

## Joshua Chapters 12-13 – John Karmelich

1. Let me give the title first, "Showing gratitude to God, and what to do after that". I will subtly answer that question as we go through the lesson, and hopefully, you will get the idea.
  - a) In this lesson we cover two chapters, 12 and 13. In Chapter 12, the whole chapter is essentially a list of kings conquered by the Israelites since they first left Egypt. The obvious application is about gratitude. The Israelites thank God for their victories.
  - b) This "time of gratitude" is followed up by the Israelites dividing up the land by tribe. God ordains these proceedings and then reminds the Israelites there is more work to do. In other words after we stop to give God thanks, it's time to get back to work for Him.
2. OK, what does this have to do with me? Remember the purpose of these lessons is not to learn history. If it were just a matter of the Israelites stopping to give thanks to God and then dividing up the land, this whole lesson would be a few sentences long.
  - a) So why dedicate a whole chapter to listing every king the Israelites defeated in battle and then have another whole chapter (13) that deals with Israel's borders and those who live outside the land of Israel. So, John, what is going on here? ☺
  - b) First of all, there is nothing wrong with giving thanks to God. When one has achieved a significant victory in life, it is important to take time to give God the credit. Why is that? Does God need the pat on the back? No. Giving thanks to God is mainly to remind ourselves that God is always there, He has given us victorious in the past and by giving thanks to Him, we keep our focus upon Him and remind ourselves that He will guide us in the future if are willing to do His will.
    - i) At this point in the story of Joshua, the Israelites have now defeated every significant king in the land of Israel. While there are still more cities to conquer and more people to defeat, all of the significant kings have been defeated.
    - ii) Dedicating a whole chapter (12) to "gratitude" (by listing every king the Israelites have defeated) is a reminder to us to take the time to give God credit for our victories. I have found that when I am "down", stopping to show gratitude is a way of lifting my spirit, getting my focus off of my problems and onto God.
  - c) The next chapter (13) mainly focuses on dividing up the land outside of "Israel proper" that some Israelites desire to settle in. Why is that?
    - i) Remember what the "Promised Land" (i.e., the land of Israel) is symbolic of: It is about living the full rich life that God desires for us as believers in Him.
    - ii) I said the title of this lesson includes the concept of what do we do after we give credit to God. Let's face it God did not call on Christians to sit around all day giving thanks to Him. While it is important to do that every now and then, it is not what He calls us to do every waking moment. (Think how much time is in the bible where people are busy doing "things" versus relatively little space dedicated to giving God the credit.)
    - iii) At this point in the story, (Chapter 13), Joshua begins to divide up the land of Israel. Let's face it, Joshua could have done this prior to all the fighting or Joshua could have said, "Not one scrap of land will be divided until we have killed every last person living in this land as God commanded us to do". ☺
    - iv) Joshua picks this moment in time to start dividing the land. What is interesting is the text focuses on those Israelites (two and one tribes) that want to settle outside of the land of Israel. Symbolically speaking, they settle for less than what God desires for them. The "connection" is the despite the time of gratitude in Chapter 12, sometimes, we are willing to settle for less than what God wants for us.

- d) Joshua is called in Chapter 13 to encourage the Israelites to go on with what God had called them to do: Conquer the Promised Land.
  - i) I picture Joshua saying, "Here is the land that God had promised you. We, the Israelites (through God's helps) have already defeated all the kings around here. It is now time to divide up the land by tribe and for each of the tribes to conquer and possess what is in each of your specific but divided territories."
  - ii) In other words, the enemies of Israel are small enough at this point that each individual tribe should work to finish the job of taking their land.
  - iii) Joshua is saying that the united armies of Israel have done their job. Yes there is still land to conquer and still people to defeat, but you Israelites have grown enough in God at this point that you should work "by tribe" and finish the job.
  - iv) In a sense, the victory is accomplished and now comes the "mop up" operation!
- 3. OK John, this is all very interesting. What does it have to do with you and me?
  - a) Symbolically speaking, it is about defeating the issues that separate us from God.
  - b) There are issues that an entire church or a nation has to work together to defeat. There are also other issues that require us to work in smaller groups to deal with.
  - c) Let me try this from another angle: One thing I always wondered is "Why did God divide up the Israelites into twelve groups?" Does that mean God wants all Christians to work within say, one of 12 large groups? No it does not. What I figured out is that the concept of "12 tribes" is that God desires teamwork. Sometimes teamwork requires everybody in the same church or everybody in the same community to work together on some project. Other times, God wants us to work within some specific group to accomplish His will.
    - i) In other words, a reason God divided the Israelites into groups is not so one group could fight the other group for things. (Unfortunately that did happen.) A point of tribal division is God wants us to work in "teams" to accomplish things for Him.
  - d) Let me give some examples here: There is something about prayer of "two or more" praying together that works better than one person praying alone. (See Matthew 18:20). God encourages us to pray with others. In other words, God is encouraging "groups" for prayer. There is also bible study. God encourages that in groups as well.
    - i) Here's another example: There may be things God wants us to accomplish around our church, our neighborhood or our town where He wants us to work as a team in order to accomplish some specific mission.
    - ii) So why is all of this true? Why can't I just worship God all by myself and not bother other people? The answer is God wants to encourage us to work together as a group of believers. It is to pray for one another, to encourage one another, to build up each other's faith. My point here is that Christianity was never designed to be a "billion solo efforts". God wants us to work together. (By the way, when it comes to this ministry, if it is not for your prayer support, it does not work!)
    - iii) This does not mean that we can't have different denominations or interests. It simply means that God wants believers to interact with other believers to help each other grow in our faith and trust in Him.
  - e) This leads me back to the Israelites. They were divided into 12 groups based on the sons of Jacob. He had 12 sons through four different women. Technically there were thirteen sons, as one of the sons (Joseph), had two sons that were adopted by his father Jacob. Without getting into a long history here of how these twelve tribes came to be, my simple point here is that God created division within the Israelites.
    - i) Grant it, divisions cause problems. The history of the Israelites as recorded in the bible included a lot of fighting between the tribes. God did not divide the Israelites into tribes for that reason. It was among other things, to encourage "group work". Speaking of "group work", lets get back to the story of Joshua.

4. Beginning in Chapter 13, the Israelites begin receiving their inheritance of land on a tribe-by-tribe basis. God promised Abraham over 400 years earlier that the land of Israel would belong to the Israelites. (See Genesis 12:7 et. al.) Later it was told through Moses (See Numbers Chapter 34) and they would divide it up by tribe. Here is where the division begins.
  - a) To emphasize again why it happens "now" is that all of the significant kings in the place where the Israelites will live have now been defeated. The Israelites stop to give thanks for their victory, which was Chapter 12. Now it is time for the Israelites to divide into their tribes and finish the job of conquering and claiming the inheritance promised to them by God.
  - b) For the Christian, God promises that we will inherit all things (See Revelation 21:7). What that means for the "here and now" is that we can have victory over all issues that God wants us to have victory over and it means that if and when Christians work together, we can have victory over projects that God desires us to have such victories.
  - c) In other words, just as the Israelites are divided and given territory to conquer, so we as Christians are to get involved in groups for whatever purpose God has called that group to do. For example, we join prayer groups or bible study groups or work groups with the goal of accomplishing what God wants us to accomplish through that group.
    - i) Sometimes we don't know the mission of a group until we get involved with that group. There is nothing wrong with trying out different groups until we find the right fit for us. The point is once we are "in" the group God wants us to be in, we should work as a team to accomplish what is God's goal for that team.
  - d) OK, I wandered off course again. Back to Joshua: ☺
    - i) God tells Joshua to stop from conquering the land and to divide up the land. The borders of each tribe are described. The job of the Israelites from this point forward is to finish the job of conquering the land, but now the job is to be done within the framework of the specific tribes.
    - ii) Well, before I go wandering off on another application, what do you say I break down and actually start the text?
5. Chapter 12, Verse 1: These are the kings of the land whom the Israelites had defeated and whose territory they took over east of the Jordan, from the Arnon Gorge to Mount Hermon, including all the eastern side of the Arabah: <sup>2</sup> Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon. He ruled from Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Gorge--from the middle of the gorge--to the Jabbok River, which is the border of the Ammonites. This included half of Gilead. <sup>3</sup> He also ruled over the eastern Arabah from the Sea of Kinnereth to the Sea of the Arabah (the Salt Sea), to Beth Jeshimoth, and then southward below the slopes of Pisgah. <sup>4</sup> And the territory of Og king of Bashan, one of the last of the Rephaites, who reigned in Ashtaroth and Edrei. <sup>5</sup> He ruled over Mount Hermon, Salecah, all of Bashan to the border of the people of Geshur and Maacah, and half of Gilead to the border of Sihon king of Heshbon.
  - a) In Verses 1 through 5, the Israelites are given a history lesson of the previous generation.
  - b) In other words, Chapter 12 does not just list the kings conquered by the Israelites under Joshua, but it also lists the kings conquered by the previous generation under Moses.
  - c) OK, if this chapter is about showing gratitude for what God has done in one's life, why list the accomplishments of the previous generation? If we're going to show gratitude for history, why not also show gratitude for the crossing of the Red Sea and all those miracles that happened in Egypt? ☺ In other words, why draw the line here at this point?
    - i) The answer is Chapter 12 is about the kings that were conquered by the Israelites. Therefore it is fair to also list the kings conquered by Moses east of the Jordan River prior to the kings defeated under Joshua's command in Israel "proper".
    - ii) One has to remember that the inheritance given to the Israelites not only included the land that we consider Israel today (west of the Jordan River), but also some land east of the Jordan River that will be given to two and one half tribes.

- d) At this point, let's talk about the text itself. The text starts by saying in effect that these are the kings east of the Jordan River that were defeated by the Israelites. Each verse listed in the text so far says in effect, "Here is this king, here is the area that he ruled over and we the Israelites (of the previous generation) have defeated that king with God's help."
  - i) So why is the territory of each king listed? It is significant in that starting in Chapter 13, the territory of these kings is divided up by the tribes of Israel.
  - ii) By stating the literalness of the territory, it shows us that these were literal kings that were defeated and Joshua is describing real places that were conquered. It is also important, as the boundaries of that king become the boundaries used to mark the territory belonging to each tribe in Israel.
  - iii) Remember that these kings were defeated a generation earlier. The text shows that the land still belongs to the Israelites despite the passing of time.
- e) OK John, I believe the Israelites really did conquer this area and I really believe this is a literal description of ancient history. Time for "the" question: Why should I care? ☺
  - i) Remember that this land being described is not part of "Israel" proper. It is the land east of the Jordan River. Of the twelve tribes of Israel, two and one half tribes said in effect, "This land (east of the Jordan River) is good enough for us, we don't have want to live in the land".
  - ii) God gave these two and one half tribes what they wanted. God lead the Israelites to conquer this land east of the Jordan River and was willing to give to the two and one half tribes the land that they want.
  - iii) The point for you and me is that if we only want to go "so far" in our relationship with God, He will only take us to that point. It is not the full, rich life that God desires for us, but if that is only as far as we want to go, God works on our level.
    - a) Let me put it this way: Some people are comfortable with only believing that Jesus died for their sins and never doing much more about it. Some people are happy at the "level" of just believing that Jesus is God, but never doing much more with their faith than that.
    - b) My point is that God only takes us spiritually as far as we want to go. God desires that we want go further in our relationship with Him, but if we want to stop short, He honors that. We have the free will to choose to accept or reject God. We also have the free will to choose how far we want to go in our relationship with Him. If we don't want to turn a specific issue of our lives over to Him, God honors that.
    - c) The sad truth is that if we only want a "limited relationship" with God, it may be fine at first, but after awhile, taking the easy way out is more costly than developing that full relationship with God.
  - iv) Let me go back to the "literal" to explain this further: The two and one half tribes looked at the land east of the Jordan and said in effect, "This is good land, we don't need to travel any further". (See Numbers 32:1-3).
    - a) Later, these tribes figured out there are no natural borders east of the Jordan River. In the land of Israel "proper", there are natural borders. To the west is the Mediterranean Sea, to the east is the Jordan River, and to the south is the desert. East of the Jordan River where these two and one half tribes settled, have no natural boundaries. These specific tribes will have to face enemies with no natural boundaries to protect them.
    - b) An underlying point of the first half of Chapter 12 and all of Chapter 13 is that "cutting our relationship short" with God may be fine in the beginning, but later in life, one discovers it is a mistake.
    - c) When we get to Chapter 13, I am going to develop that idea further.
  - v) At this point, I'm going to move on to the rest of Chapter 12.

6. Verse 6: Moses, the servant of the LORD, and the Israelites conquered them. And Moses the servant of the LORD gave their land to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh to be their possession.
  - a) Verse 6 is the only editorial comment in the whole chapter. It summarizes the point of the first five verses of this chapter. It says that Moses "gave this land", (east of the Jordan River) to the tribes of the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh. This area became the base camp of the families of these tribes while the men went to war.
  - b) When the text says "Moses", it means that this area of land (east of the Jordan) was conquered when Moses was the leader of the Israelites, and Moses (not Joshua) gave the permission for these two and one half tribes to live here, east of the Jordan River.
  - c) Many people wonder, why did the tribe of Manasseh split in two? The short answer is some in the tribe of Manasseh were willing to live in the land east of the Jordan and some wanted to live in the "proper" land of Israel. Therefore, this tribe was split.
  - d) Getting back to my theme, the point is God desires that we enter in to the rich, full life of trusting Him with every aspect of our lives. Some people don't want to go "that far" in their relationship with God and are stopping at a certain point. That is what these two and one half tribes represent. Notice that Moses (through God's commandments) permits this to happen.
    - i) At the same time, the men from these two and one half tribes were required to fight in the land of Israel along with every else. The point behind that concept is that the men of these two and one half tribes have the opportunity to see what God can do for them even if they are willing to settle for something less.
  - e) At this point in the story of Joshua, God says in effect to the Israelites, "OK, all of the ruling kings around here are now defeated. Everyone go live in the territory allotted to you and finish conquering it by tribe. Since these two and one half tribes wanted to live in this area east of the Jordan, God is now giving them what they want.
7. Verse 7: These are the kings of the land that Joshua and the Israelites conquered on the west side of the Jordan, from Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon to Mount Halak, which rises toward Seir (their lands Joshua gave as an inheritance to the tribes of Israel according to their tribal divisions--<sup>8</sup> the hill country, the western foothills, the Arabah, the mountain slopes, the desert and the Negev--the lands of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites):
  - a) From Verse 7 to the end of Chapter 12, these verses "best go" with Chapters 14-21. That is because these verses here in Chapter 12 describe the land within Israel and the kings conquered under Joshua. Again, these verses go better with Chapters 14-21 as those chapters mainly describe the dividing of the land of Israel west of the Jordan River.
    - i) So if these verses go better with Chapters 14-21, why are they listed here? The point of Chapter 12 is to list all the kings defeated by the Israelites since they left Egypt. The point of Chapter 13 is to describe the land being divided east of the Jordan River and that territory is described in the first five verses of Chapter 12.
    - ii) The kings conquered in Verses 9 through 24 of this chapter are describing the land of Israel "proper". This territory is divided up in the remainder of this book beginning in Chapter 14.
  - b) In these verses, geographic boundaries are given. The idea is to show for all of history what are the exact boundaries of the land of Israel as conquered by Joshua.
    - i) If a modern Israelite questions, "What is the exact land given to us by God", these verses are a good summary answer. In other words, if one wants to know where the actual land starts and stops, the geography lesson is Verses 7 and 8.
    - ii) It is "strange" to think of the land of Israel this way: God created the whole world. Yet, despite the fact that God created everything, He says in effect, "This section of land (Israel) is mine". (Reference Leviticus 25:23.)

- c) Let me explain the concept of "God's land" further. God told the Israelites through Moses that the "Promised Land" is "His land" and He is giving it to the Israelites.
    - i) For those of you who were with me through my study in Ezekiel, you will remember that the last few chapters deal with a time frame that is future (to us) where the land of Israel will once again be divided up by tribe.
      - a) The point is the land of Israel belongs to God, not the Israelites. Yet, God said in effect that this land is given to the Israelites as a possession.
      - b) Yes, the Israelites collectively "blew it" in that they failed to recognize Jesus as the Messiah, but giving the land of Israel was an unconditional promise of God to the Israelites and therefore, the land belongs to them.
  - d) OK John, so this land belongs to Israel. How does that apply to my life today?
    - i) Other than caring about politics or the Israelites, the spiritual lesson behind the concept of the "Land of Israel" (i.e., the "Promised Land") is again, about the life-long process of learning to trust God with every aspect of our lives. It is about living the type of life that God desires for us as believers. He wants us to conquer our own "Promised Land" in that we learn to trust God for every aspect of our lives. When we start to develop that relationship, there are still sins we have to battle which is symbolic of the battles we have discussed in the first half of Joshua.
    - ii) Meanwhile, I've wandered off track, and let's get back to Chapter 12.
8. Verse 9: the king of Jericho one the king of Ai (near Bethel) one <sup>10</sup> the king of Jerusalem one the king of Hebron one <sup>11</sup> the king of Jarmuth one the king of Lachish one <sup>12</sup> the king of Eglon one the king of Gezer one <sup>13</sup> the king of Debir one the king of Geder one <sup>14</sup> the king of Hormah one the king of Arad one <sup>15</sup> the king of Libnah one the king of Adullam one <sup>16</sup> the king of Makkedah one the king of Bethel one <sup>17</sup> the king of Tappuah one the king of Hepher one <sup>18</sup> the king of Aphek one the king of Lasharon one <sup>19</sup> the king of Madon one the king of Hazor one <sup>20</sup> the king of Shimron Meron one the king of Acshaph one <sup>21</sup> the king of Taanach one the king of Megiddo one <sup>22</sup> the king of Kedesh one the king of Jokneam in Carmel one <sup>23</sup> the king of Dor (in Naphoth Dor) one the king of Goyim in Gilgal one <sup>24</sup> the king of Tirzah one thirty-one kings in all.
- a) From Verse 9 to the end of the Chapter (Verse 24) is essentially a list of all the kings conquered by the Israelites. Each verse says in effect, "there was this king and that adds one more to the list", until we get to a total of thirty one kings at end of Verse 24.
  - b) If you notice there is a lack of punctuation in the text, it is because that is the way it is written in the NIV translation used here.
  - c) If you recall from earlier chapters in Joshua, these kings listed in these verses were the ones defeated under Joshua's command. Some of these kings were defeated one at a time like the king of Jericho and some were defeated in groups.
  - d) So why list these kings one at a time? Why not just say, the Israelites defeated a bunch of kings prior to entering the Promised Land and a bunch more when they actually entered the land. Why are they listed one at a time?
    - i) The answer is that the number "31" is significant. In both the Hebrew alphabet and the Greek alphabet, letters also have numerical values. It is roughly the idea of saying, "The letter A equals one, the letter B equals two" etc. My point here is, if one takes the Hebrew name of God, "El" in English, the numerical value of those letters when added together is 31. (Understand that God has more than one name. We tend to think of "Jehovah" as His name. There is also "Eloheem" (plural form) and "El" in the singular form, which is used more often.
  - e) OK, so God's name has the numerical value of 31 and there are a total of 31 kings listed in these verses. What's the point?
    - i) The point is God is working "behind the scenes" making it possible for the Israelites to have victory over these kings. By having the total "add up" to 31, we can see the connection between God and the victory the Israelites have.

- f) So what is the significance for us about this chapter?
- i) When we stop and realize how "far" we have come in life, God's "signature" is there behind the scenes making all of our spiritual and literal victories happen.
  - ii) It does not mean we have exactly "31" victories in life. ☺ It is a symbolic way of showing that God is making our victories in life happen.
  - iii) Unfortunately, much of the world never realizes that God is behind the scenes working in our lives. God goes to incredible lengths to draw attention to the fact that He exists and He is working in our lives. Unfortunately many people never stop to think about that fact and never acknowledge Him.
  - iv) I've always written these bible studies with the "believer" in mind. Therefore, let's talk about this from the standpoint of those who do trust in God and do trust in Jesus as our redeemer and our God.
    - a) A point here is the Israelites do in effect, stop to give thanks to God for their victories. It is not as straight forward as that. There is no mention of the Israelites actually stopping to pray to God for their victories.
    - b) The point is the book of Joshua stops to count the fact that thirty-one kings are defeated and the understanding that the numerical value of God's name is "thirty one". One can make the connection that God is there working behind the scenes in their lives and our lives.
- g) Let me put this another way: When was the last time we stopped and made a "grateful list"? The next time you or I are worried about whatever problem is in front of us or worried about some big decision or worried that things are falling apart, then take a few minutes and make a list of things we are grateful for.
- i) In other words, list some blessings we have in our life and realize that God is behind those blessings. I have learned (I thank my wife for this one) is the way to get over depression or even a bad mood is to stop and realize what we have to be grateful for. Making a grateful list is a quick way to improve our attitude.
  - ii) The Israelites, or specifically Joshua, took the time right here, to stop and make a "grateful list". They are grateful for the kings they have defeated. They are grateful for the victories God has given in their lives.
  - iii) So why do this here and now? Shouldn't this grateful list be at the end of the book? No and here is why: Yes, there are no more kings left to be conquered. However, God now wants the Israelites to keep on conquering the land, but at this point, do it in a "smaller group basis". In other words, God wants each tribe to conquer their allotted territory.
    - a) In other words, the Israelites have already accomplished the mission of defeating all the kings. Now comes a new mission for them, and that is to work in smaller groups to finish conquering the land. This is the "clean up" operation of defeating all of the people still living there.
  - iv) That comes back to the issue of "gratitude". When we get our focus on how God has worked in our lives in the past, it makes us focus us on God and not our own abilities. It reminds us that God has gotten us through struggles in the past and therefore, we are trusting that He will lead us to victories in the future. By making a "gratitude list", we are not only showing our gratitude to God for what He has done, we are reminding ourselves that He is there working and He will get us through the next issue.
- h) To summarize this chapter, the Israelites stop and list all the kings they have defeated in order to show gratitude to God and more importantly, for them to realize that God is there working in their lives and they can continue to trust God in whatever they or us, have to deal with "next" in our lives. On that happy note, we can start Chapter 13. ☺

9. Chapter 13, Verse 1: When Joshua was old and well advanced in years, the LORD said to him, "You are very old, and there are still very large areas of land to be taken over.
  - a) At this point in Joshua's life, he was probably somewhere close to one hundred years old. God is telling Joshua that despite the fact he is old, there is still much work to be done.
  - b) Let me address the "seniors" reading this study and people who plan on being seniors sometime in their lives. (There, that covers everybody. ☺) Never assume that once one reaches a certain age, God can no longer use you. Never assume that one is done serving God just because one is at a certain age.
    - i) Grant it, when we get older, there are things that are physically harder to do than when we are younger. At the same time, that never means there is an age when we are too old to do things for God. Even if one can no longer move around, one can still pray and still praise God. There is no "retirement plan" for the believer as long as we live in this lifetime.
  - c) This leads me back to Joshua. God is not saying, "You are old now Joshua. Time for you to retire and call it a life." God is saying to Joshua, "You are now old, but I still have things for you to do in this lifetime as there is still land left to be conquered."
    - i) My point here is never assume that one is done in life as far as being used by God. He is well aware of our physical abilities at any point in our life. God can (and does) use people of all ages. We may not be able to get around like we used to, but if we are willing there are things one can do for God as a "senior".
    - ii) So does this mean I can ignore God now and work for Him later when I get older? Technically, one can take the risk and still be saved. The question is why would you want to wait until "later" to serve God? Why waste our lives now when we can live to make a difference for Him at all points of our life?
    - iii) Personally, I didn't give my life to God until a "later" point in my life. While I understand that God was working on me in those earlier years, I also look back and realize how much of my life I have wasted living for my own pleasure.
    - iv) I have learned that the greatest pleasure I can get out of this life is to live to make a difference for Him. That is what Christians are called to do and how we are called to live. That doesn't mean we ignore our families or say, our careers. It means we incorporate God into whatever life He has called us to live.
  - d) This leads me to Verse 2, where God instructs Joshua as to what is ahead of him.
10. Verse 2: "This is the land that remains: all the regions of the Philistines and Geshurites: <sup>3</sup> from the Shihor River on the east of Egypt to the territory of Ekron on the north, all of it counted as Canaanite (the territory of the five Philistine rulers in Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron--that of the Avvites); <sup>4</sup> from the south, all the land of the Canaanites, from Arah of the Sidonians as far as Aphek, the region of the Amorites, <sup>5</sup> the area of the Gebalites; and all Lebanon to the east, from Baal Gad below Mount Hermon to Lebo Hamath.
  - a) In Verses 2 through 5, we get a description of the portions of the land of Israel that are still not controlled by the Israelites. To recall something from earlier lessons, God called on the Israelites to wipe out all the inhabitants of this land as a form of judgment on them.
    - i) In other words, Verses 2-5 are saying in effect to the Israelites that their job as soldiers is not yet complete. As we will see in verses coming up, God wanted the Israelites to divide up into tribes and then the individual tribes were to conquer these remaining groups and remaining locations.
  - b) If one knows their bible history, then one knows that the Israelites failed to complete this mission. For example, the Philistines are mentioned in Verse 2 and 3. This group became a problem for the Israelites for at least the next five hundred years. In other words, there are consequences to fail to do what God has called them (or us) to do. Many generations of Israelites had to suffer simply due to the fact the Israelites refused to follow through with the command to finish conquering the land and wiping out the inhabitants.



- c) Why did the Israelites collectively fail to trust God at this point in history?
  - i) After all, they just got the "gratitude" speech of Chapter 12 and the Israelites have been conquering all of these kings. You would think that by now, the Israelites trust in God and that trust would be "second nature" at this point.
  - ii) That's a key point for you and me. As we grow and trust in God, battling the issues that God wants us to defeat never gets any easier. We are guaranteed the victory as long as we trust in God, but we have to keep moving forward and keep on trusting God. All it takes is to "let off the gas" (spiritually speaking) and I promise that troubles will come back.
  - iii) The next book in the bible is the book of Judges. It is essentially a book of failure. In that book the next four hundred years of Israel's history is covered. The main idea is the Israelites failed to follow through with what God wanted them to do and failed to conquer all of the land of Israel.
  - iv) In the meantime, I am "years ahead of myself" as we are still in Joshua. ☺ God is still instructing the Israelites as to what to do next.
- 11. Verse 6: "As for all the inhabitants of the mountain regions from Lebanon to Misrephoth Maim, that is, all the Sidonians, I myself will drive them out before the Israelites. Be sure to allocate this land to Israel for an inheritance, as I have instructed you,<sup>7</sup> and divide it as an inheritance among the nine tribes and half of the tribe of Manasseh."<sup>8</sup> The other half of Manasseh, the Reubenites and the Gadites had received the inheritance that Moses had given them east of the Jordan, as he, the servant of the LORD, had assigned it to them.
  - a) In Verse 6, God continues to list some of the non-Jewish inhabitants of the land of Israel that are still there as of this date. The Israelites still have to conquer these people.
    - i) Notice Verse 6 says that God Himself will drive out these people. God is restating a principal laid out in Deuteronomy that says in effect, that God will lead the Israelites to victory over any and all enemies in the Promised Land. (See Deuteronomy 7:22, et. al.).
    - ii) The point is the Israelites should not fear these other groups. If the Israelites have trusted in God for their victories up to this point, then they need to trust in the fact that God will lead them to victory over the remaining inhabitants.
    - iii) So why did the Israelites fail to conquer these people? The short answer is the Israelites failed to trust God at this point and therefore, failed to follow through with attacking the people God wanted them to attack.
  - b) Here is where God tells Joshua to divide up the land. I suppose the reason Joshua starts the process "here and now" is that God told him too. If God tells us to do something, the key is not to wait around with following through on His commands.
  - c) The final thing these verses point out is the land of Israel is to be divided to the nine and one half tribes. That is God's way of saying He is aware of the deal made with the other two and one half tribes and God wants to divide up this land to those tribes who do want a part of this land.
  - d) So what is the significance of all of this? Let's start with the statement by God saying He will drive out the inhabitants. The point for us is that God wants us to have victory in our lives over all the sin issues and problem issues we face. God promises us as He promised them that if we are willing to confront those issues, He is there to lead us to victory.
    - i) As far as dividing up the land, there was a past tense (to us) fulfillment and a future "end time" fulfillment of this plan. The "past tense" fulfillment is what we are reading about here in the book of Joshua. One day God will again divide the land by tribe as promised to them. (See Ezekiel Chapter 48).
    - ii) The reward for the Christians is bigger in the sense that we inherit "all things". (Again, see Revelation 21:7.)

12. Verse 9: It extended from Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Gorge, and from the town in the middle of the gorge, and included the whole plateau of Medeba as far as Dibon,<sup>10</sup> and all the towns of Sihon king of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon, out to the border of the Ammonites.<sup>11</sup> It also included Gilead, the territory of the people of Geshur and Maacah, all of Mount Hermon and all Bashan as far as Salecah--<sup>12</sup> that is, the whole kingdom of Og in Bashan, who had reigned in Ashtaroth and Edrei and had survived as one of the last of the Rephaites. Moses had defeated them and taken over their land.<sup>13</sup> But the Israelites did not drive out the people of Geshur and Maacah, so they continue to live among the Israelites to this day.
- a) The locational references changes at this point. From this point (Verse 9) to the end of the chapter, the text is describing the land east the land of Israel that the two and one half tribes will specifically occupy.
  - b) The essential point of this text is that "this is the land east of the Jordan River that the two and one half tribes want to occupy, but there are still people there left to conquer."
  - c) It may help to remember that this speech is given to all the Israelites when they are still united at their "base camp" in the land of Israel. The wives and children of the soldiers of the two and one half tribes may be in a camp east of the Jordan, but the solders of these two and one half tribes are being told this at the "united" camp west of the Jordan.
    - i) What I personally visualize is Joshua standing in some central valley where all or a large group of Israelites could see what Joshua is doing. I also visualize Joshua using visual aids to describe the land. Maybe it was a flat rock on the ground or maybe just a flat piece of ground. (Again, this is speculation on my part.)
    - ii) What may also be happening at this point is that while Joshua focuses on each specific tribe and their sections, the leaders of that tribe may have stepped forward to get a closer look at what their future boundaries and future conquering entail.
  - d) This leads us back to this paragraph. It essentially says that Moses lead a great victory over the people who live in this territory east of the Jordan River. However, there are still some people here and those are the ones those Israelites who settle here have to defeat.
13. Verse 14: But to the tribe of Levi he gave no inheritance, since the offerings made by fire to the LORD, the God of Israel, are their inheritance, as he promised them.
- a) There is one tribe of the Israelites that did not have an inheritance. That is the tribe of Levi. This tribe was to be scattered all over the land and they are to be priests. The role of the Levites is that they are to be representatives of the Israelites to God.
  - b) OK, so why mention that fact here and now? I suspect the answer is that God wanted some of the Levites to also settle east of the Jordan River and work with the two and one half tribes that settle in this area.
  - c) Yes it is God's goal for all believers to be close to Him and that symbolically represented by the Promised Land. At the same time, God wants all Christians to be His witnesses to the world and to represent Him wherever people are located. My point here is I believe some Levites are called to live outside the Promised Land within these two and one half tribes. In a similar way God calls Christians to live anywhere and everywhere in the world to be His witnesses to the world.
  - d) Later in the book of Joshua, there are two chapters that focus just on the Levites (Chapters 20 and 21) and we'll discuss that tribe and their significance when we get there.
14. Verse 15: This is what Moses had given to the tribe of Reuben, clan by clan:
- a) Verses 9 to 13 describe all of the land east of the Jordan given to the two and one half tribes. From Verses 15 to the end of the chapter, we are going to have that territory broken down, "tribe by tribe" to describe each of the allotted territories.
  - b) Here starting in Verse 15, we are focusing on the tribe of Reuben. He was the firstborn son of the twelve tribes. The division began with this tribe as they wanted part of the area outside of Israel "proper" east of the Jordan River.

15. Verse 16: The territory from Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Gorge, and from the town in the middle of the gorge, and the whole plateau past Medeba<sup>17</sup> to Heshbon and all its towns on the plateau, including Dibon, Bamoth Baal, Beth Baal Meon,<sup>18</sup> Jahaz, Kedemoth, Mephaath,<sup>19</sup> Kiriathaim, Sibmah, Zereth Shahar on the hill in the valley,<sup>20</sup> Beth Peor, the slopes of Pisgah, and Beth Jeshimoth<sup>21</sup> --all the towns on the plateau and the entire realm of Sihon king of the Amorites, who ruled at Heshbon. Moses had defeated him and the Midianite chiefs, Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur and Reba--princes allied with Sihon--who lived in that country.<sup>22</sup> In addition to those slain in battle, the Israelites had put to the sword Balaam son of Beor, who practiced divination.<sup>23</sup> The boundary of the Reubenites was the bank of the Jordan. These towns and their villages were the inheritance of the Reubenites, clan by clan.
- a) It may help to look at a map at this point. Most good study bibles have a map that shows the land of Israel and the land east of the Jordan as allocated to the twelve tribes.
  - b) The key point is Reuben's territory is the land east and southeast of Israel proper. Different "experts" argue over the exact boundaries of each tribe. The point is "back then", these borders were real places and this is where the Reubenites settled.
  - c) For what it is worth, my bible lessons are not designed to be "geography lessons". There are study guides that go into much more detail as to the significance of the geography.
  - d) Also note that the average Israelite that is alive today has no idea which tribe they are from. The family records of the Israelites were lost when "The Temple" was destroyed in 70AD. Therefore, any Jewish person alive today may know they are Jewish, but they have no idea which tribe they are from.
    - i) If that is true, why study this section? If no Israelite knows whether or not they were originally Reubenites, what good is this section, other than bible trivia?
    - ii) To answer that, let me describe the territory of the two and one half tribes and then I'll come back to the spiritual significance of this section.
    - iii) Know that to God, the tribal significance is still important. Ezekiel describes a future day when the land of Israel will again be divided by tribe, but in that day, the boundaries will be different. My point is that God knows the tribal background of every Jewish person alive today. That knowledge of tribal background will be revealed to saved Jewish people in the "end times".
  - e) One more thing before I move on. Notice that "Balaam" is mentioned in Verse 22. There are three chapters dedicated to this guy in the book of Numbers. (See Numbers 22-24.) He is a non-Jew who had some type of real divination power. God commanded him not to curse the Jewish people even though a local king paid Balaam to curse the Jews. Balaam still "messed up" in that he later encouraged the Ammonites (one of the Jewish enemies) to get the Israelites to compromise in their lifestyle.
    - i) The point as it related to Joshua is that Balaam is mentioned here as one who was killed among those the Israelites defeated. The idea is to remember that no "plan against God" will succeed over time, including the one devised by Balaam.
  - f) Meanwhile, we're ready to discuss the next tribe settling east of the Jordan, which is Gad.
16. Verse 24: This is what Moses had given to the tribe of Gad, clan by clan:<sup>25</sup> The territory of Jazer, all the towns of Gilead and half the Ammonite country as far as Aroer, near Rabbah;<sup>26</sup> and from Heshbon to Ramath Mizpah and Betonim, and from Mahanaim to the territory of Debir;<sup>27</sup> and in the valley, Beth Haram, Beth Nimrah, Succoth and Zaphon with the rest of the realm of Sihon king of Heshbon (the east side of the Jordan, the territory up to the end of the Sea of Kinnereth).<sup>28</sup> These towns and their villages were the inheritance of the Gadites, clan by clan.
- a) Gad is not the second oldest brother, but he is next because his allotment of territory is just north of the allotment for Reuben. Without getting into a detailed geography lesson, the main point is they get the territory east of the Jordan River, north of the territory allotted to Reuben which is directly east and adjacent to the Jordan River.
  - b) Let me finish the last section east of the Jordan and then I'll get into "meaning".

17. Verse 29: This is what Moses had given to the half-tribe of Manasseh, that is, to half the family of the descendants of Manasseh, clan by clan: <sup>30</sup> The territory extending from Mahanaim and including all of Bashan, the entire realm of Og king of Bashan--all the settlements of Jair in Bashan, sixty towns, <sup>31</sup> half of Gilead, and Ashtaroth and Edrei (the royal cities of Og in Bashan). This was for the descendants of Makir son of Manasseh--for half of the sons of Makir, clan by clan. <sup>32</sup> This is the inheritance Moses had given when he was in the plains of Moab across the Jordan east of Jericho.
- a) Here we have the last tribal division east of the Jordan River. The half-tribe of Manasseh took the area north of the other two tribes, but still east of the Jordan River.
  - b) Again, many people wonder why this tribe split in two: The simple answer is that some of them wanted to be west of the Jordan "in the land" and some wanted to settle east of the Jordan on this plan. The point is God gave them what they wanted and didn't care about the fact the tribe split into two groups.
18. This leads to my final point (and ties to my lesson theme) about why these two and one half tribes settled east of the Jordan River and what that means to us.
- a) The symbolic idea behind these two and one half tribes not settling in the Promised Land is that some Christians are willing to "settle for less". They see where they are in life at some point and say in effect, "Where I am right now is good enough for me". That is pretty much what these two and one half tribes said. They said the land east of the Jordan River is good enough for us and we don't have to actually go into the land of Israel.
  - b) Notice that God gave them what they wanted. God always works on our level and where we are at, at the present moment. God wants us to grow further toward Him, but if we are comfortable at our present level, God does not force us to go on to the next step.
  - c) The problem with "compromising with God" is that it always is going to hurt us in the long run. For the moment, the land "outside of Israel may look fine", but over time, not drawing that close to God will cause problems. The Israelites over time ended up losing the land east of the Jordan. These two and one half tribes failed to conquer those who lived here and the Israelites ended up losing this territory. The lesson to us is fairly similar. Things may "seem fine now" to compromise with God and not go on the next step but we always pay the price in the long run for not taking that next step of faith.
19. Verse 33: But to the tribe of Levi, Moses had given no inheritance; the LORD, the God of Israel, is their inheritance, as he promised them.
- a) The chapter ends with one more reminder that the Levites do not get an inheritance. So why mention this fact here again? I suspect it is because God wanted the Levites to scatter themselves all through Israel's territory and even scatter themselves through the area east of the Jordan where these two and one half tribes are to be located.
  - b) If the Levites represent God's witnesses, they are to be where the "population is". Think of it this way: Jesus told us to pray for "workers for the harvest. The fields are white and ready to be picked." (Paraphrase of Matthew 9:38 or Luke 10:2.)
    - i) In the bible, there are very few direct prayer requests. One of those prayers is for us to pray for "workers for the harvest". What that means is God wants people to go out into the world and be His witnesses. Think of it as praying for more missionaries. How does that tie to Joshua? It is about some of God's people "spreading out" to be a witness for the people to God. Just as the Levites are called to be wherever God's people are located, so the Christians are called to spread wherever the "harvest" is.
20. With that said, let's close in prayer: Father, help us to appreciate the victories in our lives and keep our focus upon you when we face the next issue in our lives. Further, we ask that You help us not to "settle for second best" in our relationship with You. Help us not to take the "easy way out" and settle outside of what You desire for our lives. Guide us as we make a difference for You. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.