

THE CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY CHILDREN'S MEETING LESSON

DATE: March 29, 2015

SUBJECT: THE TRAVELS OF THE CHOSEN CHILDREN OF ISRAEL: The Allotment of the Good Land

SCRIPTURE: Joshua 13-21; Numbers 33:50-56; 34:1-29; 35:1-34; Genesis 15:18-21; Deuteronomy 19:1-10

AIM: To help the children realize that God always keeps His promises and that they need to cooperate with God and be thankful for God's arrangement.

MEMORY VERSES TO CHOOSE FROM: Joshua 21:43 ("So Jehovah gave Israel all the land that He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they possessed it and dwelt in it."); Joshua 21:45 ("Not a word failed of all the good things that Jehovah had spoken to the house of Israel; all came to pass."); Deuteronomy 7:9a ("Know therefore that it is Jehovah your God who is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant ...")

SUGGESTED SONGS: 64 (Every Promise in the Bible is Mine); 65 (We Must Not Forget God's Word); 6705 (The B-I-B-L-E); 9410 Bible Story Songs - The Bible #10 (I Believe the Promises of God); 96 (No, Never Alone); 46 (I'm in the Lord's Army); 6413 *first stanza only* (Stand Up! Stand Up for Jesus!); 7608 (What A Good Land); 6702 Bible Story Songs – Moses Vol.1 (The All-Sufficient God); 1614 (Cooperation)

APPROACH: Do you remember some of the things that were in the good land? Remind the children that the good land that God promised to the children of Israel was a vast land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of oil olive and honey. But there were still enemies living in the land. What would you do if God promised a land to you, but there were enemies still living there?

CONTENT: [See attached map for visual aid.]

I. God's Charge and Promise (Joshua 13:1, 6b, 7)

After entering into the good land, Joshua had to lead the people of Israel to fight for their land. They had to fight continuously until they took over the entire land to inherit and to enjoy the riches of the good land. God charged Joshua to divide the promised land to the Israelites by casting lots. [*Casting lots* was an unbiased way to determine an important matter. Lots could have been sticks of various lengths, or perhaps flat stones like coins.]

The land was divided among the Israelites, **including land that still had not yet been possessed**. God said to Joshua, "I Myself will drive them out before the children of Israel; nevertheless allot it to Israel as an inheritance as I have commanded you." (Joshua 13:6b) Joshua divided the land to nine tribes plus the half tribe of Manasseh for an inheritance. The other half tribe of Manasseh, Reuben and Gad got the land east of the Jordan River, but they still needed to fight together with their brothers for the land (Number 32, Joshua 1).

II. Caleb's Faithfulness and His Reward (Joshua 14)

Do you remember Caleb? He was one of the twelve spies that spied out the good land. Ten came back with a negative report, but Caleb and Joshua came back with a positive report. Caleb was rewarded with Hebron because he followed the Lord wholeheartedly. Although he was 85 years old, he was brave to choose Hebron with its mounts, fields, and villages where the giants lived. He had faith that the Lord would enable him to drive them out. Later he did drive out the enemies. Caleb said to Joshua, "However my brothers who went up with me made the people's heart melt, but I fully followed Jehovah my God. And Moses swore on that day, saying, Surely the land on which your foot has trodden will be an inheritance to you, and to your children forever, for you have fully followed Jehovah my God" (Joshua 14:8-9).

III. Priests and Levites Given Cities and Suburbs (Joshua 21)

The tribe of Levi did not receive a portion of the land like the other tribes when Joshua was dividing it up. Why not? Actually, they got something very special. No portion of the land was given to the tribe of Levi because God and the priesthood were their inheritance. Instead of a portion of the land, the Levites were given cities to live in from all the tribes of Israel. Each of the twelve tribes set aside some cities for the Levites.

IV. God Fulfilled His Promise to Give the Land to Israel

So Jehovah gave Israel all the land that He had sworn to their fathers, and they possessed it and dwelt in it. And Jehovah gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And no one among all their enemies could stand before them; Jehovah delivered all their enemies into their hand. Not a word failed of all the good things that Jehovah had spoken to the house of Israel; all came to pass (Joshua 21:43-45).

SUGGESTED APPLICATIONS TO CHOOSE FROM:

- **God is trustworthy and keeps His promises.** Have you ever promised something that you were not able to fulfill? Perhaps you told a friend you would go over his or her house, but then you got sick and couldn't go. Perhaps you promised to do something for your parents, but then you forgot to do it. God always keeps His promises. God commanded Joshua to allot even the land that had not yet been possessed, because in His eyes all the land was for Israel. Joshua was able to trust the Lord to fulfill His promises.
- **We should be diligent to take care of the things God has given to us.** Even though God promised the land to the children of Israel, they still had to cooperate with God by fighting for it. After they received certain portions of the land, they had to maintain and enjoy it. Some were promised lands that they had not yet been possessed. Joshua had to ask them, "How long will you be slack [slow, weak] about going to take possession of the land that Jehovah, the God of your fathers, has given you?" (Joshua 18:3) They needed to cooperate with God. Likewise, God has given us many things, including our intelligence, our health, our family, our home, our toys and belongings. How do we treat the things that God has given us? For example, we should appreciate and be thankful for the opportunity to be educated, our health, our toys, etc. We should not be lazy, but be diligent in our studies, in doing our chores, in taking care of our toys and clothing, etc.
- **We need to know God's Word to know His promises.** Each week, we are given a memory verse or two from the Bible, which is the Word of God. Though sometimes the serving ones may give us a reward to help encourage us to memorize verses, even if they do not give a reward, we should be happy to memorize the verses. The more we memorize God's Word, the more we can know about what God says, including His promises to us. We can ask the children: What are some promises of God that you know about? Examples: honoring our father and mother, that we may live long on the earth; that He will not abandon us; that we do not need to be afraid because God is with us. **For older children:** We can encourage them to read the Bible in addition to memorizing weekly verses.
- **We need to accept God's arrangement (sovereignty) for us.** God was the One who determined which tribe would get what portion of the land. The tribes were different. God in His wisdom, allotted to the different tribes particular portions of the land according to what they were. Sometimes we may feel that maybe another family is better, or that someone is smarter than we are, or better in appearance. But God made us all differently and gave us different things. We need to accept and be thankful for what God has given to us. Have the children list God's arrangement for them such as: when they were born, where they were born, into which family, which order they are in the family among their siblings, etc. God has made the best arrangement for us.

Adapted from the Church in New York City Children's Meeting lessons: 3/11/79; 2/19/89; 3/31/96; 3/28/04, 4/4/2010

