

BOOK OF JOSHUA

Chapters 15-19

THE TRIBAL PORTIONS: Why were the lands distributed **in the order that we observe** in the Book of Joshua?
The answer goes back a long way!

The Battle of the Mothers of Israel: *one of the most famous in history.*

Jacob married **two sisters:** **Leah**, the older one was the **first wife**
Rachel, the younger one was the one he loved.

- Leah was fertile and Rachel was barren, so the battle **for Jacob's love** began.

(A) • **Leah** had **four sons:** **First born** was **Reuben:** means '**see**, a son!'
The second one **Simeon:** means '**hear** me!'
The third one: **Levi:** means 'join me!'
Finally, **Judah:** means 'praise!'

- **Poor unloved Leah** thought '**a son**' would gain Jacob's love, but it didn't because Jacob loved Rachel. He worked 14 years to marry her and was tricked by his Uncle Laban on the wedding night, where Rachel was replaced by Leah.
- Leah thought **a second son** might get Jacob to listen to her
- Then Leah thought **a third son** might **join Jacob to her** in love.
- She just praised God for the fourth son born to her, a very fertile mother.

- **Rachel** waited years before God opened her womb.
 - She bore **Joseph** as her first-born: it means 'he will add' since she now expected God to give her more children.
 - **finally** she bore **Benjamin:** the young one or the little one and **she died after birth.**

(B) • Since Rachel had to wait so long for a child she gave **HER MAID Bilhah** to Jacob as his first **concubine**.
Bilhah bore two sons to Jacob: (1) **Dan:** means 'he judged'
(2) **Naphtali:** means 'my struggle'

- So, Rachel felt that God had vindicated her ("judged") with **Dan**
- and with Naphtali she wins in the struggle with her sister.

(C) But the struggle was **far from over!**
Leah herself now bore two more sons to Jacob: 1) Issachar: 'reward'
2) Zebulun: 'honour'
and one daughter 3) Dinah

- Poor Woman** !
- With Issachar **Leah** thought her husband would reward her with **love!**
 - With Zebulun she thought he would honour her!

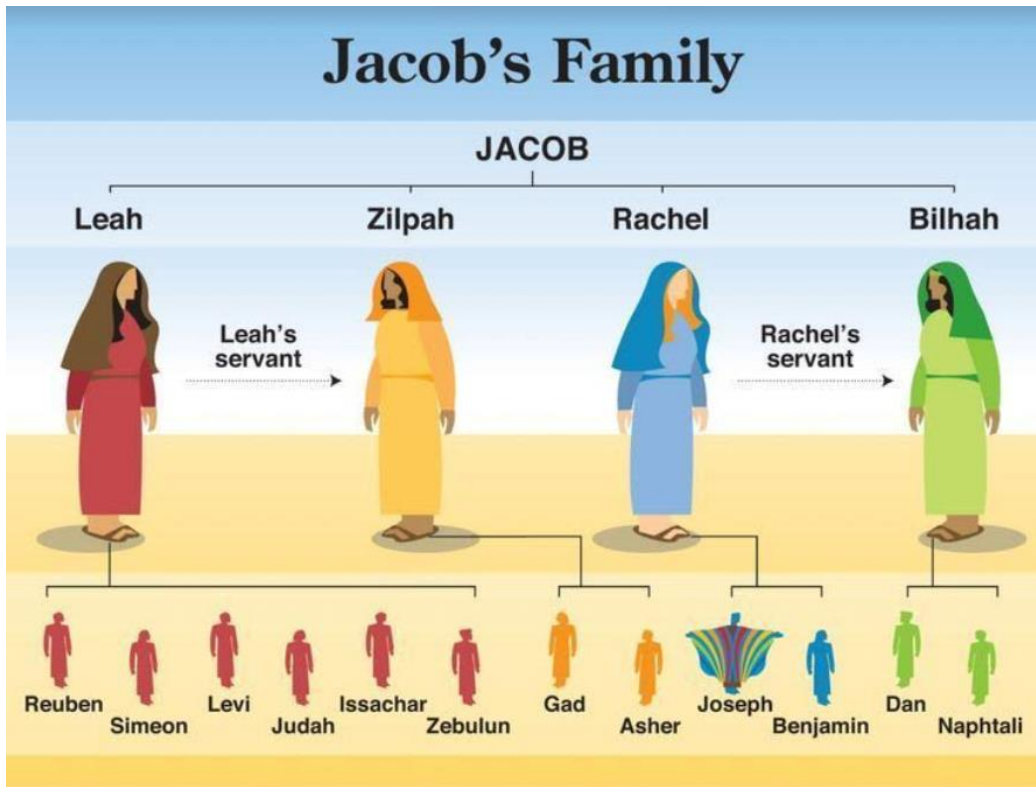
Leah was determined **TO WIN** this battle, so she gave **HER MAID Zilpah** to Jacob as his **second concubine**.

Zilpah bore two sons to Jacob: 1) **Gad:** 'good fortune' 2) **Asher:** 'happy'
So with Gad, Leah had good fortune and with Asher she was happy **BECAUSE**

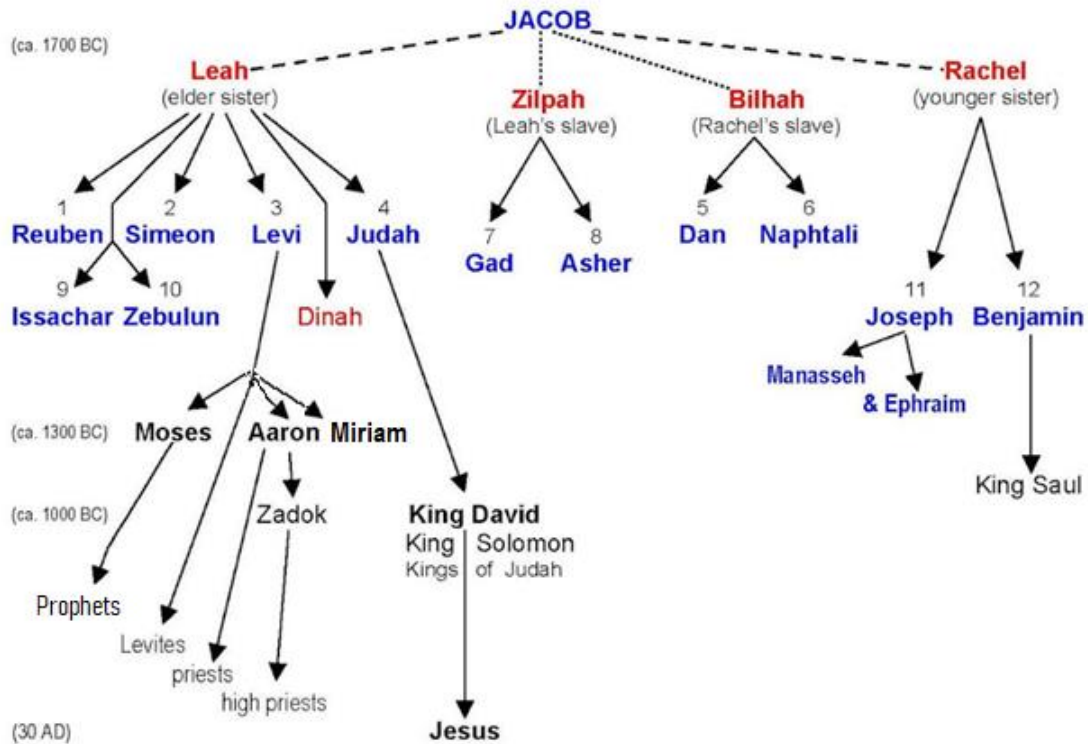
she now had 6 sons to Rachel's 2. } 12 sons of Jacob became **the origin** of the
the 2 maids had 2 sons each } 12 Tribes of Israel.

Result: **Leah: 8 Rachel: 4** Gen 35:23-26





Sons of Jacob / Tribes of Israel



Reuben: the **first-born should** have got a double portion of the land over all his brothers
- but he does **not**. Why? - **1 Chron 5:1-3**

- a) He was involved in the mandrake incident between his mother **Leah** and **Rachel** cf Gen 30:14
- b) He had sex with **Bilhah**, his Father's concubine: Gen 35:22. **Jacob didn't forgive him for this.**

But he changed in later life:

- 1) He objected to the plot to kill Joseph: Gen 37:22-35
- 2) Reuben reminded his brothers that he had **told** them at the time that it was wrong to kill Joseph: Gen 42:22
- 3) Reuben offered **himself** as guarantor for his half-brother Benjamin: Gen 42:37

Nevertheless Jacob punished him for defiling his father's marriage bed:

- by denying him his **BIRTHRIGHT**
- In fact Jacob prophesied that Reuben's pre-eminence among his brothers **would disappear**: Gen 49:4
- Even Moses prayer in Deut 33:6 did not save him!
- In Deut 3:12-17 Moses **did** give Reuben his inheritance.

In the Wilderness

- a) The revolt of Dathan and Abiram, leaders of the Tribe of Reuben was an attempt to get back their primacy – it failed: Num ch 16.
 - b) Reuben's **spy** failed to follow God's Will – they were part of the "bad 10": Num 13-14
 - c) By the time Israel got to Transjordan in the last years of Moses, Reuben's tribe were rich in cattle (Num 32:1) and flocks of sheep.
 - d) Tribe of Reuben, Gad and ½ Manasseh demanded the lands of Sihon and Og who were defeated by Israel. (Num 32)
- These 2 ½ tribes angered Moses by wanting to live **outside** of the Promised Land (Num 32:6-7). Only when they promised to fight with their brothers **for** the Promised Land, did Moses agree to give them Transjordan... it **seemed** as if they got the **BEST** of the land...
 - In human terms they did... but **God saw the future** which was hidden from **them**...
 - They refused to trust God and demanded to be given the best lands.
 - Later in Joshua 22 they came close to fratricidal war.
 - Later again in the Book of Judges, the tribe of Reuben refused to respond to the call of the Prophetess Deborah – they were more interested in looking after their **material** wealth.
 - In later times still it seems that the **MOABITES** overran this territory.
 - And later still, Transjordan and the Northern Kingdom of Israel was devastated by the King of Assyria (2 Kg 15:29)
 - thus they were lost forever to the Promised Land. **Reuben is gone forever.**

PS Ezek 48:6 allows a portion of land to be remnant of Reuben.

But no-one from this tribe plays any part in the New Testament!

- **Now** at this point in Joshua, Reuben, Gad and ½ Manasseh **have** their inheritance beyond the Jordan. Deut 3:12-17 Joshua 13: 15-33
- Of the 9 ½ tribes left, the most important are **Judah** and **Ephraim**
 - Judah was the 4th son of Leah
 - Ephraim was the younger son of Joseph. Manasseh was the first-born (Gen 48:8-20)

VIP **Caleb** belonged to the **Tribe of Judah** (and was their leader)
Joshua belonged to the **Tribe of Ephraim**

- (A) **Northern Regions of the Promised Land**: given to the **House** of Joseph.
- a **double portion** was given to **Joseph**, Ephraim and Manasseh: 1 **city** to **Joshua**: **Jos 19:49-50**
 - Four **other** tribes were assigned **to the North**: Issachar, Zebulon, Naphtali and Asher

In later history this area became known as the **NORTHERN KINGDOM of Israel** and it **apostatized** and was taken out **to Assyria and did not return**.

- It is interesting that the **MOTHER** of Ephraim and Manasseh was the daughter of an Egyptian priest and therefore **a pagan idolator**.

- (B) **Southern Regions** – These were given to **Judah** and Caleb (Hebron and Debir)

and 3 other tribes:

Benjamin	Simeon	Dan
18:11-28	19:9	19:40-48

- Dan was the only tribe which didn't accept the land allotted to them.
 - they travelled to the far north, **fought and won** some land for themselves
 - in later history they were lost to the Chosen People. They seem to have moved north again – into territory later known as **Europe!**
- The Southern Regions later became known as **SOUTHERN KINGDOM of Judah**
 - the tribe from which Christ came.
 - thus there were two major regions: North and South
 - other smaller tribes were given space **WITHIN** the two main regions.
 - the demarcation was clear at the beginning, but soon disappeared.
- Once the tribes were distributed into their regions, it was up to them **to clear** their own region to ensure that the KOG would be established **THERE**.

- (A) **Tribe of Judah**: Josh 15:1-12, 21-63

Caleb was the Leader of the Tribe and Hebron was given to his clan.

Problem: Jebus – later Jerusalem – was a very ancient city. Joshua had **some** success there in ch 10:1-5, 16-27 where he executed its King Adoni-Zedek – but the city recovered because Joshua was too busy trying to conquer the whole land.

NB 15:63 The children of Judah could not drive out the **Jebusites**
As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out; but the Jebusites DWELL WITH the children of Judah AT Jerusalem to this day.

NB Caleb and his men were absolutely determined to drive out the Anakim from Hebron but they didn't have the same ambition with other land areas and leaders.

Lesson • When we don't deal with our spiritual problems we are destined **TO LIVE with them!**

(B) Tribe of Ephraim: Josh 16 1 Chron 5:1-3

- Reuben's birth-right as the first-born was given to **Joseph**, so he got a double portion of the land.
- Reuben's portion in Transjordan was **inferior** to that of Joseph **because** it was outside of the Promised Land on East side of the Jordan River.
- Because Reuben and Gad were separated from the rest of Israel, they were exposed to attacks from the East and North-East.

Example • **Gad** was harried by Hazael: 2 Kg 10:32,33. He was King of Damascus / Syria.

The 2 ½ tribes were taken into captivity **20 years BEFORE** the rest of **Northern Tribes** by the King of Assyria, Tilgath-pileser: **1 Chron 5:26**

(NB) **In contrast** Joseph's portion was in the **HEART** of the Promised Land.

Notice Josh 16:10 The tribe of Ephraim also **FAILED** to drive out the Canaanites – who became **forced labourers** to Israel.

The **second ½ tribe** of Manasseh (in the West): **Josh 17**

V12-13 These also failed to drive out the Canaanites.
Eventually these Canaanites also became forced labour.

Lesson Again we have to live with problems we do not conquer

But we don't have to become **like** them – our experience of dealing with them can be put to good use in helping others on the way.

The Rest of the Tribes: Josh 18 and 19

There were seven tribes left who needed land, and their inheritance.

18:1-10 Their leaders were told to go and reconnoitre the land. The survey of the land was to show seven parts exactly, leaving Judah in charge in the South and Ephraim in the North. Afterwards Joshua apportioned the land to them according to their survey.

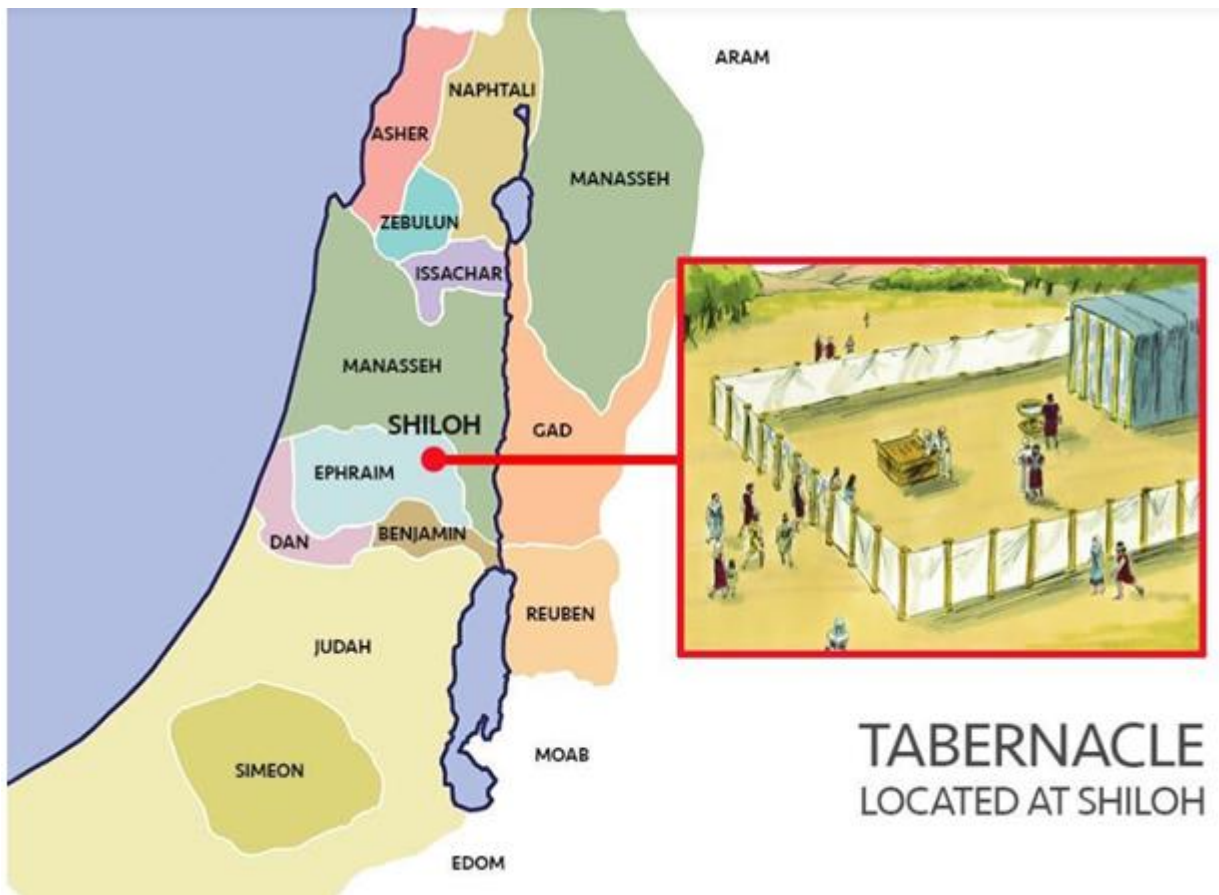
Notice that he involved the leaders in the decision-making all the time.
- that was why there was peace among the tribes.

Last of All a portion was given to Joshua himself!! **19:49-50**
Like Caleb, Joshua also **asked** for a particular city, Timnath-Serah, in the mountains of Ephraim.

- the two old spy-friends each got a city in the mountains.

19:51 The whole process was carried out in the Presence of the Lord at **Shiloh** **at the door** of the Tabernacle of the meeting.

Final Possession of the Land



TABERNACLE
LOCATED AT SHILOH