

Joshua 13 - 24: The Dividing of Canaan

INTRODUCTION.

- A. In our last lesson, we studied Joshua 6-12, the beginning of the conquest of Canaan.
 - 1. Israel defeated Jericho.
 - 2. Israel battled against the city of Ai.
 - 3. Israel made a treaty with the Gibeonites.
 - 4. Israel defeated the Amorites.
 - 5. The conquest of Northern Canaan.
 - 6. A listings of kings who were conquered.
- B. In this lesson we will cover the dividing of the land of Canaan among the tribes of Israel.

I. THE LAND OF CANAAN IS DIVIDED AMONG THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL. (13:1 - 19:51)

II. FINAL SECTION OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA. (20:1 - 24:32)

- A. The Lord told Joshua to establish the six cities of refuge. (20:1-9)
- B. The sons of Israel gave the Levites 48 cities. (21:1-43)
 - 1. The children of Aaron received 13 cities from the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin. (vs 4)
 - 2. The children of Kohath received 10 cities from the tribes of Ephraim, Dan, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. (vs 5)
 - 3. The children of Gershon received 13 cities from the tribes of Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and from the half-tribe of Manasseh. (vs 6)
 - 4. The children of Merari received 12 cities from the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Zebulun. (vs 7)
 - 5. Joshua gave the names of all 48 cities. (vs 8-42)
 - 6. The Lord gave Israel rest all around. He “delivered all their enemies into their hand.” (vs 43-45)
- C. The Tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh and the Altar Witness. (22:1-34)
 - 1. Joshua called for the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh.

Joshua told the three tribes that they had held up their agreement made with Moses and had helped Israel take the land of Canaan to the west of Jordan. As a result, the men of the three tribes could return to their lands to the east of Jordan. (vs 1-9)

2. After returning to their lands, the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh built an altar. (vs 10)
3. A misunderstanding arose of the newly built altar. The children of Israel to the west of Jordan thought that the newly built altar was for worshipping a false God. The men of Israel gathered together against the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh. (vs 11-20)
4. The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh explained that the altar was not for burnt offerings or sacrifices. The altar was to serve as a “witness between you and us and our generations after us, that we may perform the service of the Lord before Him with our burnt offerings, with our sacrifices, and with our peace offerings.” (vs 21-29, NKJV)
5. The men of Israel returned to their homes. The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh gave the altar a name, declaring the altar to be a witness that the Lord is God. (vs 30-34)

D. Joshua’s Farewell Speech to the Israelites. (23:1-16)

1. After a number of years had passed, Joshua advanced in age, called together all the leaders of Israel. (vs 1-2)
2. Joshua reminds the children of Israel of how God had provided for them. Joshua instructs the Israelites to “be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses.” Joshua warned the Israelites against clinging to the remnant of the nations which were driven out. (vs 3-13)
3. Joshua told Israel that he was going to die. He promised them that the words of the Lord would not fail. Joshua warned them of a time that they would depart from the Lord and that the Lord would punish them for their departure. (vs 14-16) (cf. Deuteronomy 28:58-68 - Moses had issued the same warning.)

E. Joshua Reminded Israel of their Deliverance by the Hands of God. He also emphasized the need for their faithfulness. (24:1-28)

1. Joshua called “all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and called for the elders of Israel, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God.” (vs 1, NKJV)
2. Joshua reviewed Israel’s history and how the Lord had delivered them. (vs 2-

13)

3. Joshua commands Israel to “fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord!” The people agreed to serve the Lord. Joshua made for the people a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. (vs 14-25, NKJV)
4. Joshua “wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God.” (vs 26-28, NKJV)

F. Joshua and Eleasar’s Death and Burial. (24:29-32)

III. LESSONS LEARNED.

A. Just as the generation was heading to a promise land of rest, so are Christians today seeking a land of rest.

1. In Joshua 21:43-45, we see that the Lord gave Israel rest all throughout the land of Canaan. Verse 44 reads, “The Lord gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers.” (NKJV)
 - a. It was approximately 683 years between the promise made to Abraham and the fulfillment of that promise.
2. The generation of Israel lead out of Egypt did not enter that promised rest. However, God did fulfill His promise to Abraham.
3. Christians are promised by God a place of rest. (Hebrews 3:1 - 4:11)

B. We should work to avoid misunderstandings.

1. When the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh built an altar, there developed a misunderstanding among the majority of Israel. This misunderstanding nearly lead to a military conflict. (22:11-34)
2. There are times in our lives when misunderstandings will arise. As Christians, we should do all that we can to work out the misunderstandings before it escalates into a full blown conflict.
 - a. Romans 12:9-21 gives a list of instructions that can be applied firstly to our dealings with Christians and, secondly, with those of the world.
 - b. When all else fails, remember the words of Jesus when He said, “Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, . . .” (Matthew 7:12, NKJV)

C. We should remember what the Lord has done for us.

1. Joshua reminded the Israelites not to forget what the Lord had done for them.

By not forgetting, the Israelites would remain faithful to the Lord. (Joshua 23:1-16)

2. After a similar fashion, Christians must never forget that the Lord has delivered them from their bondage unto sin.
 - a. II Peter 1:5-11 (emph. vs 9)
 - b. II Corinthians 4:8-10
- D. We should all follow Joshua's example in determining that our families will serve the Lord.
 1. Joshua said, "And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." (Joshua 24:15)
 2. Parents have a responsibility to make certain that their families serve the Lord. (Ephesians 6:1-4)

CONCLUSION.

- A. As we have seen in this study of the book of Joshua, the Lord fulfilled His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Lord gave the land of Canaan to the descendants of Abraham. The Lord kept His promise.
- B. As we close this lesson, let us remember the lessons learned from our study.
 1. We should work to avoid misunderstandings.
 2. We should remember what the Lord has done for us.
 3. We should all follow Joshua's example in leading our families to serving the Lord.

Joshua 13 - 24: The Dividing of Canaan -- May 13, 2001 -- File # 669
by John M. Duvall – Lawton, OK