

In our last lesson, we talked about the battles to take over the land of Canaan. Joshua conquered 31 kings. Joshua led the children of Israel through the Promised Land that God had promised to them.

There had been more than 400 years of waiting. Joshua was an old man. God told Joshua that it was time to divide the land among the tribes.

Reuben, Gad and one half the tribe of Manasseh had already been given the land on the East Side of the Jordan River. The land on the West Side would be divided between the other nine and one-half tribes. The Israelites had been slaves in Egypt. They wandered through the wilderness for forty years. They had fought battle after battle in the land of Canaan. They could finally settle on their own land and build permanent houses to live in.

Before Moses died, he had chosen ten men to represent the ten pieces of land on the west side to be divided between the 9 and one-half tribes. Caleb represented the tribe of Judah. Remember that Caleb was one of the twelve spies who was sent to spy out the land of Canaan. Caleb and Joshua had brought back a good report to Moses. God had promised Caleb a piece of land because of the good report he had given. Joshua blessed Caleb and gave him Hebron. (Joshua 14:13)

The decision of what land each tribe would get was done by casting lots. Casting lots was a way of making a decision. It was like when we flip a coin or draw straws. The land of Canaan was divided between all the tribes except for one. The tribe of Levi had been the ones to serve as priests. They were given special work to do for God. They were supported by the money given by the rest of the people.

This map shows how the land was divided between the twelve tribes. The tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh left to go back to their land on the east side. These tribes agreed to not let the Jordan River divide them from the others. They built an altar to be a reminder to them in years to come. It would remind them that they would always be part of the children of Israel. They knew their children would some day ask about the altar. They would tell them the story of the Promised Land.

Joshua was getting old. He knew he would not live much longer. He sent for all the Israelites to meet him at Shechem. Shechem was where Abraham had built an altar and worshipped God when he first went to Canaan. Joshua made his last speech to the people.

Joshua began his speech by talking about all that had happened from the time of Abraham, up to the day of his speech. He talked about how God had brought them out of the slavery and suffering in Egypt. Joshua talked about how great and good God had been to the Israelites. Joshua knew there were people left in the land that worshipped idols. Joshua did not want them to be tempted by the idol worshippers. Joshua told the people to make a choice. Joshua told them, “choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve”. Joshua had chosen to serve God.

Joshua died at the age of 110 years. Joshua was very faithful to God. He was a good example for the Israelite people. Joshua continues to be an example for us today. Remember what Joshua said in Joshua 24:15, “...choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, But as for me and for my house, we will serve the Lord”.