detailed account of the several districts allotted to each. Here, in v. 9, taking 'city' and 'river,' according to the common Heb idiom, as the collect, sing, for the plur., we conceive the writer's drift is to say, 'that beginning at Aroer, Moses gave to the two tribes and a half all the cities lying between the several rivers mentioned ch. 12:1, 2, together with all the plain or champagne country of Medeba, even to Dibon. These, in the next verse, are called the cities of Sihon, because they lay within his territories.

Joshua 13:10 and all the cities of [Sihon king of the Amorites](#), who reigned in [Heshbon](#), as far as the border of the [sons of Ammon](#);

- Nu 21:24-26
- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### DESCRIPTION OF LAND GIVEN TO GAD

While this passage is not as clear as the preceding and following passages, it does appear to be describing the middle region between the land that was given to Reuben on the south and to Manasseh on the north.

and all the cities of [Sihon king of the Amorites](#), who reigned in [Heshbon](#), as far as the border of the [sons of Ammon](#) - You can [locate Heshbon on this map](#) (I suggest opening this link in a new window to facilitate easy location as you read) - first locate the name "REUBEN" and look just to the north of that name for Heshbon and the territory of [Ammon](#) (not given to Israel) is just to the north and east of [Heshbon](#).

[Blaikie](#) - Gad settled north of Reuben. In his lot was the southern part of Gilead; Mahanaim, and Peniel, celebrated in the history of Jacob, and Ramoth-gilead, conspicuous in after times. East of Gad were the Ammonites, who proved as troublesome to that tribe as Moab did to Reuben.

Joshua 13:11 and [Gilead](#), and the territory of the [Geshurites](#) and [Maacathites](#), and all [Mount Hermon](#), and all [Bashan](#) as far as [Salecah](#);

- Jos 12:2-5 De 4:47,48 1Ch 2:23
- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### DESCRIPTION OF LAND GIVEN TO MANASSEH

and [Gilead](#) and the territory of the [Geshurites](#) and [Maacathites](#) - You can [locate Gilead on this map](#) (I suggest opening this link in a new window to facilitate easy location as you read) - first locate the name Ammon (on right side of map) and go slightly to the north and west for Gilead.

[Blaikie](#) points out that "The Geshurites here are not to be confounded with the people of the same name mentioned in Joshua 13:2,

who were at the opposite extreme - the southwest instead of, as here, the north-east of the land. But no doubt the Syrian Geshurites and Maachathites were brought into subjection by David, with all the other tribes in that region, in his great Syrian war, "when he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates " (2 Samuel 8:3). But instead of expelling or exterminating them, David seems to have allowed them to remain in a tributary condition, for Geshur had its king in the days of Absalom (2 Samuel 13:37), to whom that prince fled after the murder of Amnon. With the Maachathites also David had a family connection (2 Samuel 3:3).

and all [Mount Hermon](#) - You can [locate this site on this map](#) (I suggest opening this link in a new window to facilitate easy location as you read) - go to the top of the mouth, [Mount Hermon](#) being one of the northernmost points listed.

And all [Bashan](#) as far as [Salecah](#) - You can [locate Bashan on this map](#) (I suggest opening this link in a new window to facilitate easy location as you read) just to the right (east) of the Sea of Chinnereth (another name for Sea of Galilee). [Salecah](#) is not on the map but marks the eastern boundary of Bashan.

**Joshua 13:12 all the [kingdom of Og](#) in [Bashan](#), who reigned in [Ashtaroth](#) and in Edrei (he alone was left of the remnant of the [Rephaim](#)); for Moses struck them and dispossessed them.**

- [Og](#) Jos 12:4 De 3:10,11
- **Moses struck them:** Jos 14:3,4 Nu 21:23-35
- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### MORE DESCRIPTION OF LAND GIVEN TO MANASSEH

All the [kingdom of Og](#) in [Bashan](#), who reigned in [Ashtaroth](#) and in [Edrei](#) (he alone was left of the remnant of the [Rephaim](#) - giants) - You can [locate Ashtaroth and in Edrei on this map](#) (I suggest opening this link in a new window to facilitate easy location as you read). Find Bashan just to right (east) of the Sea of Chinnereth and you will see [Ashtaroth](#) and [Edrei](#).

**For Moses struck them and dispossessed them** - Clearly Moses was the commander in chief in the battles on the eastern side of the Jordan.

**Utley** - "Ashtaroth" This is the name of the female fertility goddess of the Canaanite pantheon (BDB 800 III). We are not exactly sure of the relationship between Ba'al and Ashtaroth because in Canaanite documents they are brother and sister, not lovers. "**Rephaim**" This word is used three different ways in the Bible: (1) it may refer to the dead (cf. Job 26:5); (2) it may refer to a tribal group; or (3) it may refer to the giants (cf. 14:12-15). The terms "Anakim" and "Rephaim" both seem to refer to the giants.

**Blaikie** - To the half tribe of Manasseh the kingdom of Og fell, and the northern half of Gilead. Jabesh-gilead, where Saul routed the Ammonites, was in this tribe (1 Samuel 11:1-15). Here also were some of the places on the lake of Galilee mentioned in the gospel history; here the "desert place" across the sea to which our Lord used to retire for rest; here He fed the multitude; here He cured the demoniac; and here were some of the mountains where He would spend the night in prayer. In our Lord's time this portion of Palestine was called Perea. Under the dominion of the Romans, it was comparatively tranquil, and our Lord would sometimes select it, on account of its quiet, as his route to Jerusalem. And many of His gifts of love and mercy were doubtless scattered over its surface.

**Joshua 13:13 But the sons of Israel did not dispossess the [Geshurites](#) and [Maacathites](#); for [Geshur](#) and [Maacath](#) live among Israel until this day.**

- **did not dispossess** Jos 13:11 23:12,13 Nu 33:55 Jdg 2:1-3 2Sa 3:3 13:37,38
- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



"\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ quite contrary,  
How does your garden grow?"  
(see "THOUGHT" below)

## ISRAELITES FAILURE TO CONQUER GESHURITES & MAACATHITES

But the sons of Israel did not dispossess ([yarash](#)) the [Geshurites](#) and [Maacathites](#); for [Geshur](#) and [Maacath](#) live among Israel until this day - This is like a sad "P.S." ([postscript](#)) indicating that for some reason the sons of Israel failed to finish the task in these two people groups.

**THOUGHT** - When we have accomplished a significant goal in our ministry, it is sometimes tempting to [take a breather](#) so to speak and in so doing we often fail to finish the task the LORD has assigned to us. And it is sad!

**Maacath** (apparently also spelled **Maacah**) was a small Aramean kingdom north and east of the Sea of Galilee (1Chr 19:6). It is north of the other territory the Manassehites failed to possess, the territory of Geshur (just east of Sea of Galilee). Its territory was in the region assigned to the half-tribe of Manasseh east of the Jordan. Maacah, its king, became a mercenary of the Ammonites in their war against David (2Sa 10:6), but his small contingent, 1,000 men, shows the pettiness of the region. Note that the identification of the name Maacah is compounded by the fact that it is the name of up to nine people in the Bible ([see note](#))!

In Joshua 13:14 the **Lxx** translates [yarash](#) with the strong verb [exolothreuo](#) which means to destroy utterly, to eliminate by destruction, to root out. Instead of "rooting" them out like one does to destroy crabgrass (so to speak), Israel left a root in the land and it appears it brought up some weeds about 400 years later when the king of Maacah allied with the Ammonites in the war against King David (2Sa 10:6).

**THOUGHT** - Do you have any "[crabgrass](#)" roots in your garden? I am speaking figuratively of the garden of your (my) heart and those stubborn, recurrent sins that just keep coming back up after being confessed and repented! If we fail to employ "divine weed killer" against these crabgrass-like sins in our heart, they will keep rearing their ugly head! You ask, "What do you mean by "divine weed killer"?" I'm glad you asked! The ONLY effective "Weed Killer" of [crabgrass](#)-like sin is the Holy Spirit, Paul explaining in Romans 8:13+ (cf Col 3:5+) that "if by the Spirit (GOD'S POWER) you are putting to death (OUR RESPONSIBILITY) the deeds of the body, you will live." The garden of your heart will then grow beautiful, God glorifying Mt 5:16+ fruit (also enabled by the omnipotent Holy Spirit - Gal 5:22-23+). So dear brother/sister, **how does your garden grow?** Are you (am I) a bit [contrary](#) (protective of the "roots" of our pet sin), like the little girl in the nursery rhyme "Mary, Mary, quite [contrary](#). How does your garden grow?" (Substitute your name - "\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, quite [contrary](#)...") In just in case you did not look it up the meaning of [contrary](#), it means perversely inclined to disagree or to do the opposite of what is expected or desired. (cf Gal 5:17+)

A similar principle is alluded to in Song 2:15+ "Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that are ruining the vineyards, while our vineyards are in blossom."

[Believer's Study Bible](#) has an interesting (albeit slightly speculative) comment - This is the first suggestion that the Israelites would lack the faithful obedience and courage to do everything that God had commanded (cf. Joshua 16:10; 17:12, 13; Jdg. 1:1-2:5).

**Donald K. Campbell** on the 2.5 tribes inheritance east of the Jordan River - The two and one-half tribes chose, as Lot did, on the basis of appearance, (Genesis 13:10, 11) and their inheritance was ultimately lost to them. On the other hand the Levites, requesting no portion, were given an inheritance of abiding spiritual significance. This reminds us of the words of Jesus, 'Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also' (Mt 6:19-21+) . ([No Time for Neutrality: When You Face Your Moment of Impossibility, God Is There: Book of Joshua](#))

The tragedy of the description before us is that these two and a half tribes are settling short of what God intended for them. One is reminded of another example of God giving the rebellious people what they wanted Psalm 106 describes the downward spiral...

So He saved them from the hand of the one who hated them, And redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.

11 The waters covered their adversaries; Not one of them was left. 12 Then they believed His words; They sang His praise. 13 **They quickly forgot His works; They did not wait for His counsel,** 14 **But craved intensely in the wilderness, And tempted God in the desert.** 15 So He gave them their request, **But sent a wasting disease among them.** (Psalm 106:10-15+)

**Irving Jensen** adds that "Transjordan tribes' request was obviously self-centered, stirred by the tempting sight of things, in this case , green pasturage. But they were to pay dearly for their covetousness in the days to come (**ED: COVETOUSNESS MAY LOOK "FREE" BUT IT ALWAYS EXTRACTS A HIGH PRICE!** cf Heb 11:25, Heb 3:13), for their land was continually exposed to invasions from the Moabites, Anunonites, Syrians, Midianites, Amalekites, and other tribes of the desert, and they were the first of Israel to be carried into captivity by the Assyrians (ca 722 BC). ([Joshua- Everyman's Bible Commentary: Rest-Land Won](#)) (Apparently even before 722 BC these eastern tribes were experiencing significant loss of territory! [Look at map showing shrinking of the lands](#) of Reuben, Gad, Manasseh by 830 BC!)

**Blaikie** adds "though the subjugation and occupation of the eastern part of the land was thus tolerably complete (with the exceptions just mentioned), it remained in the undisturbed possession of Israel for the shortest time of any. From Moabites and Ammonites on the south, Canaanites and Syrians on the north and the east, as well as the Midianites, Amalekites, and other tribes of the desert, it was subject to continual invasions. In fact, it was the least settled and least comfortable part of all the country; and doubtless it became soon apparent that though the two tribes and a half had seemed to be very fortunate in having their wish granted to settle in this rich and beautiful region, yet on the whole they had been penny-wise and pound-foolish. Not only were they incessantly assailed and worried by their neighbours, but they were the first to be carried into captivity, when the King of Assyria directed his eyes to Palestine. They had shown somewhat of the spirit of Lot, and they suffered somewhat of his punishment. It is worthy of remark that even at this day this eastern province is the most disturbed part of Palestine. The Bedouins are ever liable to make their attacks wherever there are crops or cattle to tempt their avarice. People will not sow where they have no chance of reaping; and thus it is that much of that productive region lies waste. The moral is not far to seek: in securing wealth, look not merely at the apparent productiveness of the investment, but give heed to its security, its stability. It is not all gold that glitters either on the stock-exchange or anywhere else. And even that which is real gold partakes of the current instability. We must come back to our Saviour's advice to investors, if we would really be safe: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust do corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." (Mt 6:19-20)

**Life Application Study Bible** One reason the Israelites encountered so many problems as they settled the land was that they failed to fully conquer the land and drive out all its inhabitants. The cancer-like presence of the remaining pagan peoples of Canaan caused unending difficulties for the Israelites, as the book of Judges records. Just as they failed to remove completely the sin from the land, believers today often fail to remove completely the sin from their lives-also with disastrous results. As a self-test, reread the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:1-17. Ask yourself, Am I tolerating sinful practices or thoughts? Have I accepted half-measures as good enough? Do I condemn the faults of others but condone my own?

**Rod Mattoon** -Verse thirteen records the failure of God's people to defeat their enemies. Failure to conquer these enemies led to future problems. When we fail to conquer sinful habits in our life, it will lead to future problems for us. Why do God's people fail in the first place?

- \* Indolence or laziness.
- \* Indifference ... a contentment in being saved but the prize of God's high calling is not attractive.
- \* Influence of others.
- \* Satisfaction or complacent ... some are satisfied with achievements.
- \* Unbelief
- \* Lack of courage. Fear immobilizes faith.
- \* Lack of spiritual power and persistence. ([Treasures From Joshua](#))

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**Dispossess** (03423) **yarash** means to deprive (someone) of land, property, or other possessions, to take possession of, inherit, dispossess (to put out of possession or occupancy), to drive out. The verb **yārash** is an especially important word in contexts dealing with Israel's conquest of and possession of the land of Canaan.

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## Incomplete Obedience

### Tony Beckett and Woodrow Kroll

Joshua 13-15, Luke 1:57-80

Key Verse: Joshua 13:13

Great promises and great victories fill the pages of the Book of Joshua. Israel moved into the Promised Land and conquered it with God's help. Jericho fell, literally. Ai was ultimately defeated. The sun even stood still—all striking evidence that God was fighting for Israel (Joshua 10:14).

Yet when the details of the conquest are examined beginning in Joshua 13:13, a sad fact needs to be noted. The Israelites did not drive out the people of Geshur and Maacah. The significance is not the names of the people but the fact that they were allowed to remain in the land. As you continue to read Joshua, you will find this phrase repeated: "did not drive them out completely."

The account of Joshua tells us about God's promises and Israel's victories. But it does not hide the fact that sometimes the fulfillment of the promises was limited by Israel's incomplete obedience. Lack of faith and incomplete obedience allowed some of the people to remain in the land.

God's instructions were clear. His promises were certain. The failure was not God's but the people's. They failed and ultimately bore the consequences.

Always strive for complete obedience; never stop short of it.

Whatever God gives you to do, do it completely. Unfinished tasks can be more troublesome than the effort of doing it the first time.

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### GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 13](#)

**The children of Israel expelled not the Geshurites, &c.** Spoken apparently by way of reflection upon the Israelites who succeeded Moses, for their remissness in driving out these nations. The failure of Moses to make a clean riddance of them at his first conquest, might be entirely excusable, as he was intent upon reaching Canaan, and could not well subject himself to the delay necessary for their complete extermination. But this plea would not hold after Canaan was entered. The tribes ought to have gone forward at once and finished the work which Moses had begun. Instead of this, it is related, to their disgrace, that they still suffered these people to dwell among them down to the time when this history was written. The spirit of inspiration discovers, if we may so speak, a wonderful tact, both in administering censure and bestowing praise. Instances of both, managed with the most consummate skill, abound in the compass of the sacred scriptures.

### Cities Not Conquered by the Israelites

TRIBES	JOSHUA	JUDGES	PEOPLE	CITIES
Israelites in General	Josh 13:13			
Judah	Josh 15:63		Jebusites	Jerusalem
Benjamin		Jdg 1:21	Jebusites	Jerusalem
W. Manasseh	Josh 17:11-12	Jdg 1:27-28	Canaanites	Beth Shan, Taanach, Dor, Ibleam, Megiddo, Endor,* Naphoth*
Ephraim	Josh 16:10	Jdg 1:29	Canaanites	Gezer
Zebulun		Jdg 1:30	Canaanites	Kitron, Nahalol
Asher		Jdg 1:31-32	Canaanites	Acco, Sidon, Ahlab, Aczib, Helbah, Aphek, Rehob

Naphtali		Jdg 1:33	Canaanites	Beth Shemesh, Beth Anath
Dan	Josh 19:47	Jdg 1:34-35	Amorites	Leshem

**Note** - This is a list of the so-called "Conquest Lacunae," consisting primarily of cities the Israelites did not conquer (see Kallai, Historical Geography, 102–11). It differs from the list of "Remaining Lands," which are listed together in Josh 13:2–6 and consist of territories the Israelites did not conquer (in addition to Kallai, see Na'aman, Borders and Districts, 39–73). (Source: David Howard - [Joshua: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture Volume 5 The New American Commentary](#))

**Joshua 13:14** Only to [the tribe of Levi](#) he did not give an inheritance; the offerings by fire to the LORD, the God of Israel, are their inheritance, as He spoke to him.

- See the Note on verse 33, Jos 14:3,4 Nu 18:20-24 De 10:9 12:12,19 18:2
- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## INHERITANCE OF THE LEVITES

Only to [the tribe of Levi](#) he did not give an inheritance ([nachalah](#); Lxx = [kleronomia](#)); the offerings by fire to the LORD, the God of Israel, are their inheritance ([nachalah](#); Lxx = [kleronomia](#)), as He spoke to him - Perhaps they did not receive a *material* inheritance as the other tribes (although they actually did receive some material blessings in Nu 35:1–5), but more significantly a *spiritual* inheritance.

**THOUGHT** - When we ponder material blessing versus spiritual blessing, it is easy to see that the first passes, but the second endures! This begs the question of each of God's children --- Which do we desire (cf Col 3:2+)?

**F B Meyer** - The remark about the tribe of Levi having no inheritance assigned to them (Joshua 13:14), because of the sacrifices of God which were theirs, is not introduced to disparage Levi; but to enhance the honor done to them, since theirs was a possession which could not be injured by their failures and sins. "The Lord God of Israel was their inheritance" (Joshua 13:33). Thus the Lord is the portion of His people. We are heirs of God. All that is in Him is there for us. Let us live near the altar, to minister to Him, and receive our portion from the fire. And let us be His worthy portion!

[Levi](#) was third-born son to [Leah](#). Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah are all born to Leah before any other children were born to Jacob. And so we see that although Levi was the third of "*My Three Sons*" from Leah, it was out of Levi that such luminaries as Aaron, Moses, and Miriam were born.

**Campbell** - The tribe of Levi received no specific territory of land as did the other tribes (cf. v. 33; 14:3–4; 18:7). Instead the Levites received 48 towns with pastureland for their flocks and herds (14:4; 21:41) as Moses had specified (Nu 35:1–5). ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#))

[Believer's Study Bible](#) - There is a strong emphasis in Joshua on the Levites and their landless dedication to Yahweh (cf. Joshua 13:33; 14:3, 4; 18:7; 21:1-42). Their landlessness was originally a curse (Ge 34:25-31; 49:5-7), but was turned into a blessing because of their later holy zeal (Ex 32:25-28; Nu 18:20; Dt. 33:8-11). It may be that emphasis is placed on the Levites at the beginning of the allotment section because they were to be living messages that Israel was not to become satisfied with the land and forget the Lord (**ED**: WHICH IS EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED! Jdg 3:7+), to whom the land belonged (cf. Ps 73:25-28).

**GEORGE BUSH** [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 13](#)

**Unto the tribe of Levi he gave no inheritance.** See on Num. 18:20–24.

**The sacrifices made by fire.** The term is to be understood in a large sense, including not only all the oblations of which any part was burnt, but also the first fruits and tithes assigned to the Levites for their support. This is repeated again v. 33, to intimate that the Levites had as good a title to their tithes and perquisites, as the rest of their brethren had to their estates, and also to enjoin upon the tribes a cheerful and conscientious compliance with the will of God in this respect. Withholding their dues from the Levites he considered as no less than actually robbing himself.

**Joshua 13:15** So Moses gave [an inheritance] to the tribe of the sons of Reuben according to their families.

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- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Genesis 49:3-4 (**JACOB'S DYING PROPHECY OVER REUBEN**) "**Reuben**, you are my firstborn; My might and the beginning of my strength, Preeminent in dignity and preeminent in power. 4 "Uncontrolled as water, you shall not have preeminence, Because you went up to your father's bed; Then you defiled it—he went up to my couch.

Genesis 35:22 (**REUBEN'S SIN OF INCEST**) It came about while Israel was dwelling in that land, that **Reuben** went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine, and Israel heard of it. Now there were twelve sons of Jacob—

## INHERITANCE TO TRIBE OF REUBEN

**Campbell** - Reuben received the territory previously occupied by Moab, east of the Dead Sea . Gad's inheritance, in the center of the region , was in the original land of Gilead. The allotment of the half-tribe of Manasseh was the rich tableland of Bashan east of the Sea of Galilee. ([No Time for Neutrality: When You Face Your Moment of Impossibility. God Is There: Book of Joshua](#))

Joshua 13:15-23 gives a more detailed description of the cities and boundaries of the land given to Reuben. The description begins in the southern part of Reuben's inheritance and then moves northward in the following passages, with Gad in the middle and half-tribe of Manasseh the last description and the furthest north.

**So Moses gave** [an inheritance] **to the tribe of the sons of Reuben according to their families** - NLT = "Moses had assigned the following area to the clans of the tribe of Reuben." The remainder of the chapter, now, will give us the specific inheritance on the east side of the two and a half tribes that are content to settle there.

**Rod Mattoon** has an interesting note on **Reuben** - Reuben was the firstborn of the family and entitled to a double portion. Because of his adultery with Bilhah, he lost the right of the first born and it passed to Joseph who received two portions in Ephraim and Manasseh (Genesis 49:3, 4). Three centuries later, the consequences of Reuben's sinful deed passes on to his descendants. They are affected by his sin. Reuben's life demonstrates that a reputation once broken may possibly be repaired, but the world will always keep its eye on the spot where the crack was ... Reuben's sin with Bilhah. Reuben's experience reveals that everyone leaves footprints on the sands of time. Some are the prints of a great sole, and others are the marks of a heel. Whether you like it or not, your victories and defeats affect others! Ephraim and Manasseh are given the richest, fertile land in Canaan. Judah received the largest portion in the land. Reuben was given the desert land. ([Treasures From Joshua](#))

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#### GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 13](#)

**15. Moses gave unto the tribe of the children of Reuben.**The writer now enters upon a minute specification of the portions assigned by lot to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh. This is very fully and exactly detailed. On this mode of assigning to the children their inheritances, and on this account of it, it may be remarked, (1) That it was the most equitable and satisfactory method that could be adopted. Had the distribution been made by arbitrary appointment, as all could not receive portions equally good, some would probably have complained that their brethren were better dealt by than themselves. Dividing the land by lot, therefore, by cutting off all pretence for the charge of favoritism on the part of Moses, was the readiest way of satisfying all parties, and preventing discontent and discord. (2) The several allotments are here very minutely detailed in order that litigation growing out of disputed boundaries might ever after be prevented. When the limits of each tribe were so clearly settled, there could be little room for contending claims, or if there were, an authentic register of the lot of each tribe would be at hand to be appealed to for a decision, and there is no doubt that it was often made use of in after ages for this purpose. We cannot but learn from this the great importance of devising every prudent method to prevent litigations about property. (3) The reading of this account by succeeding generations would tend to excite a very deep and lively impression of the goodness of God in bestowing upon their ancestors, for the benefit of their posterity, such a large and fertile country, an inheritance so replete with all the worldly blessings which heart could wish. 'God's grants look best, when we descend to the particulars.' Henry.

**According to their families.** As every tribe had its inheritance divided by lot; so it is probable, that afterwards the subdivisions to every family and each individual were regulated in the same manner. Thus their estates would descend to posterity, not so much as the inheritance of their fathers, as that which the Lord had immediately assigned them. They could thus say, with the Psalmist, Ps. 16:5, 6, 'The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage.'

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**QUESTION - [What can we learn from the tribe of Reuben?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Each of the twelve sons of Israel / Jacob received a blessing from his father just before Jacob's death. The twelve sons were the progenitors of the [twelve tribes of Israel](#), and the blessing contained prophetic information about the future of each tribe. In the case of the tribe of Reuben, Jacob prophesied, "Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, the first sign of my strength, excelling in honor, excelling in power. Turbulent as the waters, you will no longer excel, for you went up onto your father's bed, onto my couch and defiled it" (Genesis 49:3-4). In addition to referring to the future of the tribe of Reuben, the prophecy contains within it several lessons for all of us.

[Reuben](#), the firstborn of the twelve sons, was to Jacob his "might, the first sign of my strength" (Genesis 49:3), indicating that to him were all the rights and prerogatives of a firstborn son. At first, he excelled in honor and power, as is fitting the firstborn son, but Jacob declares that Reuben "will no longer excel" (verse 4) due to his sin of incest with Bilhah, his father's concubine wife (Genesis 35:22). Although that sin was committed forty years prior, there was left an indelible spot on Reuben's character and that of his posterity. By committing this uncleanness with his father's wife, there would be reproach upon his tribe and the family, to whom he ought to have been an example and a blessing. He forfeited the prerogatives of the birthright, and his dying father demoted him, although he did not disown or disinherit him. He would still have all the privileges of a son, but not of the firstborn.

Jacob's sad prophecy for Reuben certainly came true. No judge, prophet, ruler, or prince came from that tribe, nor any person of renown except Dathan and Abiram, who were noted for their rebellion against Moses. Reuben's tribe chose a settlement on the other side of the Jordan, a further indication of the loss of godly influence on his brothers to which his birthright entitled him. Although Reuben was the firstborn, the kingdom was given to Judah and the priesthood to Levi, leaving Reuben's tribe to be small and non-influential.

Further, Reuben was "unstable as water" (some versions translate it "turbulent as water"), and in this phrase we find several lessons for all Christians. For one thing, Reuben's virtue was unstable; he did not have control of himself and his own appetites. The charge of instability could refer to his being sometimes very regular and orderly, while at other times wild and undisciplined. As Christians, we are to be in control of our flesh and its appetites and desires at all times. Most importantly, we are to be steadfast in our faith and not "tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14).

We also learn from Reuben that those who dabble in sin must not expect to save their reputation or maintain a positive influence upon others. Although we know our sins were nailed to the cross and we are forever forgiven for past sins, we may still suffer the temporal consequences of those sins, which often include remorse and a loss of reputation and influence. Reuben's sin left an indelible mark upon him and his family. As Christians, we must understand that some of our sins will leave a lasting scar. [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Joshua 13:16** And their territory was from [Aroer](#), which is on the edge of the [valley of the Arnon](#), with the city which is in the middle of the valley and all the [plain of Medeba](#);

- Jos 13:9 12:2 Nu 21:28-30 32:33-38 De 3:12 Isa 15:1,2,4 16:7-9 Jer 48:21-24
- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

And their territory was from [Aroer](#), which is on the edge of the [valley of the Arnon](#), with the city which is in the middle of the valley and all the [plain of Medeba](#) - [Aroer](#) is the southern boundary where the Arnon River separates Reuben's inheritance from the land of Moab to the south of the Arnon River. You can [locate these sites on this map](#) (I suggest opening this link in a new window to facilitate easy location as you read) - first locate the Dead Sea and then look to the right of the Dead Sea for the locations on the eastern side of the Jordan.

**Joshua 13:17** [Heshbon](#), and all its cities which are on the plain: [Dibon](#) and [Bamoth-baal](#) and [Beth-baal-meon](#),

- [Dibon](#): Eusebius says the city was situated in the plain of Arnon.
- Bamothbaal: or, the high places of Baal, and the house of Baal-meon, Nu 21:19 22:41 32:38
- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Numbers 22:41 Then it came about in the morning that [Balak](#) took [Balaam](#) and brought him up to the high places ([bamah](#)) of Baal, and he saw from there a portion of the people.

[Heshbon](#), and all its cities which are on the plain: [Dibon](#) and [Bamoth-baal](#) and [Beth-baal-meon](#) ("house of Baal's residence" -

same as Baal-Meon - Nu 32:38; 1Chr 5:8; Ezek 25:9 and "Beth-Meon" in Jer 48:23) - Joshua reports that Moses gave [Dibon](#) to the tribe of Reuben. You can [locate these sites on this map](#) (I suggest opening this link in a new window to facilitate easy location as you read) - first locate the Dead Sea and then look to the right of the Dead Sea for the locations on the eastern side of the Jordan (note [Bamoth-baal](#) is not seen on this map) Note that [Heshbon](#) is the northern boundary of Reuben's inheritance .

[Bamoth-baal](#) means "high places of Baal." Mesha, king of Moab about 830 B.C., mentioned it in the Moabite stone. Numbers 22:41 speaks of Bamoth or high places of Baal near the Arnon River. There Balak and Balaam could see all Israel.

[Utley](#) - "Bamoth-baal and Beth-baal-meon" There was a Ba'al for every town. These two towns were named for the "high places of baal" (BDB 119 and 127, cf. Num. 22:41) and the "houses of baal" (BDB 111, cf. Num. 32:38; 1 Chr. 5:8; Jer. 48:23; Ezek. 25:9).

#### Joshua 13:18 and [Jahaz](#) and [Kedemoth](#) and [Mephaath](#),

- [Jahaz](#) : A city near Medeba and Dibon, afterwards given to the Levites. Jos 21:36,37 Nu 21:23, Jahaz, 1Ch 6:78,79, Jahzah
- [Kedemoth](#) : Supposed to have been situated east of the Arnon. See possible [location on this map](#)
- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

and [Jahaz](#) and [Kedemoth](#) and [Mephaath](#) - [Mephaath](#) was in Reuben's allotment but was also assigned to the Levites (Joshua 21:37; 1Chr 6:79 ). In Jeremiah's time the town was in Moabite hands (Jeremiah 48:21). Mephaath was apparently situated near the desert, east of Moab and in the time of Eusebius, he describes a Roman garrison there.

[Jahaz](#) - Moabite place name perhaps meaning, "landsite." As they journeyed from the wilderness to the Promised Land, Israel defeated King Sihon there (Numbers 21:23-24; Deuteronomy 2:32-33; Judges 11:20-21). Isaiah's oracle against Moab described the isolated city of Jahaz as hearing the mourning of Heshbon and Elealeh (Isaiah 15:4). Jeremiah issued a similar warning (Jeremiah 48:34; compare Jeremiah 48:21). The name also appears with the Hebrew locative ah ending, thus being spelled Jahaza or Jahazah. Jahzah is also a variant spelling. It became part of the tribal territory of Reuben ( Joshua 13:18 ) and a **city of the Levites** (Joshua 21:36; compare 1Chr 6:78 ). On the [Moabite stone, King Mesha of Moab](#) claims an Israelite king (perhaps Jehu) built Jahaz and used it as a base in his unsuccessful fight against Mesha, [Chemosh](#), the Moabite god driving the Israelites out. Mesha then annexed the city to [Dibon](#). It has been variously located at Libb, six miles north of Dibon; Aleiyah; khirbet el-Medeyineh; and khirbet Iskander, four miles north of Dibon, being the most popular suggestions

#### Joshua 13:19 and [Kiriathaim](#) and [Sibmah](#) and [Zereth-Shahar](#) on the hill of the valley,

- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

and [Kiriathaim](#) and [Sibmah](#) and [Zereth-Shahar](#) on the hill of the valley - You can [locate these sites on this map](#) (I suggest opening this link in a new window to facilitate easy location as you read) - look just to the right or east of the upper Dead Sea, but sites are only approximate (and Sibmah is not on the map).

[Kiriathaim](#) This city, according to Eusebius, was situated ten miles west of Medeba. Numbers 32:37; Joshua 13:19. A town of Reuben. Belonged first to the Emim (Genesis 14:5 Shaveh Kiriathaim, "the plain of Kiriathaim," or of the two cities) whom the Moabites dispossessed before the Exodus (Deuteronomy 2:10-11). It was in the hands of Moab in Mesha's time, and he claims to have fortified it (M S, I.10). Moab lost and recovered Kiriathaim when the trans-jordanic tribes were carried captive (Jeremiah 48:1-23; Ezekiel 25:9). Celebrated for its vines Jer 48:32. Isa 16:8, 9;

[Sibmah](#) Place name meaning, "cold" or "high." City tribe of Reuben rebuilt in Transjordan (Numbers 32:38 ). It became part of their tribal inheritance (Joshua 13:19 ). Isaiah mentioned it in his lament over Moab (Joshua 16:8-9; compare Jeremiah 48:32 ).

[Zereth-Shahar](#) Place name meaning, "splendor of the dawn." The city located "on the hill of the [Dead Sea] valley" Site is uncertain.

#### Joshua 13:20 and [Beth-Peor](#) and the slopes of [Pisgah](#) and [Beth-Jeshimoth](#)

- [Beth-Peor](#) Nu 25:3 De 4:46
- Ashdohpishgah: or, springs of Pisgah, or, the hill, Jos 12:3 De 3:17

- Bethjeshimoth: Nu 33:49 Eze 25:9
- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

and [Beth-Peor](#) and the slopes of [Pisgah](#) and [Beth-Jeshimoth](#) - You can [locate these sites on this map](#) (I suggest opening this link in a new window to facilitate easy location as you read) - first locate the Dead Sea and note these names are located just to the northeast.

[Beth-Peor](#) (4X IN OT - Deut. 3:29; Deut. 4:46; Deut. 34:6; Jos. 13:20) Place name meaning, "house of Peor." A temple for the god Peor or Baal Peor probably stood there. See Baal Peor. Town in whose valley Israel camped as Moses delivered the sermons of the Book of Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 3:29, 4:46, 34:6). It had belonged to Sihon, king of the Amorites (Deuteronomy 4:46). Moses died and was buried near there (Deuteronomy 34:6). It belonged to tribe of Reuben (Joshua 13:20). It was located at modern khirbet Uyun Musa, twenty miles east of the north end of the Dead Sea. Numbers does not use the place name, but evidently at least part of the shameful worship of Baal Peor (Numbers 25:1-5) occurred at Beth-peor. Hosea described the actions of Peor as a turning point in Israel's blissful honeymoon with God (Hosea 9:10). (See also [Peor](#) and [Baal of Peor](#))

[Pisgah](#) - (8x - Nu 21:20; Nu 23:14; Dt. 3:17; Dt. 3:27; Dt. 4:49; Dt. 34:1; Jos. 12:3; Jos. 13:20) Mountain in the [Abarim](#) range across the Jordan River from Jericho. Some Bible scholars believe it was part of [Mount Nebo](#); others think it could have been a separate rise, either en-Neba or near modern Khirbet Tsijaga. God allowed Moses to view the Promised Land from the heights of Pisgah (Deuteronomy 34:1) but would not let him cross into Canaan. Israel had camped near Pisgah (Numbers 21:20). Balak took Balaam to its height so the prophet could see Israel and curse them (Numbers 23:14). It was a limit of Sihon's kingdom (Joshua 12:23); Ashdod-pisgah in KJV) and also for the tribe of Reuben (Joshua 13:20).

[Beth-Jeshimoth](#) or BETH-JESIMOTH (KJV spelling at Numbers 33:49) (4x in OT - Num. 33:49; Jos. 12:3; Jos. 13:20; Ezek. 25:9). Place name meaning, "house of deserts." A town in Moab where Israel camped just before Moses died and Joshua led them across the Jordan (Numbers 33:49). Joshua 12:3 lists it as land Israel took from Sihon, king of the Amorites. Moses gave it to the tribe of Reuben (Joshua 13:20). Ezekiel described it as one of three frontier cities of Moab, these being "the glory of the country" (Ezekiel 25:9), but one facing God's judgment. It is usually located at modern tell el-Azeme, twelve miles southeast of Jericho.

**Joshua 13:21 even all the cities of the plain and all the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites who reigned in Heshbon, whom Moses struck with the chiefs of Midian, Evi and Rekem and Zur and Hur and Reba, the princes of Sihon, who lived in the land.**

- **even all the cities of the plain:** De 3:10
- **whom Moses struck :** Nu 21:24-35 De 2:30-36
- **with the chiefs of Midian:** Nu 31:8
- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passage:**

Numbers 31:8 They killed the kings of Midian along with the rest of their slain: Evi and Rekem and Zur and Hur and Reba, the five kings of Midian; they **also killed Balaam the son of Beor with the sword.**

**even all the cities of the plain and all the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites who reigned in Heshbon, whom Moses struck with the chiefs of Midian Evi and Rekem and Zur and Hur and Reba, the princes of Sihon, who lived in the land-**

**GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 13](#)**

**21. Dukes of Sihon.** Probably so called because they had been his tributaries, subject to his jurisdiction. They are indeed called 'kings of Midian' in Num 31:8, but by 'kings' in the sacred writings we are often to understand no more than mere petty chieftains, who might be at the same time subject to some more potent sovereign. See Gen. 14:1, 2.

**Joshua 13:22 The sons of Israel also killed Balaam the son of Beor, the diviner, with the sword among the rest of their slain.**

- **Balaam:** Nu 22:5-7, 24:1 31:8 2Pe 2:15 Jude 1:11 Rev 2:14 19:20
- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passage:**

Numbers 31:8+ They killed the kings of Midian along with the rest of their slain: Evi and Rekem and Zur and Hur and Reba, the five kings of Midian; they **also killed Balaam the son of Beor with the sword.**

Joshua 24:9-10+ 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.

2 Peter 2:15-16+ forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; 16but he received a rebuke for his own transgression, for a mute donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet.

Jude 1:11+ Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into **the error of Balaam**, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

Revelation 2:14+ 'But I have a few things against you, because you have there some **who hold the teaching of Balaam**, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block [skandalon](#) before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality (**See this rotten fruit below**)

Numbers 25:1-3+ While Israel remained at Shittim, the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab. 2 For they invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. 3So Israel joined themselves to Baal of Peor, and the LORD was angry against Israel.

## **BAALAM** **[BITES THE DUST!](#)**

**The sons of Israel also killed Balaam the son of Beor, the diviner, with the sword among the rest of their slain-** This is when Balaam [bites the dust!](#) The Septuagint translates **diviner** ([qasam](#) )

**Utley** "diviner" This PARTICIPLE (qal PARTICIPLE) means "trying to know and control the future." Several different methods were used casting lots, consulting idols, examining sheep livers, necromancy, cloud reading, flight and perching of birds. Some typical texts are Num. 22:7; 23:23; Deut. 18:10, 14; Josh. 13:22; 1 Sam. 6:5; 15:23; 28:8; 2 Kgs. 17:17; Isa. 2:6; 3:2; 44:25; Jer. 14:14; 27:9; 29:8; Ezek. 12:24; 13:6, 7, 9, 23; 21:21, 22, 23, 29; 22:28. It is based on the pagan world-view that there is information about the future hidden in natural events and that gifted humans (i.e., false prophets, e.g., Jer. 27:9; 29:8; Ezek. 13:9; 22:28) can know and influence this future.

### **Related Resource:**

- [What does the Bible say about enchantment? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**MacArthur - Israel also killed Balaam.** This Israelite slaying of the infamous false prophet occurred at an unidentified point during the conquest (cf. Nu 21–25; 31:16; Jos 24:9-10; 2Pe 2:15-16; Jude 1:11; Rev 2:14).

**Dale Ralph Davis** - we must not miss the repeated allusions to Israel's victories over our old friends Sihon and Og (Josh 13:10, 12, 21, 27, 30–31), not to mention Balaam (Josh 13:22; see Nu 22–25; 31:8). What does this mean? It means that throughout all this geography and topography there are constant allusions to the victories Yahweh had previously given Israel under Moses. The allusions jog Israel's memory and fortify their faith in face of any contemporary enemies; for it is in remembering how Yahweh handled Sihon and Og (Ps 135:10–12; Ps 136:17–22) that Israel finds assurance that Yahweh will still have compassion on his servants and that his covenant love persists into present prime time as well (Ps 135:14; 136:19b, 20b). This is the biblical prescription for faith; faith finds both steadfastness and expectancy by rehearsing and revelling in Yahweh's past acts of faithfulness. ([Joshua: No Falling Words](#))

**Cyril Barber** also emphasizes this point - There are constant references in the text to the victories God had given Israel through Moses, and these must have been of encouragement to God's people. Some indication of the significance of the defeat of Sihon and Og is to be gleaned from references to them in the book of Psalms (cf. Psalm 135:10–12; 136:17–22). ([Joshua: A Devotional Exposition](#))

**Blaikie** - The other parenthetical statement respects the death of Balaam. "Balaam also, the soothsayer, did the children of Israel slay with the sword among them that were slain by them" (Joshua 13:22). It appears from Numbers 31:8 that the slaughter of Balaam took place in the days of Moses, by the hands of the expedition sent by him to chastise the Midianites for drawing the Israelites into idolatry. That the fact should be again noticed here is probably due to the circumstance that the death of Balaam occurred at the place which had just been noted - the boundary line between Reuben and Gad. It was a fact well worthy of being again noted. It was a fact never to be forgotten that the man who had been sent for to curse was constrained to bless. As far as Balaam's public conduct was concerned, he behaved well to Israel. He emphasized their Divine election and their glorious privileges. He laid especial stress upon the fact that they were not a Bedouin horde, rushing about in search of plunder, but a sacramental host, executing the judgments of a righteous God

- "The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them." This was a valuable testimony, for which Israel might well be grateful. It was when Balaam took part in that disgraceful plot to entice Israel into sensuality and idolatry that he came out in his real colours. It seemed to him very clever, no doubt, to obey the Divine command in the letter by absolutely refusing to curse Israel, while at the same time he accomplished the object he was sent for by seducing them into sins which brought down on them the judgments of God. Nevertheless, he reckoned without his host. Possibly he gained his reward, but he did not live to enjoy it; and "what shall a man be profited if he gain the whole world and forfeit his own life?" (Matthew 16:26, R.V.). The two and a half tribes were well taught by the fate of Balaam that, in the end, however cunningly a man may act, his sin will find him out. They were emphatically reminded that the sins of sensuality and idolatry are exceedingly hateful in the sight of God, and certain to be punished. They were assured by the testimony of Balaam, that Israel, if only faithful, would never cease to enjoy the Divine protection and blessing. But they were reminded that God is not mocked: that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Balaam had sown to the flesh; of the flesh it behoved him to reap corruption. And so must it ever be; however ingeniously you may disguise sin, however you may conceal it from yourself, and persuade yourself to believe that you are not doing wrong, sin must show itself ultimately in its true colours, and your ingenious disguises will not shield it from its doom: - "The wages of sin is Death."

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**Diviner (07080) qasam** is derived from an Arabic root which primarily means to distribute, divide, decide (by God or so-called fate) and then to determine by lot or magical scroll, and thus to divine. The pagans (and sadly Israel) would divine by various methods -- sometimes by examining the position of the stars, and other times through casting lots with arrows, consulting idols, examining animal organs such as the liver (see esp Ezek 21:21) or through conjuring up the dead (a sin King Saul committed in 1Sa 28:8). The goal of divination was to attempt to predict the future or discern hidden knowledge by one of these occult methods. A [soothsayer](#) was one who attempted to predict the future by magical, intuitive, or more rational means. Notice that divination was just one of a group of evil (occult) spiritual practices (Dt 18:10)

Qasam - 20v - Deut. 18:10; Deut. 18:14; Jos. 13:22; 1 Sam. 6:2; 1 Sam. 28:8; 2 Ki. 17:17; Isa. 3:2; Isa. 44:25; Jer. 27:9; Jer. 29:8; Ezek. 13:9; Ezek. 13:23; Ezek. 21:21; Ezek. 21:23; Ezek. 21:29; Ezek. 22:28; Mic. 3:6; Mic. 3:7; Mic. 3:11; Zech. 10:2

#### Related Resource:

- [What does the Bible say about divination? | GotQuestions.org](#)

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#### GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 13](#)

**alaam also**—did the children of Israel slay. He fell with those who instigated him to his wickedness. 'This was recorded before. Num. 31:8, but is repeated here, because the defeating of Balaam's purpose to curse Israel was the turning of that curse into a blessing, and was such an instance of the power and goodness of God as was fit to be had in everlasting remembrance.' Henry Divine justice knows well how to put the brand of perpetual infamy upon those who sin, like Balaam, against light and knowledge.

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**Rod Mattoon** - **Balaam** was a prophet for hire or soothsayer who was hired to curse Israel by the king of Moab, but instead blesses them. Balaam had a head knowledge of God, but his heart was controlled by greed for fortune and fame (2 Peter 2:15). He had an outward show of spirituality, but inwardly he was full of corruption. Balaam revealed that motives are as important as actions. Your treasure is where your heart is.

- Balaam's heart was in this world.
- He yearned for all that this world had to offer. The lifestyle of the world was first.
- His advice to Balak was to destroy God's people with worldliness and wicked living. The same tactic will destroy us too today! John warns us in 1 John 2:15, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

Balaam catered to the worldly crowd and died with this crowd. Let me ask, "Is your heart controlled by greed and worldly living? Do you have an outward form of spirituality but inward corruption?" If so, there is unfinished business that needs to be taken care of in your life. ([Treasures From Joshua](#))

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#### QUESTION - [Who was Balaam in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - Balaam was a wicked prophet in the Bible and is noteworthy because, although he was a wicked prophet, he was not a false prophet. That is, Balaam did hear from God, and God did give him some true prophecies to speak. However, Balaam's heart was not right with God, and eventually he showed his true colors by betraying Israel and leading them astray.

In Numbers 22—24, we find the story about Balaam and the king of Moab, a man called Balak. [King Balak](#) wanted to weaken the



children of Israel, who on their way to Canaan had moved in on his territory. Balak sent to Balaam, who lived in Mesopotamia along the Euphrates River (Numbers 22:5), and asked him to curse Israel in exchange for a reward. Balaam was apparently willing to do this but said he needed God's permission (verse 8). Balaam, of course, had no power, in himself, to curse Israel, but, if God were willing to curse Israel, Balaam would be rewarded through Balak. God told Balaam, "You must not put a curse on those people, because they are blessed" (verse 12). King Balak then sent "other officials, more numerous and more distinguished than the first" (verse 16), promising a handsome reward. This time God said, "Go with them, but do only what I tell you" (verse 20).

The next morning, Balaam saddled his [donkey](#) and left for Moab (Numbers 22:21). God sent an angel to oppose Balaam on the way. The donkey Balaam was riding could see the angel, but Balaam could not, and when the donkey three times moved to avoid the angel, Balaam was angry and beat the animal. "Then the Lord opened the donkey's mouth" (verse 28), and it rebuked the prophet for the beatings. "Then the Lord opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road with his sword drawn" (verse 31). The angel told Balaam that he certainly would have killed Balaam had not the donkey spared his life. Ironically, a dumb beast had more wisdom than God's prophet. The angel then repeated to Balaam the instruction that he was only to speak what God told him to speak concerning the Hebrews (verses 33–35).

In Moab, King Balak took the prophet Balaam up to a high place called Bamoth Baal and told him to curse the Israelites (Numbers 22:41). Balaam first offered fourteen sacrifices on seven altars and met with the Lord (Numbers 23:1–5). He then declared the message God gave him: a blessing on Israel: "How can I curse / those whom God has not cursed? / How can I denounce / those whom the Lord has not denounced?" (verse 8).

King Balak was upset that Balaam had pronounced a blessing on Israel rather than a curse, but he had him try again, this time from the top of Pisgah (Numbers 23:14). Balaam sacrificed another fourteen animals and met with the Lord. When he faced Israel, Balaam again spoke a blessing: "I have received a command to bless; / he has blessed, and I cannot change it" (verse 20).

King Balak told Balaam that, if he was going to keep blessing Israel, it was better for him to just shut up (Numbers 23:25). But the king decided to try one more time, taking Balaam to the top of Peor, overlooking the wasteland (verse 28). Again, Balaam offered fourteen animals on seven newly built altars (verse 29). Then "the Spirit of God came on him and he spoke his message" (Numbers 24:2–3). The third message was not what the Moabite king wanted to hear: "How beautiful are your tents, Jacob, / your dwelling places, Israel!" (verse 5).

Balaam's three prophecies of blessing on Israel infuriated the king of Moab, who told the prophet to go back home with no reward: "Now leave at once and go home! I said I would reward you handsomely, but the Lord has kept you from being rewarded" (Numbers 24:11). Before he left, Balaam reminded the king that he had said from the very beginning he could only say what God told him to say. Then he gave the king four more prophecies, gratis. In the fourth prophecy, Balaam foretold of the Messiah: "A star will come out of Jacob; / a scepter will rise out of Israel. / He will crush the foreheads of Moab, / the skulls of all the people of Sheth" (verse 17). Balaam's seven prophecies were seven blessings on God's people; it was God's enemies who were cursed.

However, later on Balaam figured out a way to get his reward from Balak. Balaam advised the Moabites on how to entice the people of Israel with prostitutes and idolatry. He could not curse Israel directly, so he came up with a plan for Israel to bring a curse upon themselves. Balak followed Balaam's advice, and Israel fell into sin, worshiping [Baal of Peor](#) and committing fornication with Midianite women. For this God plagued them, and 24,000 men died (Numbers 25:1–9; Deuteronomy 23:3–6).

Balaam's name and story became infamous, and he is referred to several times in the New Testament. Peter compares false teachers to Balaam, "who loved the wages of wickedness" (2 Peter 2:15). Jude echoes this sentiment, associating Balaam with the selling of one's soul for financial gain (Jude 1:11). Finally, Jesus speaks of Balaam when He warns [the church in Pergamum](#) of their sin: "There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality" (Revelation 2:14). Satan's tactics haven't changed all that much. If he cannot curse God's people directly, he will try the back-door approach, and [idolatry](#) and [sexual immorality](#) are his go-to temptations. [GotQuestions.org](#)

#### Related Resource:

- [What is the doctrine of Balaam? | GotQuestions.org](#)

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#### James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - BALAAM; OR, THE EXPERIENCES OF A CASTAWAY Joshua 13:22; 1 Corinthians 9:27

"Not change of place, but change of heart  
Winneth the sweet wounds of love's dart;  
Coming or leaving, Thy power alone  
Shattereth or melteth heart of stone.

Not change of place, but unchanged heart  
Removes us, Lord, from where Thou art;

Darkened love! thrice saddest wonder!  
Putteth God and us asunder.”

“Balaam, the son of Beor, did the children of Israel slay with the sword among them that were slain by them.” This is a very brief statement, but it is a terrible revelation. He who once declared the Word and will of God is found slain among His enemies. A striking example of the “withered branch” referred to in John 15:6. It may be true in our Christian experience what Felicia Hemans said in another connection:

“No outward thing is changed,  
Only the joy of purity is fled.”

A tree may have every appearance of health and stability even while in heart it is rotting away. It is possible to have the form of godliness while there is an utter absence of the power. The character of Balaam is somewhat enigmatical, but enough has been given us to make a beacon fire of warning to every servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us look at—

### **I. His Character and Privileges.**

1. HE WAS BROUGHT INTO CONTACT WITH GOD (Num. 22:9–12; 23:4). What an angelic privilege to have God to speak to us, and to know that it is God who speaks! One would think that such an evidence of His existence and personal interest in us would be enough to bind our souls for ever in faithfulness to Him. But, alas, how many of us hear His Word, and believe it to be His Word, yet fail in obedience to it?
2. HE HAD THE COURAGE TO ACKNOWLEDGE GOD BEFORE OTHERS. “Balaam said, The Word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak” (Num. 22:38). Nobly spoken. In form this is the confession of the faithful (1 Kings 22:14). This is a hopeful start on the prophetic career. Ye did run well. Who did hinder? Remember Lot’s wife.
3. HE HAD THE WORD OF THE LORD PUT IN HIS MOUTH (Num. 23:5). In this he was as highly favoured as the true and tender-hearted Jeremiah (Jer. 1:9). Nor was he alone in this honour. “But what saith it? The Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart, that is, the Word of faith which we preach” (Rom. 10:8). To have the Word of God put in our mouths when young is good, but that is not enough to make faithful servants of Christ.
4. HE WAS CONVINCED OF THE SAFETY AND HAPPINESS OF GOD’S PEOPLE (Num. 23:21–24). Balaam’s testimony is: “He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob; the Lord his God is with him, and there is no enchantment against him.” Indicating a threefold privilege that belongs to all His redeemed ones: 1, Forgiveness; 2, Fellowship; 3, Safety (Rom. 4:7, 8; Heb. 13:5; Rom. 8:33). It is never very difficult to convince the ungodly that the Christian has the best of it. When the magicians failed to imitate the works of Moses they were ready to confess that “this is the finger of God” (Exod. 8:16–19).
5. HE HAD HIS EYES OPENED TO SEE THE VISION. “He saw the vision of the Almighty falling into a trance, but having his eyes open” (Num. 24:3, 4). To have one’s eyes open to see the vision of the Almighty in His wondrous grace and mercy in Christ Jesus is imperative to a holy God-pleasing life. There are those who seek to witness for God who have never seen the vision, whose inner eyes have never yet been opened; and there are those who, like Balaam, have seen the vision, and have turned back. Zechariah had understanding in the “visions of God,” and as one has lately said, “Eternity itself will be needed to measure the life of the man who has seen the visions of God.” It is an awful thing to see God in Christ and die. The vision will haunt the impenitent through eternity.
6. HE DECLARED HIS FAITHFULNESS TO GOD. “I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord to do either good or bad, but what the Lord saith, that will I speak” (Num. 24:13). These words have a very pleasant sound in our ears, coming as they do after seeing the “vision of the Almighty.” They were spoken in a firm, decisive tone. “If Balak,” he says, “would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the Word of God.” Alas, alas, Peter has a fearful comment to make on this loud-lip profession. “Balaam, who loved the wages of unrighteousness” (2 Peter 2:15; Jude 11). Not every one that saith shall enter into the kingdom.
7. HE WAS AT TIMES MOVED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD. “The Spirit of God came upon him” (Num. 24:2). Is Balaam also among the prophets? Yes. For a time the tongue of prophetic fire rests upon him, and he speaks the wisdom of God. The coming of the Spirit upon him, as upon others, was entirely of the GRACE of God, an opportunity and a provision brought within the reach of a soul that may enrich the life for ever, or that may be heartlessly received, and end in failure, darkness, disappointment, and disgrace. Take heed lest the light that is in thee be turned into darkness.
8. HE HAD A GREAT DESIRE TO DIE THE DEATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS. “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his” (Num. 23:10). There are two ends to the life of the righteous, the first and the last. The first may not always be blessed, but the last is. “Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord” (Rev.

14:13). In the sight of the Lord their death is precious (Psa. 116:15). He desired the blessed end of the righteous without living their separated life. A vain hope. Balaam was found slain among the enemies of the Lord (Josh. 13:22). Take heed to thyself.

## II. His Guilt and Failure.

1. HE SOUGHT TO ALTER THE WORD OF GOD. "The Lord afterwards declared that "He would not hearken unto Balaam" (Josh. 24:9). It would appear from this that he pleaded with the Lord to change His manner of dealing with Israel, and so break His Word of promise. The backsliding in heart would always fain do this.

2. HE LOVED THE WAGES OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS (2 Peter 2:15). Like Lot's wife, he would like the rewards of the righteous, but his heart was set on the gain of godlessness. The love of the heart decides the character of the life in the sight of God. Be not deceived, God is not mocked. The Lord looketh upon the heart. Love is either the fulfilling or the breaking of the law of God.

3. HE TAUGHT THE PEOPLE OF GOD TO SIN (Rev. 2:14; Num. 31:16). This is an awfully solemn charge to bring against a man whose eyes had been opened to see the vision of the Almighty, but it is the Almighty One Himself who makes the charge. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon. If we fail to walk in the light, and turn aside, like Balaam, to the company and fellowship of the ungodly we cannot but "cast a stumbling block" in the way of others, and bring woe upon our own souls.

4. HE WENT BACK TO HIS OWN PLACE. "And Balaam rose up, and went and returned to his own place" (Num. 24:25). Back like the sow that was washed to its wallowing in the mire. "They went out from us because they were not of us; if they had been of us they would no doubt have continued with us." Back to his own place of curse after God had in mercy given him a place of blessing. If he had gone out heartily for God and His people he would have had no cause or desire to go back. To turn away from God is to go back to your own place of death and dishonour (Heb. 6:4-6).

5. HE CAME TO A WOEFUL END. "Balaam also did the children of Israel slay with the sword among them that were slain by them" (Josh. 13:22). In going back to his own place he dug his own grave and sealed his own doom. Backslider, beware. Return unto the Lord, and He will restore again the joy of thy salvation. The love of the world is a sin that will eat like a canker the spiritual life out of the soul. It was not without good reason Paul wrote: "I keep my body under, lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. 9:27; Acts 1:25).

**Joshua 13:23 And the border of the sons of Reuben was the Jordan. This was the inheritance of the sons of Reuben according to their families, the cities and their villages.**

- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### SUMMATION OF THE INHERITANCE OF REUBEN

**And the border of the sons of Reuben was the Jordan-** See Reuben's [sites on this map](#) Much of the inheritance of the Reubenites had the Dead Sea as its westward boundary and just a very little of the Jordan River close to its northern boundary. The Reubenites had the Arrunonites on the east and the Dead Sea, with just a portion of the Jordan River, on the west.

- [See this map of Reuben's tribal allotment.](#)

**This was the inheritance of the sons of Reuben according to their families, the cities and their villages-** In measuring out the land, you can say that the inheritance was about 25 miles north and south and about 32 miles east and west.

**Joshua 13:24 Moses also gave an inheritance to the tribe of [Gad](#), to the sons of Gad, according to their families.**

- Nu 32:34-36
- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passages:**

Numbers 32:34-36 The sons of Gad built Dibon and Ataroth and Aroer, 35 and Atroth-shophan and Jazer and Jogbehah, 36 and Beth-nimrah and Beth-haran as fortified cities, and sheepfolds for sheep.

## INHERITANCE TO TRIBE OF GAD

**Moses also gave an inheritance to the tribe of [Gad](#), to the sons of Gad, according to their families**- GAD is the 7th born son to Jacob, and Gad is the firstborn of Leah's maid Zilpah. Gad means "to be fortunate, rich. "

**Joshua 13:25 And their territory was Jazer, and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the sons of Ammon, as far as Aroer which is before Rabbah;**

- their coast: Nu 32:35
- Jazer: A city near a brook of the same name, now called Wady Szyr; and probably the present Szyr occupies its site.
- half: Nu 21:26-30 De 2:19 Jdg 11:13-27
- Rabbah: De 3:11 2Sa 11:1 12:26 Eze 21:20 Am 1:14
- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**And their territory was [Jazer](#), and all the cities of [Gilead](#), and half the land of the [sons of Ammon](#), as far as [Aroer](#) which is before [Rabbah](#)** - You can [locate Gilead on this map](#) (I suggest opening this link in a new window to facilitate easy location as you read) - first locate the name Ammon (on right side of map) and go slightly to the north and west for Gilead. **Rabbah** is next to the name AMMON.

Jazer is about 12 miles north of Heshbon, which is the northern boundary of Reuben's territory.

**Jazer** Place name meaning, "May He help." Amorite city state Israel conquered while marching across the land east of the Jordan towards the Promised Land (Numbers 21:32 ). The tribe of Gad rebuilt and settled Jazer (Numbers 32:35; compare Joshua 13:25 ). Joshua assigned it to the Levites (Joshua 21:39 ). Isaiah pronounced judgment on Jazer while preaching against Moab (Isaiah 16:8-9 ). Jeremiah echoed him (Jeremiah 48:32 ). David found outstanding leaders there (1 Chronicles 26:32 ). It was also an important city in the period between the Testaments (1Maccabees 1 Chronicles 5:8 ). Interpreters debate Jazer's exact location. German archaeologists appear to favor tell el-Areme, while Israelis point to khirbet es-Sar about eight miles west of Amman. Others point to khirbet Jazzir about two miles south of es-Salt

**Rabbah** A very strong place on the east of the Jordan, and the chief city of the Ammonites. In five passages - Deuteronomy 3:11; 2 Samuel 12:26; 2 Samuel 17:27; Jeremiah 49:2; Ezekiel 21:20 - it is styled at length, Rabbath of the Ammonites, or the children of Ammon; but elsewhere, Joshua 13:25; 2 Samuel 11:1; 2 Samuel 12:27; 2 Samuel 12:29; 1 Chronicles 20:1; Jeremiah 49:3, simply Rabbah. When first named, it is mentioned as containing the bed or sarcophagus of the giant Og. Deuteronomy 3:11. David sent Joab to besiege Rabbah. 2 Samuel 11:1; 2 Samuel 11:17; etc. Joab succeeded in capturing a portion of the place - the "city of waters," that is, the lower town, so called from its containing the perennial stream, which rises in and still flows through it. The citadel still remained to be taken, but this was secured shortly after David's arrival. 2 Samuel 12:26-31. Long after, at the date of the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar, Jeremiah 49:2-3, it had walls and palaces. It is named in such terms as to imply that it was of equal importance with Jerusalem. Ezekiel 21:20. From Ptolemy Philadelphus, (B.C. 285-247), it received the name of Philadelphia. It was one of the cities of the Decapolis, and became the seat of a Christian bishop. Its ruins, which are considerable are found at Ammon about 22 miles from the Jordan. It lies in a valley, which is a branch, or perhaps the main course, of the Wady Zerka usually identified with the Jabbok. The public buildings are said to be Roman, except the citadel, which is described as of large square stones put together without cement, and which is probably more ancient than the rest.

**Joshua 13:26 and from [Heshbon](#) as far as [Ramath-mizpeh](#) and [Betonim](#), and from [Mahanaim](#) as far as the border of [Debir](#)**

- Ramathmizpeh: Jos 20:8 Ge 31:49 Jdg 10:17 11:11,29 1Ki 22:3
- Mahanaim: Jos 21:38 Ge 32:1,2 2Sa 2:8 17:27
- Debir: 2Sa 9:4,5 17:27, Lodebar
- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**and from [Heshbon](#) as far as [Ramath-mizpeh](#) and [Betonim](#), and from [Mahanaim](#) as far as the border of [Debir](#)** - You can [locate](#)

[some of these sites on this map](#) (I suggest opening this link in a new window to facilitate easy location as you read) - look to right (east) of Jordan River. Only cities on map are Betonim and Heshbon.

It is Mahanaim where Abner and Ishbosheth set up a northern rival kingdom to David's in Hebron. And it is at Mahanaim that David flees to stage his military operations against Absalom.

**Ramath-mizpeh** high-place of the watch-tower; Sept.  $\rho\alpha\beta\theta\kappa\alpha\tau\tau\nu\text{Μασσηφά}$ , v. r.  $\rho\alpha\mu\theta\kappa\alpha\tau\tau\nu\text{Μασφά}$ ; Vulg. Ramath Masphe). In defining the boundaries of the tribe of Gad, Joshua states that Moses gave them inheritance... : "from Heshbon unto Ramath-mizpeh, and Betonim" (Joshua 13:26). This place is nowhere else mentioned; and it appears to have constituted one of the landmarks on the northern border of the tribe, which ran from the banks of the Jabbok, in the parallel of Jerash, to the southern end of the Sea of Galilee. It was in this region Jacob and Laban had their remarkable interview and entered into the covenant. The place where they vowed to each other was marked by a heap of stones, and called both Galeed and Mizpah (Genesis 31:48-49). This would seem to suggest the identity of the Mizpah of Jacob and Ramath-Mizpeh.

**Betonim** Place name meaning, "pistachios." A border town in tribal allotment of Gad (Joshua 13:26). It is located at khirbet el-Batne, two and a half miles southeast of es Salt on Mount Gilead.

**Mahanaim**, two camps, as often, and explained in Genesis 32:2 as meaning the heavenly army of God; where the Sept. has  $\text{Παρεμβολαί}$ , Vulg. Mahanaim, id est Castra; elsewhere  $\text{Μαανά Ρ μ}$  or  $\text{Μααναϊ ν μ}$ , once  $\text{Μαναῆμ}$ , sometimes  $\text{παρεμβολαί}$ ; Vulg. Manaim, but usually castra), a place beyond the Jordan, north of the river Jabbok, which derived its name from Jacob's having been there met by the angels (Josephus,  $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\sigma\tau\text{ρατόπεδον}$ , Ant. 1:20, 1) on his return from Padan-aram (Genesis 32:2). (The name was eventually extended to the town which then existed, or which afterwards arose in the neighborhood. This town was on the confines of the tribes of Gad and Manasseh, as well as on the southern boundary of Bashan (Joshua 13:26; Joshua 13:30), and was a city of the Levites (Joshua 21:38; 1 Chronicles 6:80). It was in this city that Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, reigned (2 Samuel 2:8; 2 Samuel 2:12) during David's reign at Hebron, and here he was assassinated (ch. 4). The choice of this place was probably because he found the influence of David's name less strong on the east than on the west of the Jordan; at least, it seems to show that Mahanaim was then an important and strong place (comp. 2 Samuel 2:29; 2 Samuel 19:32). Hence, many years after, David himself repaired to Mahanaim, where he was entertained by Barzillai, the aged sheik of that district, when he sought refuge beyond the Jordan from his son Absalom (2 Samuel 17:24; 2 Samuel 17:27; 1 Kings 2:8). In this vicinity also appears to have been fought the decisive battle in the wood of Ephraim, between the royal troops and the rebels (2 Samuel 18). Apparently it was on the border between Gad and Manasseh, and it was assigned as a Levitical city (Joshua 13:26,30; 21:38; comp. 1 Chronicles 6:80).

**Debir** A town in Gad east of the Jordan given various spellings in the Hebrew Bible: *Lidebor* (Joshua 13:26); *Lwo Debar* (2 Samuel 9:4-5); *Lo' Debar* (2 Samuel 17:27); *Lo' Dabar* (Amos 6:13). The city may be modern Umm el-Dabar, twelve miles north of Pella. It apparently was near Mahanaim, where first Ish-bosheth and then David while fleeing Absalom, made their headquarters. Some Bible students have suggested a location at tell el-Chamme or khirbet Chamid.

Joshua 13:27 and in the valley, **Beth-haram** and **Beth-nimrah** and **Succoth** and **Zaphon**, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of **Heshbon**, with the Jordan as a border, as far as the lower end of the Sea of **Chinnereth** beyond the Jordan to the east

- **Beth-haram**: Nu 32:36
- **Beth-nimrah**: Nu 32:3,36
- **Succoth**: Ge 33:17 Jdg 8:5,6,14-16 1Ki 7:46
- **Chinnereth**: Jos 11:2 12:3, Nu 34:11 De 3:17 Lu 5:1
- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

and in the valley, **Beth-haram** and **Beth-nimrah** and **Succoth** and **Zaphon**, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of **Heshbon**, with the Jordan as a border, as far as the lower end of the Sea of **Chinnereth** beyond the Jordan to the east - Sea of Chinnereth is the Sea of Galilee. Basically, this is describing almost everything on the east side of the Jordan River from the Dead Sea to the Sea of Galilee.

**Beth-haram** Place name meaning, "house of the exalted one," or "house of height." (KJV, Beth-aram). A city Moses allotted the tribe of Gad (Joshua 13:27). It is probably tell er-Rameh though others suggest tell Iktanu. It is probably the same as Beth-haran. A city near mount Peor, and not far from the entrance of the Jordan into the Dead Sea; rebuilt and called Livias by Herod, in honour of Livia, wife of Augustus.

**Beth-nimrah** Place name meaning, "house of the panther." City east of the Jordan that tribe of Gad rebuilt after Moses allotted it to them (Numbers 32:36). It provided good grazing land (Numbers 32:3). It is located at either tell Nimrin or nearby at tell el-Bleibil, about ten miles northeast of the mouth of the Jordan

**Succoth** A place name meaning, “booths.” A city east of the Jordan in the tribal territory of Gad. Jacob dwelt there upon his return to Canaan (Genesis 33:17 ). It was an important town during the time of Gideon. Its leaders were punished by Gideon for not helping him in a campaign against the Midianites (Judges 8:5-7 ,Judges 8:5-7,8:13-16 ). Near Succoth Hiram made vessels for Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 7:45-46 ). It is usually located at tell Deir Alla, but some excavation results have called this into question.

**Zaphon** Place name meaning, “north.” City east of the Jordan River in Gad's territory (Joshua 13:27 ). It was probably a center of worship of the god Baal-zaphon in the days of Canaanite supremacy before the Gadites took over. It is identified with tell el-Qos, tell es-Saidiye, or tell el-Mazar. Shopan (Numbers 32:35 ) may be another spelling of the same city.

**Joshua 13:28 This is the inheritance of the sons of Gad according to their families, the cities and their villages.**

- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SUMMATION OF THE INHERITANCE OF GAD

**This is the inheritance of the sons of Gad according to their families, the cities and their villages-** If you were to measure this territory, it would be about 25 miles east and west, and about 60 miles north and south. The Gadites would have Ammon on the east and Reuben on the south, Manasseh on the north, and the Jordan River as its west boundary. The south boundary would be just a little bit north of the Dead Sea, and the north boundary would be at the south end of the Sea of Galilee.

- [See this map of Gad's tribal allotment.](#)

**Joshua 13:29 Moses also gave an inheritance to the half-tribe of Manasseh; and it was for the half-tribe of the sons of Manasseh according to their families.**

- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## INHERITANCE TO HALF-TRIBE OF MANASSEH

**Moses also gave an inheritance to the half-tribe of Manasseh; and it was for the half-tribe of the sons of Manasseh according to their families -**

**Joshua 13:30 And their territory was from Mahanaim, all Bashan, all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and all the towns of Jair, which are in Bashan, sixty cities;**

- Jos 13:26 Nu 32:39-41 De 3:13-15 1Ch 2:21-23

**And their territory was from Mahanaim, all Bashan, all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and all the towns of Jair, which are in Bashan, sixty cities -** You can [locate Bashan on this map](#)

**Bashan** - The northernmost region of Palestine east of the Jordan River. Though its precise extent cannot be determined with certainty, it was generally east of the Sea of Galilee. In the time of Moses it was ruled over by a king named Og, whom the Israelite army defeated (Numbers 21:33-35 ). It was assigned to the tribal area of Manasseh (Deuteronomy 3:13; Joshua 13:29-31 ). Probably on account of its frontier location, it changed hands several times during the course of Israelite history. It was known as a particularly fertile area (Deuteronomy 32:14; Ezekiel 39:18 ).

**Joshua 13:31 also half of Gilead, with Ashtaroth and Edrei, the cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan, were for the sons of Machir the son of Manasseh, for half of the sons of Machir according to their families.**

- Ashtaroth: Jos 12:4
- the children of Machir by: Nu 32:39,40

- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SUMMATION OF THE INHERITANCE OF THE HALF-TRIBE OF MANASSEH

also half of [Gilead](#), with [Ashtaroth](#) and [Edrei](#), the cities of the [kingdom of Og](#) in [Bashan](#), were for the [sons of Machir](#) the son of **Manasseh, for half of the sons of Machir according to their families** - You can [locate Ashtaroth and in Edrei on this map](#) (I suggest opening this link in a new window to facilitate easy location as you read). Find Bashan just to right (east) of the Sea of Chinnereth and you will see [Ashtaroth](#) and [Edrei](#). When you measure this territory, you come up with about 65 miles north and south, and 60+ miles east and west . You have Syria in the north and the Sea of Galilee in the west; Gad and Ammon in the south and the Syrian Desert on the east.

Although all of Bashan was assigned to the half tribe of Manasseh, it is doubtful that settlement reached beyond the Yarmuk Valley.

**Machir** Personal name meaning “sold.” Oldest son of Manasseh and grandson of Joseph (Joshua 17:1 ). He was the father of Gilead (Joshua 17:1 ), Peresh, and Sheresh (1 Chronicles 7:16 ), and a daughter whose name is not given (1 Chronicles 2:21 ). He had a brother named Asriel (1 Chronicles 7:14 ) and a wife named Maacah (1 Chronicles 7:16 ). Machir was the head of the family called the Machirites (Numbers 26:29 ). Apparently Machir along with his family had a reputation for being expert warriors (Joshua 17:1 ). “Because he was a man of war,” Machir was allotted the territory of Bashan and Gilead, east of the Jordan (Joshua 17:1 ). Apparently the territory of the Machirites started at the site of Mahanaim, on the Jabbok River, extended northward, and included the region around the Yarmuk River (Joshua 13:29-31 ).

**Joshua 13:32 These are the territories which Moses apportioned for an inheritance in the plains of Moab, beyond the Jordan at Jericho to the east.**

- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SUMMATION OF THE INHERITANCE APPORTIONED BY MOSES

**These are the territories which Moses apportioned for an inheritance in the plains of Moab, beyond the Jordan at Jericho to the east.** - A summary of the preceding detailed allotment to Reuben, Gad and half tribe of Manasseh.

**Joshua 13:33 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.**

- Jos 18:7 Dt 10:9 Dt 18:1-2
- [Joshua 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

Numbers 18:20; 24+ Then the LORD said to Aaron, **“You shall have no inheritance in their land nor own any portion among them; I am your portion and your inheritance among the sons of Israel.** ...24 “For the tithe of the sons of Israel, which they offer as an offering to the LORD, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance; therefore I have said concerning them, ‘They shall have no inheritance among the sons of Israel.’”

Numbers 35:2+ “Command the sons of Israel that they give to the Levites from the inheritance of their possession cities to live in; and you shall give to the Levites pasture lands around the cities.

Joshua 13:14 Only to the tribe of Levi he did not give an inheritance; the offerings by fire to the LORD, the God of Israel, are their inheritance, as He spoke to him.

Deuteronomy 10:9+ Therefore, Levi does not have a portion or inheritance with his brothers;**the LORD is his inheritance**, just as the LORD your God spoke to him.)

Deuteronomy 18:1-2+ “The Levitical priests, the whole tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Israel; they shall eat the LORD’S offerings by fire and His portion. 2 **“They shall have no inheritance among their countrymen; the LORD is their inheritance**, as He promised them.

**But to [the tribe of Levi](#), Moses did not give an inheritance ([nachalah](#))** - No land but the LORD! The priestly tribe of Levi did not receive a definite territory, but instead was allotted 48 cities distributed over the tribal areas, the purpose of their dispersion among the people was to facilitate their teaching the people the Word of the LORD. Simeon and Levi were also scattered in fulfillment of the prophecy of Jacob (Ge 49:5–7). Simeon eventually became a part of Judah. The Levites were to remain unentangled with the affairs of the laity and were given no inheritance or share of property in the promised land.

**THOUGHT** - The fact that Levi had no land relieved them of any pressure to deal with the various vagaries of owning a piece of property (We all know what that is like - I just received my property tax bill and "Yipes!") Their status in a sense is that they would be unencumbered by the things of this world, and instead of being [cumbered](#) (weighed down, hindered, hampered) by them! This truth reminds me of two passages in the New Testament that speak to us a "believer-priests" of God

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also **lay aside every encumbrance ([ogkos](#))** and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 fixing ([aphorao](#) = VERB MEANS LOOKING AWAY FROM EVERYTHING THAT MIGHT DISTRACT US SO THAT WE CAN HAVE SINGLE MINDED FOCUS OF) **our eyes on Jesus**, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1-2+)

Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. **4No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life**, so that (PURPOSE!) he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. (2 Timothy 2:3-4+)

[Guzik](#) adds "In this sense, if there is any tribe that Christians are spiritually connected to, it is the tribe of Levi. We also are called priests (1 Peter 2:5) and have a special inheritance in God (Ephesians 1:11, Colossians 1:12, and 1 Peter 1:4). Many of us are dissatisfied with our place before God. We wish He would have given us something different, and we can even get bitter towards God about this. The primary answer to this is to see ourselves as priests, and to understand that our real inheritance is God Himself.

**William MacDonald** - Dropping Levi from the tribes leaves only eleven tribes. But Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, are included in Joseph's place, and that raises the number to twelve again. The reason Joseph's sons are included is that they were adopted by Jacob as his own sons before his death (Gen. 48:5). ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**The LORD, the God of Israel, is their inheritance ([nachalah](#)), as He had promised to them** - All the tribes of Israel except Levi received allotments of the promised land except Levi who received an even better (the best) promise! Yahweh was to be the focus of the Levites for He alone was their inheritance. The Levites were to be totally committed to their work for Yahweh on behalf of the people. Promised is *dabar* which is the content of what is spoken, and in the case of God it equates with assurance that He will keep His Word. That was true yesterday, today and tomorrow. Hallelujah! Amen!

**THOUGHT**- God would meet their needs just as He meets our needs beloved. As Paul writes "And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." (Php 4:19+)

**God of Israel, is their inheritance** - They were to be satisfied with God and His work. Paul said, But godliness with contentment is great gain. (1 Timothy 6:6) The priest could not serve God if he was bogged down with the concerns and cares of the world. The high priest was God's man dedicated to the things pertaining to God.

**Donald Campbell** - By contrast with the rich though dangerous inheritance of these tribes, it is twice emphasized in this chapter (Joshua 13:14, 33) and twice later (Joshua 14:3–4; 18:7) that the tribe of Levi received no inheritance from Moses. At first this may seem puzzling, but closer examination reveals that in lieu of territorial possessions the tribe of Levi was allotted the sacrifices or offerings (Joshua 13:14), the priesthood (Joshua 18:7), and the LORD Himself (Joshua 13:33). Who could have dreamed of a greater inheritance? The two and one-half tribes chose, as Lot did, on the **basis of appearance** (cf. Gen. 13:10–11), and their inheritance was ultimately lost to them. On the other hand the Levites, requesting no portion, were given an inheritance of abiding spiritual significance. (ED: AS WE SAY [APPEARANCES CAN BE DECEIVING!](#)) ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#))

**NET Note** - Levi has no allotment or inheritance. As the priestly tribe, Levi would have no land allotment **except for forty-eight towns set apart for their use** (Nu 35:1–8; Josh 21:1–42). But theirs was a far greater inheritance, **for the LORD himself was their apportionment, that is, service to him would be their full-time and lifelong privilege** (Num 18:20–24; Deut 18:2; Josh 13:33).

**McGee** - Notice that the tribe of Levi was to have no material inheritance. God was their inheritance. God had promised to give land, a certain amount of acreage, to the other tribes. And when He blessed them, it was temporal blessing. He did not promise that to Levi. This is also the position of the believer today. Like Levi, our inheritance is in God. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies.

**TSK Note** - At verse 14, as well as here, notice is taken, that to the tribe of Levi, "Moses gave no inheritance," for so God had



appointed. Nu 18:20. If they had been appointed to a lot entire by themselves, Moses would have served them first, not because it was his own tribe, but because it was God's, but they must be provided for in another manner; their habitation must be scattered in all the tribes, and their maintenance brought out of all the tribes, and God himself was the portion both of their inheritance and of their cup.

**Life Application Study Bible** - The tribe of Levi was dedicated to serving God. The Levites needed more time and mobility than a landowner could possibly have. Giving them land would mean saddling them with responsibilities and loyalties that would hinder their service to God. Instead, God arranged for the other tribes to meet the Levites' needs through donations. (See Numbers 35:2–4 for how the Levites were to receive cities within each tribal territory.)

**Dale Ralph Davis** - In this section the writer points the people of God to their true inheritance. He does this in the two notes about the Levites. They were exceptional in that they did not receive a land allotment like the other tribes. Rather, Levi's inheritance consisted of the offerings by fire (or 'food offerings' or 'gifts?') belonging to Yahweh (Joshua 13:14) or, quite plainly, of Yahweh himself (Joshua 13:33). However, any believing Israelite could come to adopt this Levite perspective, realising that, above all else, Yahweh himself was his 'portion in the land of the living' (Ps. 142:5), indeed his 'portion forever' (Ps. 73:26). This does not mean that a truly spiritual Israelite would regard his land inheritance as so much dirt. No, faith always prizes the land as Yahweh's gift (Ps. 37:3, 9, 11, 22, 29, 34). But healthy, grateful faith sees beyond the inheritance to the one who granted it and is careful never to prize Yahweh's gifts more than Yahweh himself. Hence Levi—and Israel—should say, 'Yahweh is my inheritance, my portion.' He remains such, even if the land be taken away (Lam. 3:24 in context). ([Joshua: No Falling Words](#))

**Rod Mattoon** has an interesting note - The Levites would later be provided with 48 priestly cities among all the tribes. They would be given pasture lands for flocks and herds (Numbers 35:2). Simeon and Levi were both instruments of cruelty (Genesis 49:5–7). Simeon was absorbed into the tribe of Judah. **Levi went on to prosper. Why?** Why was Levi chosen as the priestly tribe? The answer is found in Exodus 32:26–28. While Moses was in the mount, Israel erected a golden calf and began to worship it. The Levites made their choice for God in the wilderness, not in the land of blessing. In the wilderness, God's promises were still obscure and His purposes were still unknown. The future was still dark and the journey was wearisome. Sin and idolatry abounded all around, yet, the Levites turned to the Lord in a crucial moment that demanded great faith. Their choice for God was a choice of conviction, not convenience. ([Treasures From Joshua](#))

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## A Moravian Missionary

"But unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not any inheritance: the LORD God of Israel was their inheritance, as he said unto them."—Josh. 13:33

The Moravian missionary, Zeisberger, who laboured for sixty-three years among the Red Indians, never took a penny from the Church for his support. "I am no hireling," he said quietly; "God set me this work."

Zeisberger died in extreme old age in an Indian village. Bishop de Schweinitz, in his history of the Moravian missionary, tells us that, when the hour of his death drew nigh, the passing bell tolled, and his white friends, the Brethren, withdrew and gave way to the Lenape Indians, who gathered around his bed. They sang the hymns in their own tongue, which he had written for them, and on these strains of lofty hope his soul passed. "Then," says the chronicler, "the red men fell upon their knees, and wept aloud, for they knew that their best friend was gone for ever."

## Related Resource -

- [What is the Moravian Church? | GotQuestions.org](#)

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## H Forbes Witherby - The Most Sacred Inheritance Joshua 13:14, 33 -

THE countries which the children of Israel inherited in Canaan were settled by Jehovah by lot, and distributed by the high priest and the leader of Israel, the heads of the tribes conveying the Lord's directions to the people.

Levi's peculiar portion is first to be considered: "Unto the tribe of Levi He gave none inheritance; the sacrifices of the Lord God of Israel made by fire are their inheritance, as He said unto them" (13:14). The Lord God of Israel was their inheritance (13:33). Levi was "scattered in Israel," according to the prophecy of Jacob; but Levi's portion was the most sacred and the most precious of all. Wherever the other tribes dwelt, there was Levi; wherever the devout spirits in Israel worshipped the Lord, there Levi had his inheritance. The Lord—not a position—was Levi's lot: "The Lord God of Israel is their inheritance." And so it is that the happiest and wealthiest Christians are they who find in the Lord Himself their portion. Whether dwelling among the two and a half tribes on the other side Jordan, or among the nine and a half in Canaan, not the special position of the land where their cities were, but Jehovah Himself, and the sacrifices made by fire to him, were Levi's inheritance. "The breadth, and length, and depth, and height" (Eph. 3:18) are most truly comprehended by those Christians who have most of Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith; by those who, like Levi, have the Lord Himself and the sacrifices as their conscious portion. It is well to fight the giants and to overcome cities; but it is better to sacrifice burnt offerings and to partake of

peace offerings, to worship God and to hold communion with Him concerning the Lord Jesus.

Levi's portion, in one sense, could never be assailed either by the dweller in the land or by the foreign foe; for even in the darkest day of Israel's departure, when the people of God had betaken themselves to caves and holes in the earth for fear of the enemy, Levi could look up to the unclouded heavens, and exclaim to Jehovah, "Thou art my portion and the lot of my inheritance." Yet in another sense, Levi would be the first to suffer in the day of Israel's adversity, for the sacrifices of Israel were Levi's portion, and these would fail when the foe held Israel captive. And so it is, those nearest to Christ, while they rejoice in a portion that can never be removed, and which never can vary, are the first to feel, in all its acuteness, the spiritual poverty of saints or their affliction by the enemy.

Israel, responsible to maintain their possession in Canaan, might and did utterly fail; the heathen and the idols might and did obtain the mastery over them; but the unchangeable God was Levi's inheritance, and wherever the spirit of worship to Him arose in any of Israel, and sacrifices by fire were offered to Him, there Levi had his inheritance.

With the material blessings of Israel before our eye—their land flowing with milk and honey, and fed with depths springing out of valleys and hills—it is not difficult to discern the peculiar position occupied by Levi. And, spiritually understood, in the Levites' inheritance is seen the believer's most perfect portion; for, while we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ, while we have in Him pleasures bestowed upon us for evermore, we have, beyond all blessings which are conferred upon us through or in Christ, the Lord Himself. Indeed, believers are brought into the blessings of Christianity that they may delight in Christ. God has saved and brought His people to Himself, for no less an end than that of their being like the Lord and knowing Him as they are known. (1 Cor. 13:12.) God's grace towards us reaches beyond deliverance from wrath and entrance into life. Therefore, while we contemplate His mercy—the forgiveness of sins, redemption of Christ, death and resurrection with Christ—it is for us to reach forth, in order that we may realize and abide in our nearest and highest portion. "That I may know Him" (Phil. 3:10), is the high aim of the energy of the new life.

When the Lord is seen, by faith, in his excellence, the glory of his light dims everything else. Saul of Tarsus saw His face brighter than the noonday sun, and thenceforth Saul was for heaven. The Lord in the heavens instructed him not only concerning the glory, but opened to him the wonder of His own heart there.

It is well to consider our unchangeable God and our unvarying portion in Him before we dwell on the failure of God's people in general, either to lay firm hold of the conquered portions of the land, or to advance and conquer the portions still unpossessed. Let the Lord Himself fill the heart, and the possessions will be obtained, but where possessions are the object and not the Lord, the soul is dry and unprofitable, and the hard and unprofitable soul soon loses conscious grip of its possessions.

[\(The Book of Joshua, shadowing forth the Fulness of Blessings in Christ\)](#)

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**John Butler - [Sermon Starters Volume 6](#)**

### **DOES IT PAY TO SERVE THE LORD? Joshua 13:33**

"Unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not any inheritance; the LORD God of Israel was their inheritance, as he said unto them." (Joshua 13:33).

The question many ask is, Does it pay to serve God? Peter asked the question to Christ about remuneration for faithfully following Him (Matthew 19:27). The question is not an evil question, for we should ask every solicitor what the remuneration is. Sin tries to tell us that it will bring great remuneration when it actually brings great retribution. So ask the question. No one pays as well as God. Our text is an illustration of God taking care of those who serve him.

#### **FIRST—THE CLAN**

"The tribe of Levi." This tribe was a special tribe in Israel. From this tribe came the priests and all the helpers in the Tabernacle and the Temple. This tribe would replace the firstborn of all the Israelites (Numbers 3:12) as well as take care of the services of the Tabernacle and the Temple. They had great spiritual privilege in their position. But it required a life time of dedication. The Levites could never be anything but God's servants.

#### **SECOND—THE COMPENSATION**

"Moses gave not any inheritance; the LORD God of Israel was their inheritance" The compensation was twofold.

- The restrictive part of the compensation. "Not any inheritance." While they had great spiritual privileges, their compensation was restricted. They would receive no inheritance in the land of Canaan. You do not read of any tribal allotment being given them as was given to the other tribes. This part is the hard part for those serving the Lord. If you are called to serve Him, there are privileges, but there are also the restrictions. Ministers and missionaries will not be millionaires in this life. Devoting your life to service for Him may leave you without much material possessions that others have. Spiritual privilege is nice to have, but it comes at a high price.
- The rewarding part of the compensation. "The LORD God of Israel was their inheritance." To the truly dedicated,

this is a great blessing; but to the carnal it is a disappointing compensation. If you would serve the Lord, you must by faith let Him take care of your remuneration. You do not bargain with Him about your pay. You should be primarily interested in your duties. Trust Him. He will reward you with sufficient blessings which will last eternally.

### THIRD—THE CONFIRMATION

“As he said unto them.” The Word of God confirms the compensation in this call to service. Those called to serve have many promises in the Scriptures about God taking care of them. However, if the material compensations (“inheritance”) is lacking, some feel God has forsaken them. But His Word says otherwise (1 Corinthians 15:58; Matthew 19:28, 29). The Levites never went begging.

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#### QUESTION - [How was God Himself the inheritance of the Levites?](#)

**ANSWER** - Deuteronomy 18:1–2 says that the Levites had a very special inheritance from God: “The Levitical priests—indeed, the whole tribe of Levi—are to have no allotment or inheritance with Israel. They shall live on the food offerings presented to the Lord, for that is their inheritance. They shall have no inheritance among their fellow Israelites; the Lord is their inheritance, as he promised them.” The other tribes of Israel received a land inheritance in Canaan, but the Levites received no land. Instead, the Levites were given certain [cities](#) within the other tribes’ territories.

The Levites’ inheritance was God Himself in the sense that they were the ones chosen to oversee the worship of the entire nation of Israel. The Levites were responsible for the [tabernacle](#) and its implements as well as overseeing the sacrifices and offerings of the people.

The priests were provided for through their service. Deuteronomy 18:3–4 offers a summary of the Law’s provisions: “This is the share due the priests from the people who sacrifice a bull or a sheep: the shoulder, the internal organs and the meat from the head. You are to give them the firstfruits of your grain, new wine and olive oil, and the first wool from the shearing of your sheep.”

The fuller explanation of this teaching is found in Numbers 18. “I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel as their inheritance in return for the work they do while serving at the tent of meeting. . . . They will receive no inheritance among the Israelites. Instead, I give to the Levites as their inheritance the tithes that the Israelites present as an offering to the Lord. That is why I said concerning them: ‘They will have no inheritance among the Israelites’” (Nu 18:21, 23–24).

God was the unique inheritance to the Levites. He was the focus of their service, the source of their sustenance, and the significance of their calling. Their inheritance included cities, daily food, and a constant vocation, but it did not include the same type of land inheritance given to the other tribes of Israel. [GotQuestions.org](#)

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#### Related Resources:

- [What was the Levitical priesthood? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is the difference between priests and Levites? | GotQuestions.org](#)