

# JOSHUA 13

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## THE REMAINING LAND AND TRIBAL ALLOTMENTS

Joshua 13 begins the second major section of the eponymous book, which extends to the book's close. This portion of the text describes the allotment of land to the various tribes of Israel, Joshua having conquered Canaan in the first half of the book. Not all of Canaan, however, was successfully captured. The first six verses of the chapter describe how portions of Canaan remained unconquered, mainly the southwest coastal territory (the "borders of the Philistines") and the east side of the Sea of Galilee ("all Geshuri"). These portions of Canaan would reportedly only come under Israelite control during the rule of King David (see 2 Samuel 3:1–3; 8:1–2). That some territory remained under Canaanite control despite Joshua's rapid succession of campaigns narrated in chapters 1–11 seems to contradict or at least complicate the idealized portrayal of the conquest by the narrator (compare Joshua 13:13).

The allotted territories first described in this chapter are those that pertain to the territory east of the Jordan River and that are included under Moses's allotments (verses 7–33). This section acts, in effect, as a sort of flashback to the territories conquered by Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness. As part of this list, verse 14 states that the tribe of Levi received no land inheritance but instead was attached to the portable tabernacle as its ritual custodians (compare Leviticus 7:29–36).

Also mentioned by name in this list is Balaam (son of Beor), the seer-for-hire encountered by Israel during the wilderness wanderings (see Numbers 22–24). His fate is death by the sword for unspecified offenses (Joshua 13:22; compare Numbers 31:8). The text refers to him pejoratively as a "soothsayer" (Hebrew *qosem*, "augur" or "diviner"), suggesting that whatever his moral status in the previous generation, by the time of the conquest he had a more negative reputation.

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