

Judges Series

Lesson #92

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Dean Bible Ministries

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The Evil of Religion
Judges 17–18



JUDGES

2021

When Chaos Was King

“Everyone has a worldview. Typically, it’s fully developed and operational before they reach their teen years. Parents, of course, play a hugely significant role in shaping it. And therein lies the issue—at least for those hoping for a resurgence in the number of Americans whose worldview is biblical.”

Dr. Barna identifies “Seven Cornerstones of the Biblical Worldview”:

- An orthodox, biblical understanding of God.**
- All human beings are sinful by nature; every choice we make has moral considerations and consequences.**
- Knowing Jesus Christ is the only means to salvation, through our confession of sin and reliance on His forgiveness.**
- The entire Bible is true, reliable, and relevant, making it the best moral guide for every person, in all situations.**
- Absolute moral truth exists—and those truths are defined by God, described in the Bible, and are unchanging across time and cultures.**
- The ultimate purpose of human life is to know, love, and serve God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.**
- Success on Earth is best understood as consistent obedience to God—in thoughts, words, and actions.**

- **Only 50% of American adults embrace the true nature of God.**
- **35% believe Jesus is the only way for salvation.**
- **27% recognize humans as sinful.**
- **46% accept the Bible as true and reliable.**
- **A slim 25% believe in absolute truth rooted in the Bible.**
- **36% see their purpose as serving God.**
- **Only 23% define success as obedience to God.**

Review

- **Man cannot generate his own principles of worship. God defines the terms of our worship of Him. God sets the rules. Deut. 12:1–4**
- **Law of the central sanctuary, Deut. 12:5–6**
- **The creature cannot determine how to worship the Creator.**
- **God always has only one way: one way to survive the flood, one way to enter the ark, one way to enter the Tabernacle, one way to enter the Temple, only God determines the conditions to enter as well. God chose where His sanctuary would be located.**

Judg. 2:10, “When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel. [NKJV]

Judg. 2:11, “Then the children of Israel did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and enslaved themselves to the Baals; [RD]

Judg. 2:12, “and they abandoned the Lord God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the Lord to anger.” [NKJV]

Deut. 12:1, “These are the statutes and judgments which you shall be careful to observe in the land which the Lord God of your fathers is giving you to possess, all the days that you live on the earth.

Deut. 12:2, “You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations which you shall dispossess served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree.

Deut. 12:3, “And you shall destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars, and burn their wooden images with fire; you shall cut down the carved images of their gods and destroy their names from that place.

Deut. 12:4, “You shall not worship the Lord your God with such things.” [NKJV]

Deut. 12:5, “BUT you shall seek the place where the Lord your God chooses, out of all your tribes, to put His name for His dwelling place; and there you shall go.”

Deut. 12:6, “There you shall take your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, your vowed offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks.” [NKJV]

Deut. 12:8, “You shall not at all do as we are doing here today—every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes—

Deut. 12:9, “for as yet you have not come to the rest and the inheritance which the Lord your God is giving you.” [NKJV]

Deut. 12:11, “then there will be the place where the Lord your God chooses to make His name abide. There you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, and all your choice offerings which you vow to the Lord.

Deut. 12:12, “And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your sons and your daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates, since he has no portion nor inheritance with you.

Deut. 12:13, “Take heed to yourself that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every place that you see;

Deut. 12:14, “but in the place which the Lord chooses, in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you.” [NKJV]

Deut. 12:29, “When the Lord your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land,

Deut. 12:30, “take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.’ ” [NKJV]

Deut. 12:31, “You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way; for every abomination to the Lord which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.

**Deut. 12:32, “Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.”
[NKJV]**

Outline of “Judges” (Chieftains, Tribal Rulers, Leaders)

1:1–3:6

Introduction

**How Israel went from
spiritual victory
to being worse than
the Canaanites**

Incomplete obedience

Compromise

Failure

Cycles of discipline

3:7–16:31

Paganization of the Leadership

Othniel (the best)

Ehud

Shamgar

Deborah

Gideon

Tola, Jair

Jephthah

Ibzan, Elon, Abdon

Samson (the worst)

17:1–21:25

Paganization of the Priests

Chap. 17–18

and the

People

Chap. 19–21

Comparing Judges 17–18 and 19–21

- 1. Both focus on events that take place in the heart of Israel, in the hill country of Samaria—the territories of Dan, Benjamin, and Ephraim.**
- 2. The events take place in this area primarily between Judah in the south and Ephraim in the north.**
- 3. In both accounts, the Levites play a crucial role.**
- 4. In both sections the Levites are connected to Bethlehem. In 17–18 the Levite comes from Bethlehem of Judah, and in the second, the Levite travels to Bethlehem.**

Comparing Judges 17–18 and 19–21

- 5. Both Levites have connection to the hill country of Ephraim. The first Levite traveled there to the home of Micah, and the second one was from Ephraim.**
- 6. Priests inquire of God about their plan of action.**
- 7. Both refer to Shiloh. Judges 18:31; 21:19–24.**

Comparing Judges 17–18 and 19–21

- 8. In the first account, the Danites have a military force of 600 men, in the second there is a band of 600 Benjamites.**
- 9. Both accounts emphasize there was no king, Judges 17:6, 18:1; 19:1; 21:25.**
- 10. Both accounts emphasize that everyone did what was right in their own eyes, Judges 17:6; 21:25.**

Overview of Judges 17–21

- **The same time as ch. 3–16 and explain what is going on culturally with the people.**
- **Ch. 17–18 describe how the religious apostasy began.**
- **Ch. 19–21 describe the gross immorality, the viciousness, violence, and abusiveness of the people.**
- **N.B. Religious apostasy always precedes cultural collapse. Apostasy precedes rampant immorality and violence. It was not an atheistic culture, but a religious culture.**

Judg. 17:6, “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” [NKJV]

Judg. 17:1, “Now there was a man of the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Micah.”

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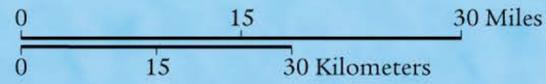
- City
- ▲ Mountain
- ▨ Territory shared by the tribes of Judah and Simeon

0 15 30 Miles
0 15 30 Kilometers



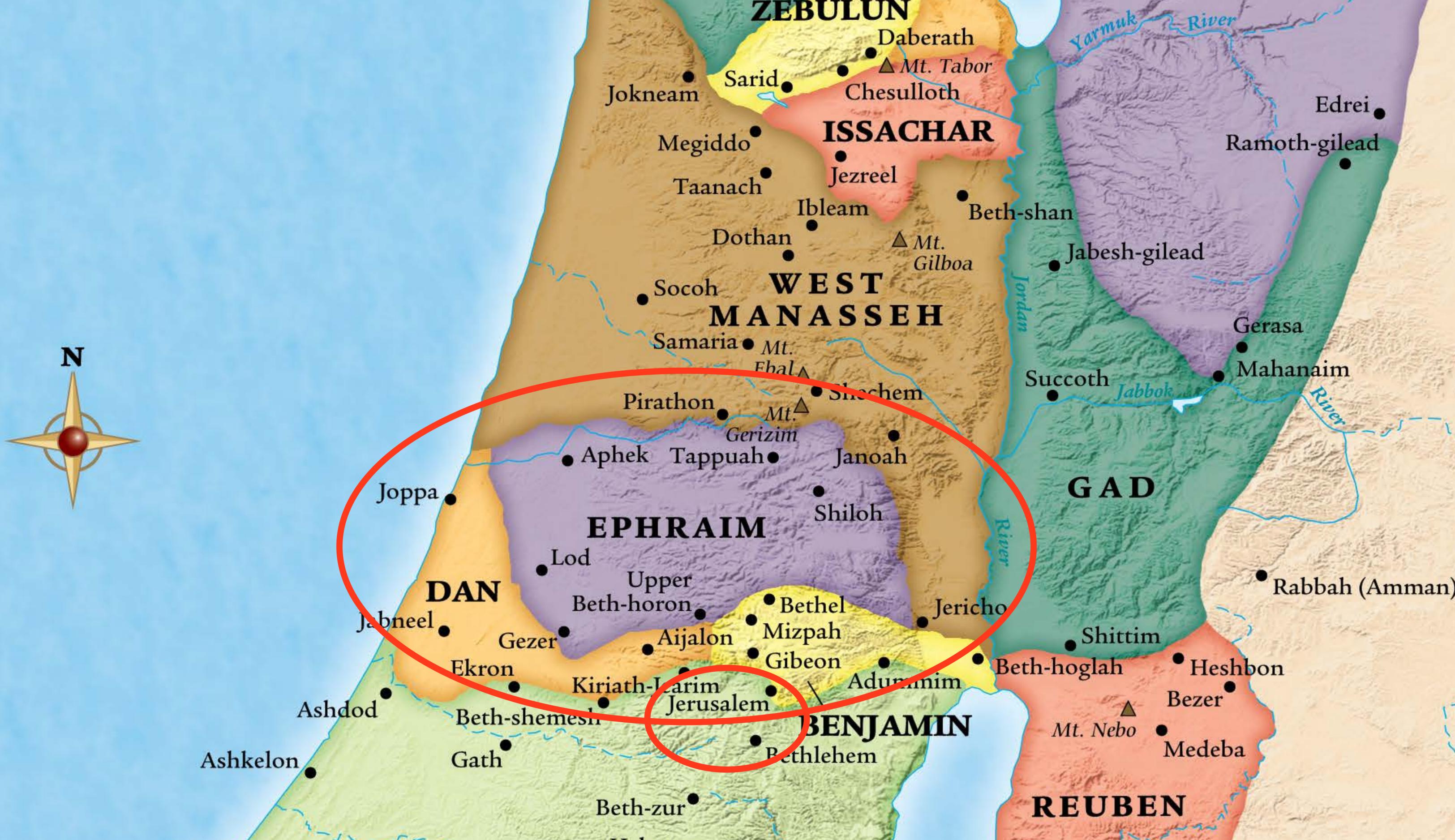
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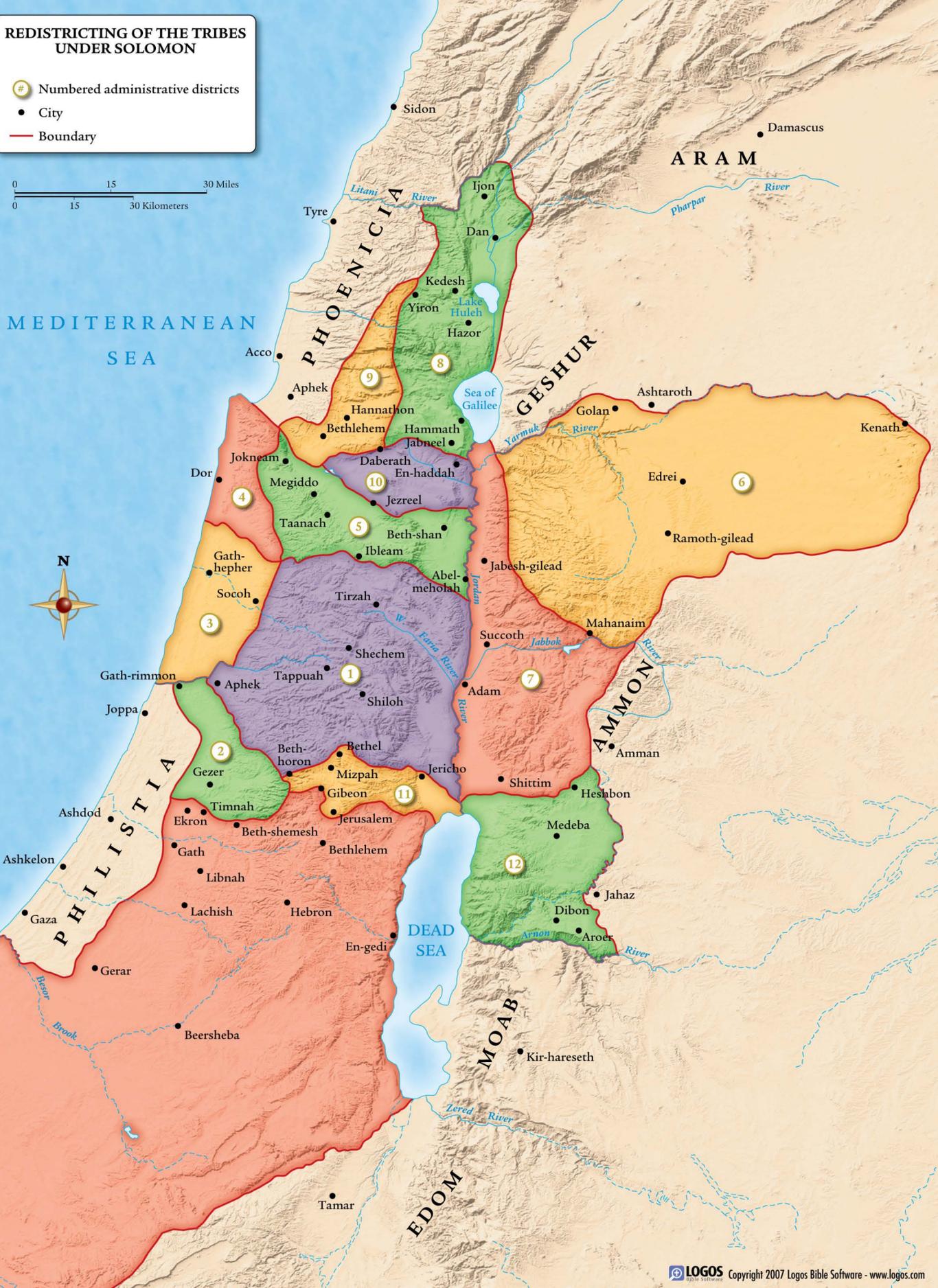




REDISTRICTING OF THE TRIBES UNDER SOLOMON

- Numbered administrative districts
- City
- Boundary

0 15 30 Miles
0 15 30 Kilometers



Judg. 17:1, “Now there was a man of the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Micah.”

Judg. 17:13, “Then Micah said, ‘Now I know that the Lord will be good to me, since I have a Levite as priest!’ ”
[NKJV]

Judg. 17:13, “Then Micah said, ‘Now I know that the Lord will be good to me, since I have a Levite as priest!’ ”
[NKJV]

Judg. 18:31, “So they set up for themselves Micah’s carved image which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.” [NKJV]

**Judg. 17:6, “In those days there was no king in Israel;
everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” [NKJV]**

**Judg. 18:1, “In those days there was no king in Israel. And
in those days the tribe of the Danites was seeking an
inheritance for itself to dwell in; for until that day their
inheritance among the tribes of Israel had not fallen to
them.” [NKJV]**

Deut. 33:5, “And He [*Yhwh*] was King in Jeshurun, when the leaders of the people were gathered, all the tribes of Israel together.” [NKJV]

Kings and Human Politics are not the Solution

**Kings who did right
in their own eyes:**

**Solomon (1 Kgs.
14:8),
Jehu (2 Kgs. 10:30),
Ahaz (2 Kgs. 16:2).**

**Others did better, but failed
to eliminate the high places:**

**Asa (1 Kgs. 15:11–14),
Jehoshaphat (1 Kgs. 22:43),
Jehoash (2 Kgs. 12:2–3),
Amaziah (2 Kgs. 14:3–4),
Azariah (2 Kgs. 15:3–4),
Jotham (2 Kgs. 15:34–35).**

**Kings who followed
the Law:**

**David (1 Kgs. 22:2),
Hezekiah (2 Kgs. 18:3),
Josiah (2 Kgs. 22:2).**

Satan is the Master Counterfeiter

2 Cor. 11:13, “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.

2 Cor. 11:14, “And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.

2 Cor. 11:15, “Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.” [NKJV]

Judg. 17:1, “Now there was a man of the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Micah.”