

General Church Education



The Land of Canaan Divided

Joshua 13:1-7, 7-14; 14:1-5; 18:1-10

Lesson 14

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 4: The Lord Is the Hero

For ages 9-10

The Land of Canaan Divided

Joshua 13:1,7-14; 14:1-5; 18:1-10

For Parents and Teachers

The land of Canaan pictures heaven. It was the home of the heavenly people of the gold and silver ages, the children of Israel, and of the Lord when He was on earth. Every mountain, river or town there was full of heavenly meaning. Gaining control and settling the land pictures our fights against spiritual enemies and the granting of heavenly states by the Lord.

After three military campaigns Canaan was under Israel's control. Only a few enemies remained. The land was then divided so the tribes could settle and build new lives. Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh already had land east of the Jordan. Canaan itself was divided by lot, a sign that all the decisions were in the Lord's hands. Judah, Ephraim and the other half of Manasseh received land to the south and middle of the land. The spies who gave favorable reports years earlier received their own land: Caleb, in Judah; Joshua, in Ephraim. The tabernacle was set up in Shiloh (meaning "peace"). Shiloh was to be the center of worship for the next 300 years, until Solomon built the temple. Finally, the remaining land was surveyed, and Benjamin, Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali and Dan received their inheritance. The Levites did not inherit a territory but instead forty eight cities throughout the land. They taught about the Lord and led worship. Similarly, we should include the Lord in all aspects of our lives.

Ideas for Children

- We inherit heaven (the land of Canaan) as we fight evils and try to do what the Lord tells us to.
- Casting lots means allowing the Lord to lead us.
- Just as each tribe had its own place in the land, each person has their own special place in heaven.

From the Writings

'The land of Canaan' represents the Lord's kingdom. Because of this it also represented the celestial and spiritual things that belong to the Lord's kingdom. See *Arcana Coelestia* 1413.

All things in the land of Canaan were representative. Those in the midst of the land represented the Lord's internal man—Mount Zion and Jerusalem represented celestial and spiritual things. Outlying districts represented more remote things. The most outlying districts which formed the boundaries, represented the external man.... Almost all cities, mountains, hills, valleys, rivers, and land features were representative. See *Arcana Coelestia* 1585.

The twelve tribes mean universal divisions of faith and love that constitute the Lord's kingdom in heaven and on earth. In general the twelve tribes mean everything constituting the doctrine of truth and good, that is, of faith and love; for these constitute the Lord's kingdom, since what are essentially matters of truth or faith constitute the whole of thought there, and what are essentially matters of good or love constitute the whole of affection. Twelve means all things in general, while 'tribes' means matters of truth and good, or of faith and love, so that 'the twelve tribes' means all of these. See *Arcana Coelestia* 3858.

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Joshua 13:1,7-14; 14:1-5; 18:1-10

Vocabulary

inhabitant—a person who lives in a particular place

ravine—deep valley

remnant—small number that remain

inheritance—(as used in this lesson) ownership of land given by the Lord

subdued—brought under control

survey—to look at in detail

territory—area of land

The Lord's Promise

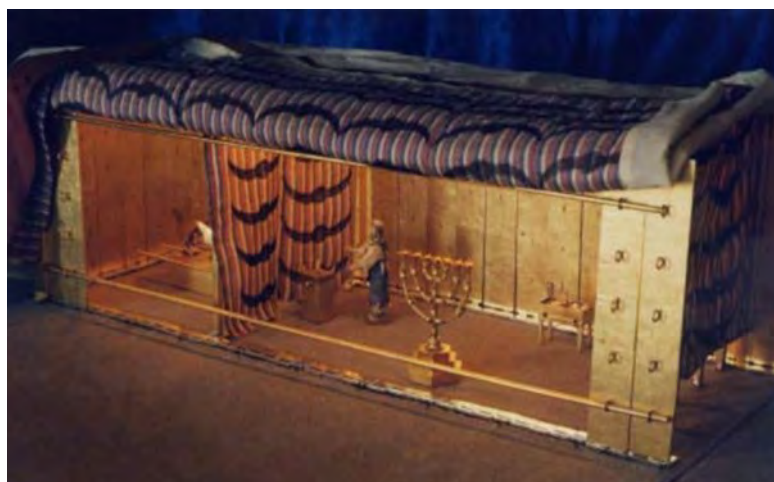
Do you remember the promise the Lord made to Joshua? The Lord told Joshua to be strong and of good courage, and he would have good success. And the Lord made another promise:

“Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.” (Joshua 1:6.)

For about seven years, Joshua and the armies of Israel fought against the people of Canaan. First they fought in the middle of the land. Then they fought in the south. Finally, they fought in the north. When the fighting ended, they had had good success. They controlled the whole land. There were still small groups of enemies scattered throughout the land of Canaan, but they were no longer strong enough to fight the children of Israel.

The Land Is Divided

Joshua was now an old man. The Lord told him it was time to divide the land among the twelve tribes of Israel as the inheritance He had promised them.



Do you remember that Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh were promised land on the east side of the Jordan River? They had crossed the river Jordan to help the other tribes conquer the people living in Canaan. Now they would return across the Jordan River to their new land.

All the other tribes, except Levi, would now be given their own part of the land as an inheritance. The tribe of Levi was not given a part

of the country. The Levites were the priests. Their job was to lead worship and teach people about the Lord. They needed to be everywhere, so they were given cities with every tribe throughout the land.

Read Joshua 13:1, 7-14; 14: 1-5.

The Tabernacle Is Set up in Shiloh

Now that people were ready to settle down, build homes and plant crops, it was time to set up the tabernacle. The tabernacle was the special tent where the children of Israel worshiped. During their long journey through the wilderness, the tabernacle was always set up in the center of the camp.

Now it was time to set it up near the center of the land, in a place called Shiloh. Shiloh means “peace” or “rest.” The people would bring offerings there to worship the Lord. Its place in the center of the country reminds us that we should put worship of the Lord in the center of our lives.

Do you remember what the tabernacle looked like? The tabernacle had a special tent containing the Holy of Holies and the Holy Place. It also had a courtyard around it.

What furniture was in the tabernacle? The Ark of the Covenant was in the Holy of Holies. It was the same Ark that divided the waters of the Jordan River and brought down the walls of Jericho. The seven branch candlestick, the altar of incense, and the table of shewbread were in the Holy Place. The laver for washing and the altar of burnt offering were in the courtyard.

The Last Tribes Receive Their Inheritance

Joshua sent men to survey the land and divide it into parts for the remaining tribes. The first meeting that took place at Shiloh was to decide which land or territory the tribes would receive.

Their inheritance was by lot, as the Lord had commanded by the hand of Moses. (Joshua 14:2.) Each tribe received its land by lot. We are not told exactly how the lots were picked. Perhaps they were written on stones or tablets of wood, and chosen without looking. Can you think of some ways it might have been done? What we do know is that the Lord guided the way the land was divided.



Joshua did not decide. The people did not decide. The Lord decided.

Read Joshua 18:1-10.

Each tribe was to drive out any Canaanite enemies still living in their territories before settling down. But the people were tired of fighting and eager to get settled, so they did not drive them all out as the Lord had commanded them to do. They let some enemies stay in the land. This caused many problems later. You will read about them in the Book of Judges.

It took seventeen years to divide the land among the tribes, and for the tribes to settle in. People had to build houses, plant vineyards and olive groves, begin businesses, and start trade.

The Lord's Promise Fulfilled

The Lord had guided the children of Israel on a long journey to the land of Canaan, the home He had promised them. When they obeyed the Lord, He was able to give them good things. He gave them victory in their battles, and their home in the Promised Land. He gave them everything. And after all their struggles, the Lord was able to give them rest.

The Lord Gives Us Everything

The Lord looks after us as well. We can choose to trust the Lord to guide our “lot”, or we can insist on following only our own path. When we trust the Lord and obey Him, He can lead us to good and useful things. The Lord is always leading us toward heaven, where He will give us a special home and special work. The Lord will give us rest.

Discussion Questions

- The twelve tribes were each to have their own land in Canaan. How did Joshua decide which tribe should be given a specific piece of land?
- How might you divide something among your friends? What are some good ways you could choose to do it? Which would be the most fair way? Which ways might lead to disagreements or fighting?
- How might having the Lord choose which tribe gets each piece of land make dividing the land easier?
- Did you know that the Lord has a special place in heaven for each person, just as He had a special place for each tribe in the land of Canaan? How can we find that place? Think about what the children of Israel had to do to inherit their place in the land.
- Were all the enemies in the land destroyed?
- How might not destroying all of the enemies in the land be a problem for Israel's future?
- Why do you think the tabernacle was set up for worshipping the Lord in the middle of the land?
- Why didn't the tribe of Levi have land of their own? Where did the Levites live?

Activity Overview | The Land of Canaan Divided

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

So the Lord gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. Joshua 21:43

Projects

Choose one or two activities.

- Drawing Lots with Snacks
- Map the Tribes in the Land of Canaan
- Picture to color—Dividing the Land (Joshua 13)

Additional Activity Ideas

- Have you ever heard someone talk of pulling the “short straw”? Why might someone who pulls the “short straw” be unhappy? Choosing one piece of straw from a bundle is a way of drawing lots. To draw lots, a bundle of straw is made up from as many straws as there are people in a group. All but one of the straws are the same length, but one straw is cut shorter than the others. The straws are then made to look as if they are the same length. To draw lots each person takes one straw. The person who takes the short straw gets something, or gets to do something that nobody else gets. Practice “drawing straws” as a way of choosing someone to do a job or to get a reward. There are many more ways to “draw lots”. Can you think of one that might work well?
- Choose words from a word bank to complete review questions about dividing the land of Canaan. Download the activity at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-dividing-the-land-of-canaan-review-questions-joshua13-19.pdf>.

Activity 1 | Draw Lots with Snacks

Students experience what it would have been like to inherit a portion of the land of Canaan by lot. Students will draw lots to receive one snack from an assortment of snacks.



Materials

a variety of snacks, e.g. boxed raisins, small packages of chips, granola bars, apples, etc.

paper or plastic bag in which to hide snacks

bowl or large jar

1-2" (3-6cm) squares of paper

pen or pencil

tape

Preparation for Activity

1. Use a pen or pencil to write duplicate numbers on small squares of paper. Create as many numbers as you have snacks.
2. Tape one number on each snack. Fold the corresponding number and put it into the bowl or jar.
3. Hide the snacks in a paper or plastic bag.

Directions

1. The Lord divided the land of Canaan as an inheritance among the tribes of Israel by lot. When people draw lots, they don't know which of a number of things they will receive. We're going to find out what this would have been like for the Israelites. There are a variety of snacks in this bag. You will receive one snack. The number you draw will determine which snack you get.
2. Offer each student the bowl. Invite them to pick one numbered slip of paper. Once each student has a number, give students the snack that has a corresponding number.
3. Was drawing lots a fair way to give out the snacks? Why or why not?
4. Whether or not you got the snack you would have chosen, say one good thing about your snack. (e.g. It's easy to share, it's healthy, it tastes good, etc.)
5. The land of Canaan represents heaven. The Lord has a place for each of us in heaven, and He is leading us to that place. While things don't always seem fair, we can know that the Lord is leading everyone to their own place.
6. *Optional:* While all students received a snack, the teacher did not! Which tribe did not get their own piece of land when Canaan was divided? (Levi.) What did the tribe of Levi receive instead? (Cities throughout the land.) Brainstorm what could we do that would be similar. (e.g. the teacher gets one bite of every snack.)

Activity 2 | Map the Tribes in the Land of Canaan

Discover the territories of the twelve tribes of Israel in the Land of Canaan. Cut out each tribe and glue them on to a map of the land.

Materials

copies of the *Land of Canaan Map* and *Individual Tribes* pages

glue

scissors

Directions

1. Cut out the “Tribes” of Israel.
2. Using the *Tribes Map Page* for reference, place the tribes you have cut out on the *Land of Canaan* page.
3. When you have placed all the tribes, glue them to the map.
4. Which tribes were in the south?
5. Which tribes were in the north?
6. Which tribes settled to the east of the Jordan River?
7. Which tribes bordered the Mediterranean Sea?
8. Try to learn the names of the tribes and where they were in Canaan.

