

STUDIES IN JOSHUA-JUDGES-RUTH

6. What king is sometimes described as a descendant of giants?
7. What mountain is described as the northern border of the land taken by Joshua?
8. What mountain is given as the southern border of the land taken by Joshua?
9. How many kings in all did Joshua overthrow?
10. What six names are given to the Canaanite tribes whom Israel drove out?

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 13

- Vv. 1- 6 *God's instructions to Joshua.* This chapter marks the turning point of the book of Joshua. The first twelve chapters were devoted to the narration of the conquest of the land. The final chapters are devoted to the recording of the process of dividing the land among the tribes. Some time may have passed after the battles were over before God gave these instructions to Joshua since it is said that at the time Joshua was "old and stricken in years" (verse 1).
- Vv. 7-14 *A description of the land east of Jordan.* The land east of the Jordan had been given to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh. When God gave instructions to Joshua about dividing the land west of the Jordan, He reminded Joshua of the promises which Moses had already made to the eastern tribes. At the same time, there was a review of the general borders of the entire land east of the Jordan.
- Vv. 15-23 *The territory of Reuben.* Moses gave the southernmost part of the land east of the Jordan to the children of Reuben. Their territory was

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down around the Dead Sea on the east side of that large body of water. It lay north of the Arnon River which flowed into the eastern side of the Dead Sea about halfway up the east coast.

Vv. 24-28 *The territory of Gad.* The children of Gad were given the land which lay east of the Jordan River and north of the territory of Reuben. It was roughly one half of the territory sometimes called Gilead.

Vv. 29-33 *The territory of Manasseh.* Moses gave the northernmost part of the land east of the Jordan to the children of Manasseh. Not all of the children of Manasseh settled east of the Jordan, but roughly one half of the descendants of Manasseh lived in this area. Their territory lay north of the land given to Gad and east of the sea of Galilee. It was primarily the land which had been ruled by Og, king of Bashan.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *The Lord is not slack.* When Jacob, the great patriarch of the children of Israel, lay on the land where Joshua was standing, God promised to give the territory to his descendants. This promise had been made half a millennium prior to the time when God actually gave directions to Joshua for distributing the land. It may seem to man that God works slowly; but as it has been said, the mills of the gods grind exceedingly slowly but they grind exceedingly fine. No promise of God has ever failed. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise" (II Peter 3:9).

2. *God's leaders are led by God.* Joshua had a position of responsibility, but he did not bear the responsibility alone. Although Joshua led the people, God led him. God gave specific directions to Joshua for distributing the land among the twelve tribes. In giving these directions to Joshua he reminded him that Moses had already made certain provisions for Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh.
3. *God has something for all His children.* The tribe of Levi was not included in the giving out of the land itself. The tribe of Levi were God's own special people. They had been taken from among the children in lieu of the firstborn from among all the tribes. These sons of Levi did not receive any land as such. They were given forty-eight cities in which to dwell, with small surrounding suburbs for their use. Their inheritance was the sacrifices of the Lord. They lived from the tithes and offerings brought to God by God's people. This special provision for the tribe of Levi is indicative of the fact that God does provide for every need.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

God's Instructions to Joshua 13:1-6

Now Joshua was old and stricken in years; and the Lord said unto him, Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.

2 This is the land that yet remaineth: all the borders of the Philistines, and all Geshuri,

3 From Sihor, which is before Egypt, even unto the borders of Ekron northward, which is counted to the Canaanite: five lords of the Philistines; the Gazathites, and the Ashdothites, the Eshkalonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites; also the Avites:

4 From the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that is beside the Sidonians, unto Aphek, to the borders of the Amorites:

5 And the land of the Giblites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrising, from Baal-gad under mount Hermon unto the entering into Hamath,

6 All the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon unto Misrephoth-maim, and all the Sidonians, them will I drive out from before the children of Israel: only divide thou it by lot unto the Israelites for an inheritance, as I have commanded thee.

1. How old was Joshua? 13:1

The statement is made that Joshua was "old and stricken in years." His exact age is not given, but we know that he died at the age of one hundred and ten years (24:29). He would of necessity have been at least sixty years old when he came into the Promised Land, since he was among those numbered at Sinai and also among those numbered in the steppes of Moab forty years later. Only Joshua and Caleb were among those counted in the first census and among those who were allowed to go into the Promised Land. If he were sixty when he came into the land and died when he was one hundred and ten, he would be allowed some fifty years for conquering the land and settling the tribes in it. It seems reasonable to suppose that he made this division of the land some years before he died. Nevertheless, he must have been approaching the last years of his life when God gave him these instructions.

2. How much land remained unconquered? 13:2-6

Part of the unconquered land lay towards the South, part toward the North. The cities still occupied by the Canaanites were left for capture by the tribes into whose allotment they might fall; but the land especially mentioned falls into the following districts: (1) The Shephelah

and the Maritime Plain, being described as “. . . the borders of the Philistines;” (2) Geshuri, the land of an ancient tribe, which lived in the desert between Arabia and Philistia (cf. I Samuel 27:8); (3) Pentapolis, the region of the five cities—Gaza, Ashdod, Eshkalon, Gath, and Ekron; (4) Hamath, the extreme northern boundary point of Palestine; (5) and the land stretching from the Lebanon Mountains to Misrephoth-maim, probably the place later known as Zarephath.

A Description of the Land East of Jordan 13:7-14

7 Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance unto the nine tribes, and the half tribe of Manasseh,

8 With whom the Reubenites and the Gadites have received their inheritance, which Moses gave them, beyond Jordan eastward, even as Moses the servant of the Lord gave them;

9 From Aroer, that is upon the bank of the river Arnon, and the city that is in the midst of the river, and all the plain of Medeba unto Dibon;

10 And all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, which reigned in Heshbon, unto the border of the children of Ammon;

11 And Gilead, and the border of the Geshurites and Maachathites, and all mount Hermon, and all Bashan unto Salcah;

12 All the kingdom of Og in Bashan, which reigned in Ashtaroth and in Edrei, who remained of the remnant of the giants: for these did Moses smite, and cast them out.

13 Nevertheless the children of Israel expelled not the Geshurites, nor the Maachathites: but the Geshurites and the Maachathites dwell among the Israelites until this day.

14 Only 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.

3. *Why were there nine and a half tribes?* 13:7

Since Reuben, Gad, and part of the tribe of Manasseh received an inheritance east of the Jordan, there were nine and a half tribes left to receive land west of the Jordan. The western tribes were to receive the major part of the Promised Land. They received territory which lay west of the Jordan River and extended to the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Since all of Simeon's territory lay within the boundaries of the land given to Judah, the Simeonites are not counted as a separate tribe. In reality, they were divided in Jacob and scattered in Israel (Genesis 49:7).

4. *What was the extent of the land east of the Jordan?*
13:8-14

The territory east of the Jordan had all been conquered in the days of Moses. It is apparent that there was less territory unconquered in those campaigns. At least no mention is made of land which had not been taken from its original inhabitants. The land east of the Jordan extended north from Aroer, a settlement on the north bank of the Arnon River. This river flowed into the Dead Sea about halfway up the east coast of that body of water. The territory extended through all of what was called Gilead and reached to the territory east of the Sea of Galilee. This northern part had been ruled by Og and was best described by the word "Bashan."

5. *Who were the giants?* 13:12

The American Standard Version translates the word from the original language with the English word *Rephaim*. The word is elsewhere translated as "dead things" (Job 26:5), and the word seems to be a derivative of the verb which means to "sink" or to "relax." It probably was a reference to the descendants of Rapha, and properly translated as a proper noun in the American Standard translation. Og did have a large bedstead, but he may have had

this as a symbol of his affluence as much as for the accommodation of his large body (Deuteronomy 3:11).

6 *How did these people live among the Israelites?* 13:13

Reference is made to the fact that the Geshurites and the Maachathites dwelt among the Israelites for a considerable length of time. If Joshua lived fifty years after he came into the Promised Land and perhaps even forty years after the original conquest was finished, sufficient time had elapsed to incline him to make mention of the fact that these people were still among the Israelites. Radical critics say this reference is an indication of the fact that the book was not written by Joshua, but the argument is not strong enough to overcome all the other indications of its having been written by Joshua.

7. *Why did the Levites receive no inheritance?* 13:14

In two different verses of this chapter mention is made of the fact that the Levites did not receive an inheritance. One is in this verse and the other is in the closing verse of the chapter. In the latter instance it is said that "the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance" (verse 33). At this point it is said that "the sacrifices of the Lord God of Israel made by fire are their inheritance." The descendants of Levi were given the responsibility of teaching the Law to the people of God. Out of their midst came the priestly family, the descendants of Aaron. They did not receive land which they could till, but they were given forty-eight cities in which they might live. Around these cities lay suburbs, or open ground which they could use for grazing animals or for other small crops, but it was not their privilege to have vineyards and fields of grain. They lived from the tithes and offerings made by the people of Israel. Certain portions of the sacrifices were designated for their consumption. This was God's way of taking care of these servants.

The Territory of Reuben 13:15-23

15 And Moses gave unto the tribe of the children of Reuben inheritance according to their families.

16 And their coast was from Aroer, that is on the bank of the river Arnon, and the city that is in the midst of the river, and all the plain by Medeba;

17 Heshbon, and all her cities that are in the plain; Dibon, and Bamoth-baal, and Beth-baalmeon,

18 And Jahazah, and Kedemoth, and Mephaath,

19 And Kirjathaim, and Sibmah, and Zareth-shahar in the mount of the valley,

20 And Beth-peor, and Ashdoth-pisgah, and Beth-jeshimoth,

21 And all the cities of the plain, and all the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, which reigned in Heshbon, whom Moses smote with the princes of Midian, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, which were dukes of Sihon, dwelling in the country.

22 Balaam also the son of Beor, the soothsayer, did the children of Israel slay with the sword among them that were slain by them.

23 And the border of the children of Reuben was Jordan, and the border thereof. This was the inheritance of the children of Reuben after their families, the cities and the villages thereof.

8. *Where was the land of Reuben? 13:15-23*

In general terms, the borders of the land of the tribe of Reuben may be described as follows: on the west, the Dead Sea and the Jordan River; on the south, the land of Moab; on the east, the land of Ammon; and on the north, the Wady Nusariyat. Sihon, king of the Amorites, had ruled this land; and it had been taken from him by the children of Israel in the campaign led by Moses (Numbers 21:21-31).

9. *Who had ruled this land formerly?* 13:21

Sihon, king of the Amorites, had ruled over this land before the children of Israel conquered it. The conquest was made under the leadership of Moses (Numbers 21:24). His capital had been in Heshbon, the town which had originally belonged to the Moabites. Later it was made a Levitical city (Joshua 21:39). The present location is called Hesban and lies twenty miles east of the Jordan and stands some four thousand feet above the valley. An excellent spring is located at this point and thus it is an extremely pleasant location. Extensive ruins are still on the site. The king had several chiefs who assisted him in government, and Moses destroyed these along with their leader.

10. *Who was Balaam, the son of Beor?* 13:22

Balaam was the soothsayer from the east who had been summoned by Balak, king of the Moabites (Numbers 22:5). He had been warned of God to speak only those things which were revealed to him by God. His cupidity was so strong that he is described in the New Testament as the epitome of avarice (II Peter 2:15, 16; cf. Jude 11). When God revealed only blessings for Israel through Balaam, Balaam stayed among the Moabites and was slain when Israel was purged of the foreign seducers who had come in among them (Numbers 31:8).

The Territory of Gad 13:24-28

24 And Moses gave inheritance unto the tribe of Gad, even unto the children of Gad according to their families.

25 And their coast was Jazer, and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the children of Ammon, unto Aroer that is before Rabbah;

26 And from Heshbon unto Ramath-mizpeh, and Betonim: and from Mahanaim unto the border of Debir;

27 And in the valley, Beth-aram, and Beth-nimrah, and Succoth, and Baphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon, Jordan and his border, even unto the edge of the Sea of Chinnereth on the other side Jordan eastward.

28 This is the inheritance of the children of Gad after their families, the cities, and their villages.

11. *What were the borders of the tribe of Gad? 13:24-28*

The men of Gad inhabited the center of the land east of the Jordan River. On the south, their border was Reuben; on the east, the Arabian desert, on the west, the Jordan River; and on the north, the land of the half-tribe of Manasseh. The territory is designated especially as centering around Mahanaim. Mahanaim itself figures into later Israelite history with a great deal of regularity and importance.

12. *Where was the Sea of Chinnereth? 13:27*

The Sea of Chinnereth is best known as the Sea of Galilee. It is also sometimes called the Sea of Tiberias, or Lake Gennesaret (Matthew 17:27; Luke 5:1; John 21:6). This body of water was very outstanding and important to those people who lived in Canaan. It made a good point for a boundary line, and the tribe of Gad evidently settled in the territory which had a border running from Mahanaim in a northwest direction to the south tip of the Sea of Galilee.

The Territory of Manasseh 13:29-33

29 And Moses gave inheritance unto the half tribe of Manasseh: and this was the possession of the half tribe of the children of Manasseh by their families.

30 And their coast was from Mahanaim, all Bashan, all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and all the towns of Jair, which are in Bashan, threescore cities:

31 And half Gilead, and Ashtaroth, and Edrei, cities

of the kingdom of Og in Bashan, were pertaining unto the children of Machir the son of Manasseh, even to the one half of the children of Machir by their families.

32 These are the countries which Moses did distribute for inheritance in the plains of Moab, on the other side Jordan, by Jericho, eastward.

33 But unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not any inheritance: the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance, as he said unto them.

13. In what area did the half-tribe of Manasseh settle east of Jordan? 13:29-33

Children of Machir, a son of Manasseh, settled east of the Jordan. The rest of the descendants of Manasseh by his other children settled west of the Jordan. Thus, each of the two groups of the children of Manasseh became known as a half-tribe. The half-tribe which settled east of the Jordan inhabited the northernmost part of the land east of the Jordan. Their land was the former kingdom of Og, king of Bashan. In New Testament times it was the country known as Decapolis. On the west, it was bordered by the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River; on the south, by the land of Gad and especially Mahanaim; on the east, by the Arabian desert; and on the north, by the northernmost boundaries of the Promised Land, the land of Hamath.

14. Who was Jair? 13:30

Jair was the son of Segub, the descendant of Judah on his father's side (I Chronicles 2:22) and from Manasseh on his mother's side. Moses counted Jair among the children of Manasseh (Numbers 32:41; Deuteronomy 3:14), largely because of his conquest and settling of Gilead (I Chronicles 2:23). His descendants appeared to have settled in the southern part of the tribe of Manasseh, and some of the towns there are known as Havoth-Jair, or

villages of Jair (Numbers 32:41; Deuteronomy 3:14). They are variantly numbered as being twenty-three (I Chronicles 2:22), thirty (Judges 10:4), and sixty (I Chronicles 2:23; Joshua 13:30). It is thought that sixty may have been conquered by Jair and his brethren, with only twenty-three designated for him and seven others being added later.

15. *Who was Machir?* 13:31

Machir was the oldest son of Manasseh (17:1). He was old enough to have children before Joseph died in Egypt (Genesis 50:23). His grandson, Zelophehad, had only daughters; and a special decree was made about their inheritance (Numbers 27:1; 36:1; Joshua 17:3). It was his daughter who became the wife of Hezron and mother of Segub (I Chronicles 2:21). It was this line of the descendants of Manasseh who made special request for the land east of the Jordan, and their request was granted by Moses before he died. Joshua was fully informed about this as he began to make preparations for distributing the rest of the Promised Land to the other tribes.

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 13

1. How many tribes settled west of Jordan?
2. How many tribes settled east of Jordan?
3. Which tribe received no land as an inheritance?
4. Which tribe was southernmost in the land east of Jordan?
5. What Amorite king had formerly ruled this area?
6. Which tribe was in the center in the land east of Jordan?
7. Which tribe was northernmost in the territory east of Jordan?
8. What king had formerly ruled this land?
9. How many cities were in this area?
10. By what name was this northern area known?