

THE DIVISION OF THE LAND

Joshua 18:1-10

This lesson should cover the conquest as well as the division of the land. With the younger classes the statement that the land was conquered will be enough. The Juniors should be told the fact that there were three campaigns, and their order. A little more should be done in the three older classes. Suggestions as to outstanding points will be found in the pupils' notes.

Doctrinal Points

Casting lots means that we leave the decision of a thing in the Lord's hands. There is no such thing as chance or accident. Everything is under the control of divine providence.

The Word is so closely knit together that the oftener we read it the more comes to us from it and the more we find we have to learn.

Our faith needs to be supported by an understanding of the whole plan and organization of life.

We have to drive out our spiritual foes in order to attain a heavenly character.

Notes for Parents

Joshua conquered the Holy Land in three campaigns. The first was in the center of the land. When we determine to make our character heavenly, we must first of all strike at the heart of all our evil feelings and false ideas: we must recognize and fight the love of self. Then we must fight the wrong desires which spring from self-love—the campaign in the south—and finally acknowledge and correct the false ideas which fill our minds—the campaign in the north. We never make a complete conquest. The Israelites left many enemies untouched. But we can gain a sufficient mastery with the Lord's help so that we become settled in a heavenly order.

This is the division of the land among the tribes, of which our chapter for today tells us.

The tabernacle with the ark in it was set up at Shiloh in the center of the land. The commandments must be “written on the heart” if we are to know peace. *Shiloh* means “peace.” The Levites were given cities throughout the land. This means that the desire to serve the Lord must pervade everything we do, for you remember that the Levites were the tribe who had charge of the worship of Israel. Each of the other tribes was given its own special inheritance. All our powers and abilities must recognize and perform their proper functions in the interests of the whole character. Regeneration is not something which is accomplished for us by the Lord without any cooperation on our part, and our cooperation involves thought as well as action. The Lord gives us the power to conquer our inner foes; our place in heaven comes to us as an inheritance from Him. But we must never cease to learn from Him, to ask for His help, and to be on our guard against these evils within ourselves which are always lurking there and gain strength as we become careless and self-confident, and may even get control of us again before we realize what is happening.

Primary

The setting up of the tabernacle at Shiloh can be made the principal part of the lesson, and the children should learn the name *Shiloh* and what it means. They should learn what casting lots means, that the Lord governed the choice, and also where the various tribes settled, including the tribe of Levi.

From the camp at Gilgal, Joshua led the fighting men out to conquer the whole land of Canaan. It took them more than twenty years during the life of Joshua, and even then they never wholly overcame their enemies.

But after seven years they had gained enough control so that they could divide the land and settle in their homes.

Where did they set up the tabernacle?

Shiloh means “peace.”

The tabernacle remained at Shiloh for three hundred years.

Do you remember what the tabernacle was? It was the tent for worship which was made at Mount Sinai according to the Lord's directions. The ark—the gold-covered chest in which they kept the two tables of stone on which the Lord had written the commandments—was always placed in the inner chamber or Holy of Holies of the tabernacle, just as we always keep a copy of the Word on the altar in our church.

The tabernacle had been carried by the Levites along with the children of Israel wherever they went throughout their wilderness journey. The Levites, you remember, were set apart to have charge of everything pertaining to the worship of the people. They set up the tabernacle in the midst of every camping place. But after the land was conquered, they did not have to take it down any more, but could have a permanent place for it.

How did the Israelites mark out the divisions of the land?

Where had the tribes of Judah and of Joseph been given lots?

In verse 5 “on the north” means north of the tribe of Judah, not the northern part of the land.

You remember that Joseph had become two tribes—Ephraim and Manasseh.

The Levites did not have any separate area, but they were given forty-eight cities, four in the land of each of the twelve tribes, so that they could teach the people how to worship the Lord and could receive the sacrifices and offerings which had been commanded all through the year. But the Passover and the other two great feasts which were celebrated once a year were centered at the tabernacle in Shiloh.

Where had Reuben and Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh been given their lots?

How was it determined which lot each of the remaining seven tribes was to have?

When lots are cast, it is the Lord who really makes the choice.

Two men were given special inheritances.

Joshua was given a city called Timnath-serah in the lot of Ephraim.

Caleb was given Hebron.

What do you remember about Hebron?



Junior

Map study is indicated for this class, as well as the reading of the Bible references in its notes. This will help the children develop a background for many of the Bible stories, as well as fixing names of persons and places in their memories.

From the camp at Gilgal, Joshua led the fighting men out to the conquest of the land. The conquest was carried out in three campaigns, the first in the central part of the land, the second in the south, and the third in the north. These three campaigns are described in chapters 6 to 11 of the book of Joshua, which are stirring chapters to read. Chapter 12 reminds us that Moses had conquered Sihon king of the Amorites and Og king of Bashan, the two great kings on the west side of the Jordan. This whole effort, which took about seven years, gave the Israelites the mastery of the land and enabled them to divide it and settle in their homes, but there were still many cities which had not been taken, and most of the people in the land never ceased to be enemies.

Caleb had been promised by Moses—at the command of the Lord (Deuteronomy 1:36)—that he should have a certain place in the land for himself. Read Joshua 14:6-15 and 15:13-14 to see how this promise was kept.

Whose home had Hebron been?

Joshua also was given a city of his own in the allotment of Ephraim (Joshua 19:49-50). And before the final division described in our chapter for today, five of the tribes had been taken care of. The tribes of Reuben and Gad had asked for and received land in the south and center of the cross-Jordan country, and half of the tribe of Manasseh had been given land north of them. The other half of the tribe of Manasseh and the tribe of Ephraim—you remember Joseph's two sons were to be heads of tribes—had the center of the Holy Land proper, and Judah had already been given all the land south of them.

How did Joshua have the rest of the land divided?

How did they decide which property each tribe should have?

When lots are cast, who really decides the choice?

Now look at a map of the Holy Land as divided among the tribes. You will see that the southern part of the land went to the tribes of Simeon and Judah; the central part to the descendants of Joseph, to Benjamin, and to Dan; and the northern part to the other tribes. In chapter 19:47 we learn that Dan found its lot too small and went up to the north of the others and conquered more territory, taking the city of Leshem, elsewhere called Laish, and changing its name to Dan. This made Dan the northernmost city of the Holy Land, as Beersheba was the southernmost, and from this comes the expression “from Dan to Beersheba,” meaning everywhere. In Joshua 19:9 we find that the inheritance of Simeon was taken out of the portion of Judah because it was found that too much land had been given to Judah. From this point on in the Bible story there is little mention of the tribe of Simeon.

Why did the tribe of Levi have no separate area?

In chapters 20 and 21 we are told of the establishment of six cities of refuge and forty-eight Levitical cities. The first fifteen verses of the thirty-fifth chapter of Numbers explain why these cities were commanded.

Now the tabernacle was moved from Gilgal, where it had been during the conquest, and set up at Shiloh. *Shiloh* means “peace.” Find Shiloh on the map. You see it is near the center of the land. The tabernacle remained here for three hundred years. Worship was conducted in it, and the people came to it for the three great feasts of the Jewish year.

Intermediate

The meaning of regeneration should be stressed—the fact that it involves the rooting out of evil and falsity from our hearts and minds. Speak of the fixing of the commandments and service of the Lord as the center of our life—the tabernacle at Shiloh—and then as an outline follow the specific correspondences given at the end of the Intermediate notes.

Joshua conquered the Holy Land in three campaigns. The first gave him control of the center of the land. This campaign, described

in chapters 6 through 9, includes the stories of the fall of Jericho and Ai and the league with the Gibeonites, which we have studied earlier. The second gave him control of all the southern part of the land and is told in chapter 10. The third, described in chapter 11, gave him all the northern part; and in chapter 12 we are reminded that Moses had conquered the country east of the Jordan. Chapter 13 tells us the boundaries of the two and a half tribes which had chosen this cross-Jordan country for their inheritance. Then in chapters 14 through 17 we are told of the settlement of the tribe of Judah in the southern part of the land, Caleb being given the city of Hebron, the home of Abraham, and of the assignment of the very center of the land to the tribes of Joseph–Ephraim and the other half of Manasseh.

The conquest in the north completed the task assigned to Joshua. Israel was now master of the whole land, although only the people who had actively resisted Joshua had been destroyed. Joshua 11:13 and 11:22 tell us that the cities “that stood still in their strength” were not destroyed, and that a few of the giants also were still left. These picture the falsities and evils within us which lie dormant during our early efforts at regeneration, to rise up later when we think the conquest is over.

Joshua’s final work was the setting up of the tabernacle at Shiloh, where it remained for more than three hundred years—*Shiloh* means “peace”—and the division of the previously unassigned land among the remaining tribes. The rest of chapter 18 and chapter 19 describe the boundaries of the various tribes. We remember that the twelve tribes represent all our abilities and powers. The order in which the twelve sons of Jacob—or Israel—were born is the order in which these abilities and powers develop, beginning with the simple general ones we use in childhood, then followed by the faculties which enable us to take our places in the world, and finally by the higher spiritual faculties pictured by Jacob’s two youngest sons, Joseph and Benjamin. In the distribution of the tribes in the Holy Land we find the oldest sons, Reuben, Simeon, and Judah are all in the south, which is the will part of our nature. (Levi, of

course, is scattered throughout the land because he represents worship.) The next six sons are in the north, the thought part of us. And in the center of the land, where the higher land is and where the tabernacle is set up, are the tribe of Benjamin and the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph. On the map Dan is also near the center, but on the seacoast; later this tribe spread to the far north. This is because Dan represents the ability to judge, and specifically the acknowledgment of the truths of revelation which is necessary before any correct judgment can be formed and truth can enter the mind and will; so Dan is rightly a boundary tribe. Thus the map of the Holy Land becomes a wonderful picture of the way in which our various abilities, faculties, and powers are meant to be arranged in order to make up a heavenly character.*

Chapter 21 tells of the forty-eight cities with their pasture lands which were given to the Levites. Worship of the Lord must be within everything we think, feel, and do.

Chapter 22 tells us how Joshua dismissed with his blessing the two and a half tribes which had been given homes east of the Jordan, since they had now fully kept their promise to help their brethren conquer the land. Like Lot they had chosen to live in the fertile plain rather than in the mountains, and they picture that part of us which is most concerned with activities and enjoyments of the world. Joshua charged them solemnly to be faithful to the worship of the Lord if they wished to prosper. To keep this in remembrance they set up an altar near the Jordan, not for worship and sacrifice but as a witness of their promise. The Lord wants us to enjoy the good things of this world and its activities but always to make them serve the higher goals of our spiritual life. When the Lord prayed for His disciples, He said, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." This should always be our guide in

*There is a map showing the correspondences of the twelve tribes on p. 80 of Hugo Odhner's *The Divine Allegory* (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1954). --Ed.

deciding what occupations we choose, how we conduct them, and what pleasures we may enjoy.

Basic Correspondences

the southern part of the land = the will or affection part of us
the cross-Jordan country = our natural or external life

Senior

The meaning of the twelve tribes and the reason for their particular allotments in the Holy Land is the general lesson, but stress the fact that we never succeed in conquering all our inner foes and that we need constantly to watch and to study so that we may recognize and resist them.

The taking of Jericho and Ai and the treaty with the Gibeonites were the beginning of the conquest and gave Joshua control of the central part of the land. The “divide and conquer” principle thus has a scriptural basis, for with the center of the land in his hands, Joshua was able to proceed to gain mastery over the rest in two campaigns, the first in the south and the second in the north. In all these stories of conquest we find an element of miracle. Joshua and the Israelites were not allowed to forget that it was the Lord who gave them the victory. The conquest under Joshua is a picture of the process of regeneration in its earlier states, when we are in an ardent and enthusiastic state and willing to attack our faults boldly.

Then comes our lesson for today. The land is conquered. The enemies in heart and mind have been recognized and brought into a state of subjection. But we should notice that although some have been altogether destroyed, others have merely been driven back into their cities. Nevertheless a time of temporary peace comes when we take stock of ourselves and make orderly plans for future accomplishment. The tribes are ready to take their allotted places and to settle down, each man under his own vine and fig tree (Micah 4:4).

First the tabernacle is set up in Shiloh (“peace”) in the center of the land. We can see that this is as it should be. The two and a

half tribes who chose the cross-Jordan country are allowed to go and take possession of it. Caleb, who with Joshua long before had trusted the Lord and urged the people to go forward and conquer the land in spite of its seeming strength, and who was at that time promised a special inheritance, is given Hebron, the former home of Abraham. The Levites are assigned their forty-eight cities throughout the land, so that there may be worship and remembrance of the Lord everywhere. And the land is divided by lot among the rest of the tribes.

This is a picture of an orderly life, each faculty in its proper place and serving the Lord in its appointed way. The highest faculties, the spiritual, are in the center. Joseph and Benjamin, Jacob's last-born sons, represent these faculties, which develop later in our lives than the so-called "practical" faculties. The tribes of Simeon and Judah are in the south, the affectional part of our life, where our childhood states—Hebron, the home of Abraham—persist. The other tribes, concerned with our intellectual life, are in the north. In the cross-Jordan country also, in the plane of our outer activities, all three types of faculty are needed.

The place of Dan in the Holy Land is interesting. He was given an inheritance along the seacoast near the center of the land, but finding it too "straight" or confined for him later went up and conquered territory north of all the other tribes. Dan was the son of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid, the first indirect fruit of the spiritual love pictured by Rachel. *Dan* means "judging." Swedenborg tells us that he represents the affirmation or acknowledgment that we should believe in God and live a good life. And he says, "affirmation and also acknowledgment is the first general principle with the man who is being regenerated, but it is the last with the man who has been regenerated." This is the reason why Dan moved from the central seacoast to the northernmost border of the land.

There were still conquests to be made. Joshua commanded each tribe to continue the conquest in its own territory and to keep in subjection the enemies already overcome. We need this injunction.

One of our most subtle temptations is to become self-satisfied and think we have no more to do. We shall find in the book of Judges a picture of the results of such a mistake.

Adult

The whole subject of regeneration is presented in this lesson. We should note especially that it is no haphazard process accomplished in us by the Lord without constant cooperation on our part. It is the achievement of a well-ordered inner as well as outward life.

We have studied in Joshua 6 through 9 the three principal stories concerning Joshua's first campaign, which gave him control of the central part of the Holy Land: the conquest of Jericho, the conquest of Ai, and the treaty with the Gibeonites.

The conquest of the rest of the land was divided into two campaigns, the first in the south and the second in the north. In general the south represents states of affection and the north intellectual states, and these two campaigns thus represent the effort to recognize and overcome evils and falsities in our hearts and minds. We sometimes use the terms *evil* and *falsity* without stopping to think just what they mean. An example may help us here. Take dishonesty in business, for instance. The evil involved is the love of selfish gain; the falsity is the excuse we make for doing what we know to be wrong—as, for example, that our first duty is to take care of ourselves, that everyone does such things, that it is impossible to survive in the business world without such practices. The evil is the underlying desire; the falsity, the thoughts and reasonings which excuse and support it. Our hearts and minds are full of these evils and falsities, as the Holy Land was full of hostile peoples, and they band together against our efforts at regeneration, one evil drawing others to support it, and many falsities bearing each other up, so that in fighting against one we must fight against many. These are the general campaigns, first against the five kings in the south, the league of evil desires; and then against the kings of the north, the host of false ideas and reasonings. The campaign

in the south comes first. We must recognize and overcome the underlying evil before we are prepared to see the true nature of the excuses we have been making and discard them. In the southern campaign the Lord sent hailstones against the enemy and also gave the Israelites light to pursue them into complete rout. Our evils are conquered not so much by our own efforts as by the power of the Lord's truth* and by the clear light of the Word. "Thou searchest the reins and the heart." In the northern campaign, the use of horses and chariots is noteworthy, as the affection for our own intellectual powers and the systems of thought through which we have made these powers effective. The Lord promised Joshua that they should "hough [hamstring] their horses and burn their chariots with fire"; our admiration for our own wisdom can be broken, and love will destroy the false ideas on which we have acted.

After these first campaigns the Israelites were masters of the Holy Land and ready to settle in their homes there. This does not mean that they had conquered all their enemies. The Lord permits us to begin to enjoy spiritual living while we have still many battles to fight. We never come to the end of our spiritual battles while we are in this world; yet we can know a measure of heavenly joy and peace even while here. The tabernacle was set up at Shiloh, the name of which means "peace." The Holy Land is always spoken of as the "inheritance" of the tribes. This is because they received it as a gift from the Lord. A place in the heavens, which means a heavenly character, is the inheritance of each one of us who will recognize the Lord as his Heavenly Father and try to do His will. And as each one of us is born with different qualities and gifts from those of any other, his place is a specific one, the place where he alone can serve, which no other could possibly fill, his particular inheritance. "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matt. 25:34)

*In this case it is turned into something coldly destructive by our negative attitudes. The truth hurts when we are evil. –Ed.

The twelve sons of Jacob represent the various good affections which make up a complete person. Each of these affections has its proper place in the perfect life; people governed by each of these affections have their proper place in the Grand Man. So the division of the Holy Land by lot among the tribes pictures the well-rounded spiritual life, and also the well-rounded spiritual society, in which good men and women of all types and gifts have their proper place and work together harmoniously in the Lord's service. And we should notice that the fundamental choice of place is not ours but the Lord's, for the casting of lots always pictures the acknowledgment that the decision is in the Lord's hands.

The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh were permitted to settle east of the Jordan, after they had helped their brothers conquer the Holy Land. The cross-Jordan country represents the plane of natural living. It was a fertile land and good for cattle; that is, the plane of natural living is meant for the carrying out of the good affections for useful service of an external kind. Many people love such service who do not care to think very deeply. They are at home in useful, kindly, external living. Such people, if they are willing to recognize the necessity of the deeper things of worship and doctrine and to make due effort to examine themselves and to conquer selfishness and its supporting excuses, are permitted to spend their lives for the most part in the land of external service. They do not attain very deep or high states, but they are useful and happy. Part of the Lord's ministry was in this cross-Jordan country. It is interesting to note that the two tribes who asked for an inheritance in this country were Reuben, who represents the first faith of the natural man, and Gad, who represents good works of an external kind, and that half the tribe of Manasseh was assigned a lot to the north of them, although there is no record that Manasseh had asked for this assignment.* Manas-

*While this is correct (see Numbers 32:33, where the original assignment is recorded), one could, of course, *infer* that a request was made by the Manasites even though such request was not recorded in the letter. –Ed.

seh, the older son of Joseph, represents the good of the church; so we may understand that his being placed as a bulwark to the north of Reuben and Gad indicates that those who settle in the natural plane need to have their thinking guarded by the recognition that good comes from the Lord and not from themselves.

We should note also that the Levites received no particular part of the land as their inheritance. They were to be responsible for the worship and spiritual instruction of the people, as well as to carry on the service of the tabernacle. It is said of them that “the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance.” Among the tribes, the Levites represent the element of worship. They are those affections in us which look directly to the Lord and find their satisfaction in learning of Him and meditating upon Him and in the spirit and act of prayer and praise. This is their inheritance. They have no one place in the well-ordered life, but pervade the whole. There is no part of our lives where there should not be “cities of the Levites,” systems of thinking which relate that part to the Lord and His service. All parts of our lives should minister to this spirit of worship, as the tithes of all the people supported the Levites. We should not go to church on Sunday and forget the Lord the rest of the week. We should not have one place in our minds for religion and a separate compartment for everyday life. We should not read the Word each morning and refuse to test our conduct by it. “Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon the earth.” (Deuteronomy 12:19)

From the Writings of Swedenborg

Arcana Coelestia, n. 3913: “By the twelve sons of Jacob are here described the twelve general or cardinal things by means of which while being regenerated or made a church, man is initiated into what is spiritual and celestial. For when a man is being regenerated, or made a church (that is, when from a dead man he is becoming alive, or from corporeal heavenly), he is led by the Lord through many states. These general states are what are designated by the ‘twelve sons,’ and afterwards by the ‘twelve tribes’; for which reason the ‘twelve tribes’ signify all things of faith and love . . . for generals involve all

the particulars and singulars, and these latter bear relation to the former. When a man is being regenerated, the internal man is to be conjoined with the external, consequently the goods and truths of the internal man with the goods and truths of the external; for from truths and goods man is man. These cannot be conjoined without means. Means are such things as derive something from the one side, and something from the other, and which are attended with the effect that in so far as the man accedes to the one, the other becomes subordinate. These means are what are signified by the ‘handmaids,’ the means on the part of the internal man by the handmaids of Rachel; and the means on the part of the external man by the handmaids of Leah.”

Suggested Questions on the Lesson

- J. In how many campaigns did Joshua conquer the Holy Land? *three*
J. What was the order of these campaigns? *center, south, north*
J. What familiar stories are connected with the first? *Jericho, Ai, Gibeon*
J. Were all the enemies in the land conquered? *no*
P. Where was the tabernacle set up permanently? *Shiloh*
P. What does *Shiloh* mean? *peace*
J. Who marked out the divisions of the land? *three men from each tribe*
P. How was it decided which tribe should have which division? *by casting lots*
P. When lots are cast, who really makes the decision? *the Lord*
J. What tribes had the center of the land? *Joseph, Benjamin, Dan*
J. Why were there two tribes of Joseph? *Joseph’s sons were “adopted” by Jacob*
J. What tribes had the cross-Jordan country? *Reuben, Gad, half Manasseh*
J. What tribes had the southern part of the land? *Judah, Simeon*
J. What city was given to Caleb? *Hebron*
J. Why were the Levites not given one of the divisions of the land? *in charge of worship*
P. What were they given instead? *forty-eight cities*
I. What do the twelve tribes represent? *all our mental faculties*
S. What is pictured by the setting up of the tabernacle at Shiloh? *putting worship in a central and settled (i.e., peaceful) part of our lives*