

# Joshua

## *The LORD is Salvation*

Note: often the number of cities/towns/villages Joshua mentioned in a tribal inheritance of land did not always agree with the specific number given <sup>e.g., Joshua 19:32-38</sup>. Also, Joshua used an interesting phrase: "towns and their villages" <sup>e.g., Joshua 19:23</sup> to seemingly indicate smaller habitable areas associated with and on the outskirts of larger residential centers.

### *Chapter 18:1-10 Dividing the Remaining Land among the Seven Last Tribes*

**18:1-2** With the division of the land inheritance nearing completion, a military base camp was much less important than a center for worship. Shiloh, in the east central hill country of the territory of Ephraim, was chosen as the place for the tabernacle and the "whole assembly of the Israelites". From their location in Shiloh, Joshua (and others) distributed land to the remaining 7 tribes.

On Mt. Sinai, God gave Moses the design for the tabernacle (or Tent of Meeting), the courtyard and the furnishings <sup>Exodus 25-27,30</sup>; the chest (ark of the Covenant <sup>Deuteronomy 10:3</sup>), table of showbread, golden lampstand, alter of incense and the alter of burnt offering. Joshua set up the Tent of Meeting at Shiloh, making it the center of worship for the PL. The tabernacle was kept at Shiloh for over 100 years <sup>Judges 18:31, 1 Samuel 1:3</sup>. It was moved to Gibeon <sup>2 Chronicles 1:2-6</sup> sometime prior to the destruction of Shiloh (late 11<sup>th</sup> century B.C.). The tabernacle then remained in Gibeon until it was transported to Jerusalem after Solomon completed the construction of the temple <sup>2 Chronicles 5:1-6</sup>.

**18:3-7** Joshua indicated that the remaining tribes were slow to decide on an area of land for their inheritance <sup>Proverbs 12:27</sup>, so he instructed the leaders of each of those seven tribes to pick three men to survey the land that they desired for their people. These lands had to be within the PL, but outside the areas that had already been distributed to Judah, Manasseh and Ephraim to the west of the Jordan River and Gad, Reuben and Manasseh to the east. Joshua once again reaffirmed the fact that the Levites would not receive an inheritance of land, but they would be scattered throughout the land as priestly servants, dedicated to the LORD <sup>Joshua 13:33</sup>.

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**18:8-10** Joshua told the surveyors to map the lands, and then bring the scrolls with the descriptions of the seven lands they requested for the seven remaining tribes, and the final decision would be made by casting lots before the LORD at the tabernacle in Shiloh. <sup>Joshua 19:51</sup>

Even though the surveyors described the lands requested by each tribe, the decision on what land they would inherit was determined by Joshua, Eleazar the priest and the tribal clan leaders <sup>Joshua 4:1, 19:51</sup>. This chosen group discussed the merits of these issues; however, the ultimate decision was made by the casting of lots <sup>Joshua 14:2</sup> (probably by Eleazar, and not by Joshua <sup>see notes on Joshua 14:1-5</sup>). Undoubtedly, there must have been disagreements between tribes on the lands they desired <sup>e.g., Joshua 17:14</sup>, this process (defined by God) removed any basis for a legitimate argument, because their dispute was with the LORD <sup>Proverbs 16:33</sup>.

### Chapter 18:11-28 *The Land Allotment for Benjamin*

**18:11-20 Benjamin** As a favored son of Jacob <sup>Genesis 42:4</sup> and a full brother to Joseph <sup>Genesis 35:24</sup>, Benjamin's allotment of land was carefully placed in a special area "between the tribes of Judah and Joseph" and included the sacred city of Jerusalem <sup>v.28</sup>. The very long northern border of Benjamin's inheritance was with Ephraim and Manasseh, while the long southern border was with Judah. In addition, the territory of Benjamin also share short borders with Dan on the west and Reuben on the east (along the Jordan River). Jericho also lay within Benjamin's land <sup>v.21</sup>.

**18:21-28** Twenty-six cities and associated villages belonging to the clans of Benjamin are listed.

### Chapter 19 *The Land Allotment for the Last Six Tribes and Joshua*

**19:1-9 Simeon** The inherited land for the tribe of Simeon was taken out of the south-central portion of Judah's allotment, because they had more than needed (and possibly fulfilling a prophecy by Jacob <sup>Genesis 49:7</sup>). Seventeen cities and their villages were listed within Simeon's land.

**19:10-16 Zebulun** The tribe of Zebulun received a relative small landlocked inheritance of land directly west of the Sea of Galilee. Zebulun's allotment included twelve towns and their villages.

Zebulun and Naphtali <sup>v.32-39</sup> were called the "Galilee of the Gentiles" by both Isaiah <sup>Isaiah 9:1</sup> and Matthew <sup>Matthew 4:15</sup>. This phrase referred to the fact that the main route Gentiles took to enter and exit Israel passed through Galilee. The context of Matthew's quote of Isaiah's broader statement <sup>Isaiah 9:1-2, Matthew 4:12-16</sup>, "the people living in darkness have seen a great

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light...”, was that Israel ‘exhibited’ the light of God to the world (“Gentiles”) and in a much more definitive way, Jesus ‘brought’ the light <sup>John 8:12</sup>, through Israel, to the Gentiles.

**19:17-23 Issachar** The small territory of the tribe of Issachar was southwest of the Sea of Galilee, extending from the Jordan River west to the Kishon River, including Mt. Tabor <sup>Judges 4:4-14</sup> and the city of Jezreel <sup>1 Kings 21</sup>. Later, it was said about the men of Issachar that they “understood the times and knew what Israel should do” <sup>1 Chronicles 12:32</sup>, essentially calling them prophets.

**19:24-31 Asher** Asher’s tribe received a strip of land ~10 mile wide along the Mediterranean Sea bounded by the Litani River on the north and the Kishon River on the south. One of the 22 towns in Asher was Tyre, where Paul landed at the end of his 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey <sup>Acts 21:3</sup>.

**19:32-39 Naphtali** The land allotted to Naphtali was between Asher and the Jordan River, from west of the Sea of Galilee north to Mt. Hermon. Naphtali’s inheritance included nineteen towns. The “large tree in Zaanannim” <sup>v.33, Judges 4:11</sup> was the place where Jael later killed Sisera by driving a tent “peg through his temple into the ground” while Sisera was asleep <sup>Judges 4:21</sup>.

**19:40-46,48 Dan** Dan’s territory was “U”-shaped, with Ephraim to the north, Judah to the south. It extended from the west boundary of Benjamin west and then northwest to the Great Sea.

**19:47** The Danites were so afraid of the Amorites living in their inherited land, they fled north and attacked the northern city of Leshem (Laish <sup>Judges 18:29</sup>, in the inheritance of Naphtali). The men of Dan killed everyone in Leshem and renamed it Dan. Dan was ~15 miles SW of Mt. Hermon.

The tribe of Dan abandoned their inheritance because of their great fear of the Amorites, but later, the descendants of Joseph pressed the Amorites into forced labor <sup>Judges 1:34-35</sup>.

**19:49-50 Joshua** Once the land division was complete, the Israelite people knew that Joshua deserved an inheritance, as the LORD had implicitly promised <sup>Numbers 14:30</sup>. Being from the tribe of Ephraim <sup>Numbers 13:8</sup>, Joshua chose the city named Timnath Serah (also known as Timnath Heres <sup>Judges 2:9</sup>) on the western edge of the Ephraim hill country overlooking the Great Sea. When Joshua died at the age of one hundred ten, he was buried in Timnath Serah. <sup>Joshua 24:30</sup>

**19:51** A summary verse of who assigned the seven lands, and how and where it was achieved.