

# Joshua 13:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

All the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon unto Misrephoth-maim, and all the Sidonians, them will I drive out from before the children of Israel: only divide thou it by lot unto the Israelites for an inheritance, as I have commanded thee.

## Analysis

**All the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon unto Misrephothmaim, and all the Sidonians, them will I drive out from before the children of Israel: only divide thou it by lot unto the Israelites for an inheritance, as I have commanded thee.**

This verse addresses the tension between completed conquest (11:23) and remaining territory. God acknowledges that significant areas remain unconquered—particularly the Lebanese mountain ranges and Phoenician coastal regions. The promise "them will I drive out" (anokhi orishennu, אֲנֹכִי אוֹרִישֶׁנּוּ) places responsibility squarely on divine action, not human military capacity. The emphatic pronoun "I" (anokhi, אֲנֹכִי) stresses that Yahweh Himself will complete what Joshua's generation began, provided Israel maintains covenant faithfulness.

The command "only divide thou it by lot" (raq hap'ileha leYisrael benachalah, רק הפלה לישראל בנחלה) instructs Joshua to allocate even unconquered territory, demonstrating faith in God's promises. This requires remarkable trust—distributing land not yet possessed based solely on divine promise. The lot-casting (goral, גורל) removes human favoritism, allowing God to determine each tribe's inheritance (Proverbs 16:33). This method anticipates the apostolic practice of

casting lots before Pentecost (Acts 1:26), after which the Spirit's direct guidance made lots unnecessary.

Reformed theology sees here the relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. God promises to drive out enemies, yet Israel must actively possess their allotted territory (13:1 notes Joshua's age and much land remaining). God's promises don't eliminate human action; they motivate and empower it. This balance appears throughout Scripture: God works, therefore we work (Philippians 2:12-13). The tragic failure of some tribes to fully possess their inheritance (Judges 1) demonstrates that divine promises, though certain, require human appropriation through faith-filled obedience.

## Historical Context

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The unconquered territories—Lebanon, Phoenician coast, Philistine pentapolis—would remain thorns in Israel's side throughout the monarchy. The Sidonians (Phoenicians) maintained independent city-states including Tyre and Sidon, becoming both trading partners and sources of religious corruption (1 Kings 16:31; Jezebel was Sidonian). Israel's failure to drive them out, despite God's promise, resulted from covenant unfaithfulness, not divine inability.

The lot-casting practice appears throughout ancient Near Eastern cultures, but Israel's use was distinct—rather than divining fate through impersonal forces, lots discerned God's sovereign will. Urim and Thummim (probably a lot-type mechanism) provided yes/no answers to specific questions. Archaeological discoveries include dice-like objects and inscribed stones that may have served in ancient lot-casting, though exact methods remain uncertain. The key theological point is that God controlled outcomes, ensuring just distribution (Proverbs 18:18).

The detailed boundary descriptions in chapters 13-19 serve practical and theological purposes. Practically, they prevented tribal disputes by establishing clear territorial limits. Theologically, they demonstrate God's attention to detail and orderly administration of His gifts. The preservation of these ancient boundary markers in Scripture, though tedious to modern readers, testified to each tribe

that their specific inheritance was divinely ordained, not arbitrarily assigned. Every tribe mattered to God; every family had designated place in His plan.

## Related Passages

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**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

## Study Questions

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1. How does God's command to distribute unconquered land by faith challenge us to claim God's promises before seeing their fulfillment?
2. What does Israel's later failure to fully possess their inheritance teach about the difference between God's promises and our appropriation of them?
3. In what areas of Christian life do we need to balance trusting God's sovereignty ("I will drive them out") with active obedience (possessing our inheritance)?

## Interlinear Text

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כָּל	יֹשְׁבֵי	הַ הָר	מִן	הַלְבָּנוֹן	עַד	מִשְׁרֹף ת
H3605	All the inhabitants	of the hill country	H4480	from Lebanon	H5704	H0
	H3427	H2022		H3844		
	מִם	כָּל	צִידֵי יָם	אֲנֹכִי	אֲדִישׁ	ם
	unto Misrephothmaim	H3605	and all the Sidonians	H595	them will I drive out	
	H4956		H6722		H3423	
מִפְּנֵי	בְּנֵי	לְיִשְׂרָאֵל	כִּי	הַפֶּלֶה		לְיִשְׂרָאֵל
from before	the children	of Israel	H7535	only divide thou it by lot		of Israel
H6440	H1121	H3478		H5307		H3478
	בְּנִחְלָה	כָּאֲשֶׁר	צִוִּיתִי:			
	for an inheritance	H834	as I have commanded			
	H5159		H6680			

## Additional Cross-References

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**Joshua 11:8** (References Israel): And the LORD delivered them into the hand of Israel, who smote them, and chased them unto great Zidon, and unto Misrephoth-maim, and unto the valley of Mizpeh eastward; and they smote them, until they left them none remaining.

**Joshua 23:13** (Parallel theme): Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you.

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