

JOSHUA 18–19

Joshua 18. The Territories of the Remaining Tribes

The description of the distribution of the remaining territorial allotments after the conquest is described in chapters 18 and 19 of the book of Joshua. The allotments of Judah and Joseph were described previously in chapters 15–17. Seven such remaining allotments are described in chapters 18–19: those belonging to Benjamin (18:11–28), Simeon (19:1–9), Zebulun (19:10–16), Issachar (19:17–23), Asher (19:24–31), Naphtali (19:32–39), and finally Dan (19:40–48).

The children of Israel were divinely instructed to preserve in writing a description of the allotted territories (see 18:6; the King James Version renders the Hebrew *ktv*, “write,” as “describe”). This not only reinforced the importance of record keeping among God’s covenant people¹ but also perhaps gives a hint about one of the sources of information used by the composer or compiler of the book of Joshua for his description of the territories.

Before the allotments are described, however, Joshua 18 switches the narrative setting. Previously the children of Israel had stationed their camp at Gilgal (Joshua 14:6), but by chapter 18 Shiloh was the place of assembly (18:1–10). This is the first reference to Shiloh in the context of the historical setting of ancient Israel. Jacob mentioned Shiloh at Genesis 49:10 in his blessing to Judah, but the meaning of the usage in that text is not entirely clear. In any case, it is not mentioned in the context of a historical or geographical setting. The location served as an important religious site for Israel in the pre-monarchic period, being, among other things, the resting place of the ark of the covenant before its eventual removal to Jerusalem

¹ Compare Doctrine and Covenants 128:1–5 for a modern example.

(see for example, Judges 18:31; 1 Samuel 4:3–4). Once again, the ritual nature of the allotment is clear, with Joshua casting lots in the presence of the assemblage (Joshua 18:8–10).

Joshua 19. The Territories of the Remaining Tribes (Continued)

The final allotment was given to Joshua himself (Joshua 19:49–50). Caleb, his fellow spy from the previous generation, had already received his inheritance along with the rest of Judah (see 14:6–15), leaving only Joshua to receive his portion. The chapter concludes by noting how the tabernacle was stationed at Shiloh at the time of the completion of the allotments (19:51).

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