

# Psalm 78:55

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.

## Analysis

**He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.** God actively **cast out** (garash, גָּרַשׁ)—a forceful expulsion—the Canaanite nations, demonstrating sovereign judgment on their wickedness (Leviticus 18:24-28). This wasn't ethnic cleansing but holy war against idolatry, prefiguring Christ's ultimate conquest of evil at His return.

The phrase **divided them an inheritance by line** (vaynachalem bechevel nachalah, וַיְנַחַלֵּם בְּכֶבֶל נָכְלָה) describes the orderly land distribution by lot and measuring line (Joshua 13-21). God gave each tribe its nachalah (נָכְלָה)—inheritance, permanent possession—fulfilling promises made centuries earlier. This inheritance anticipates believers' eternal inheritance in Christ (Ephesians 1:11).

**Made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents** emphasizes settlement and rest after wilderness wandering. The verb **dwell** (shakan, שָׁקַן) shares the root with mishkan (tabernacle)—Israel dwelt in the land while God dwelt among them. True rest comes when God's people inhabit God's place under God's rule.

## Historical Context

The conquest and settlement (1406-1390 BC) transformed Israel from nomadic wanderers into a landed nation. Each tribe's inheritance became their identity

marker. The 'tents' of conquered Canaanites became Israel's homes—a complete reversal showing God's faithfulness to His covenant promises despite Israel's earlier unbelief.

## Related Passages

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

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

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## Study Questions

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1. How should Christians understand Old Testament conquest narratives in light of Christ's command to love enemies?
2. What 'inheritance' has God given you, and how are you stewarding it for His kingdom?
3. In what ways does secure dwelling (rest) depend on God's presence rather than merely physical location?

## Interlinear Text

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He cast out	also before	the heathen	them and divided	by line
H1644	H6440	H1471	H5307	H2256
נָפַל הָ	מִפְנִים בָּ	גּוֹי מִ	מִפְנִים בָּ	בְּנֵי רָשָׁ
them an inheritance	to dwell	in their tents	and made the tribes	of Israel
H5159	H7931	H168	H7626	H3478

## Additional Cross-References

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**Psalms 44:2** (Parallel theme): How thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them; how thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out.

**Joshua 13:7** (Parallel theme): Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance unto the nine tribes, and the half tribe of Manasseh,

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