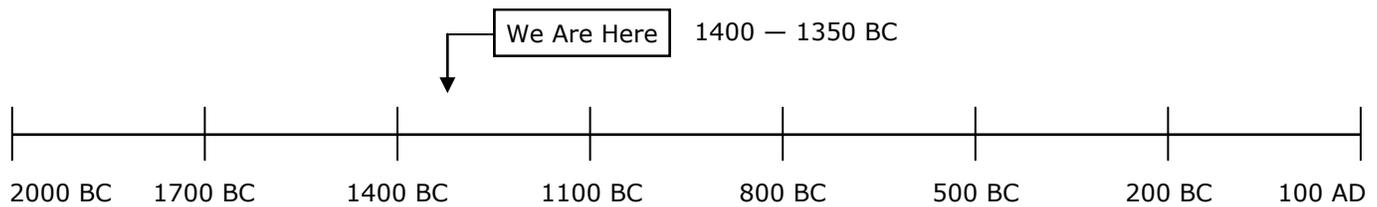


# The Tale of Two Nations

BiAY.org | Weekly Reviews

Week 13: March 26-April 1 — *Joshua 12-24; Judges 1-6*

25% Complete — 274 Days to Go



## Helpful Resources

Map of Divided Canaan (p.105), Judges of Israel (p.67), Overview of Bible History (p.37)

## Making Sense of It All

- The Big Picture

This week, we read the tale of two nations, that is the Israel that kept God’s covenant during the days of Joshua and the Israel that abandoned the covenant shortly after he died. As we review this unfortunate story, let’s break it down into those two categories.

### Joshua’s Last Days

1. **Spirit of Shiloh** (*Joshua 18:1, 2*): After all of Israel’s wandering, God’s mobile desert sanctuary finally took residence at Shiloh (near Shechem), which was a central location.
2. **Dividing the Land**: After invading and subduing much of Canaan, Joshua divided the land among the tribes, as instructed by God through Moses. Land allotments were appropriate to the size of the tribe; the location itself was determined by lots (view map for details).
3. **Famous Last Words** (*Joshua 23:1-16; 24:14, 15*): Joshua assembled the people and issued his final challenge. He reminded them, as Moses did, of their covenant with God. He urged the people to worship only Him and to keep His laws, if they wanted to survive and succeed. To remind them perpetually, Joshua set up Massebah (stone) by the Tabernacle at Shiloh, under the oak that was appropriately called “Joshua’s Tree” (*Joshua 24:25-27*).

After the success the tribes experienced in battle, it is clear that God honors those who love Him and follow His commands. In other words, covenant-keepers always win in God’s book.

### The Period of Judges

**Around and ‘Round We Go**: It is true still today that people tend to stray without leadership; that was the case in Israel after Joshua died. The people neglected God’s commands and worshiped idols. As a result, God used a nearby enemy to overwhelm and enslave them; here was the fulfillment of the prophecy, that surrounding unconquered nations would become thorns in their side and pricks in their eyes (*Judges 2:1-5*). Once in bondage, Israel would cry out to God and, in His mercy, the Lord would send a deliverer called a judge. He or she would free the people from their suffering and grant them a brief reprieve; however, it didn’t take long and Israel would repeat this awful pattern. The gist of *Judges* is that covenant-breakers always lose. Those who choose to neglect God’s commands are asking for trouble.

- Prophetic Passages
  1. **Israel's Fall** (*Joshua 23:14-16*): Similar to earlier prophecies of Israel's future, the Lord foretold of the nation's fall, His judgment, and, then, its final faithful return to Him.
  2. **Of Canaanite Tribes** (*Judges 2:1-5*): The Angel of the Lord foretold of the trouble that the Israelites would have with unconquered Canaanite tribes.
  
- Pictures of Christ
  1. **The Spirit of Shiloh** (*Joshua 18:1, 2*): A few weeks ago, we discovered the symbolism of the Tabernacle and its connection to Christ; when the Tabernacle was stationed in Shiloh, that name became synonymous with the coming of the Messiah (*Genesis 49:10*).
  2. **The Angel of the Lord**: Once again, the Lord's Angel, a pre-incarnate role of Christ, appeared in the Old Testament, this time to Gideon (*Judges 6:11-21*).
  
- Personal Application
  1. **A Parent's Purpose**: It didn't take long for Israelites to stray from their roots, even after all the time and effort Moses put in to making sure that the people kept the covenant. Within one generation, the Israelites were off track (*Judges 2:10-15*). Where was the breakdown? With the parents. While there are many facets of parenting, no one duty is more important than passing on our commitment to God and His calling on our lives. If we do nothing but steer our children in His direction, we will have done more for them than anything else we could have done. What are you doing to train the next generation?
  2. **Spheres of Influence**: The selection of Canaan as the Promised Land is interesting. Why not Egypt, Mesopotamia, or Asia Minor? One reason is that it is central to the ancient world. There were three highways that were well-traveled (see map) — the King's Highway (east side of the Jordan), the Via Maris or "Way of the Sea" (crossed Canaan and ran along the Mediterranean), and Jericho Road (connected the two in Canaan). In other words, Israel's land connected both ends of the ancient world; those traveling to or from Egypt to the east or Assyria, Babylon, Persia to the west had to travel through the Promised Land. Simply put, God placed His people in the middle of everything, and He gave them the opportunity to impact every traveler in ancient history.

Each tribe had a portion of that land. Some tribes were given more than others; and, each tribe's location varied, obviously. There is a powerful application hidden here — God has done the same with us today. Though each of us has a different role in life, God has given us a sphere of influence; some people have bigger spheres, but everyone has a chance to make an impact for God on those among us. Though we do not get to decide how much "land" we will be given by God to influence, He still counts on us to do our part to impact our sphere for His kingdom (*Judges 1:19, 21, 27-36; 15:63; 19:47*).

### **The Bottom Line**

God providentially places each of us in a *place* and *position* to *influence* others for Him.

### **Questions to Consider**

1. What are you doing to impart the truths of God to the next generation? Is it enough?
2. Have you impacted those in your area for God? Would people notice if you were gone?