

**Please use this Sermon-Based Bible Study with your Life Group, or in your personal devotions this week.**

- There will be just one more Sermon-Based Bible Study before "The Story" -

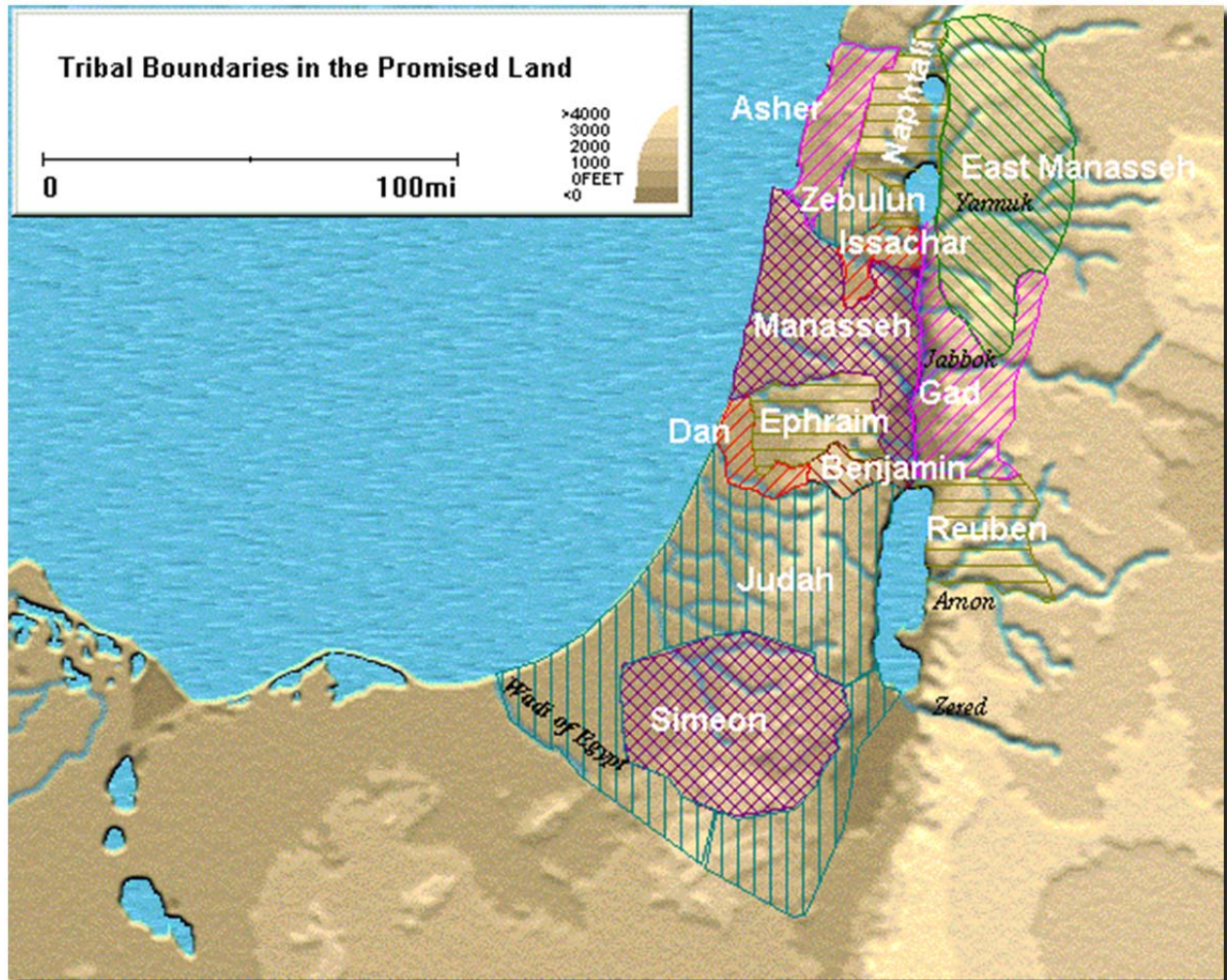
## **"THE POWER OF WE"**

There's a wonderful story about Jimmy Durante, one of the great entertainers of several generations ago. He was asked to be a part of a show for World War II veterans. He told them his schedule was very busy and he could afford only a few minutes, but if they wouldn't mind his doing one short monologue and immediately leaving for his next appointment, he would come. Of course, the show's director agreed happily. But when Jimmy got on stage, something interesting happened. He went through the short monologue and then stayed. The applause grew louder and louder and he kept staying. Pretty soon, he had been on fifteen, twenty, then thirty minutes. Finally he took a last bow and left the stage. Backstage someone stopped him and said, "I thought you had to go after a few minutes. What happened?" Jimmy answered, "I did have to go, but I can show you the reason I stayed. You can see for yourself if you'll look down on the front row." In the front row were two men, each of whom had lost an arm in the war. One had lost his right arm and the other had lost his left. Together, they were able to clap, and that's exactly what they were doing, loudly and cheerfully.

*(Adapted from Tim Hansel, Holy Sweat, 1987, Word Books Publisher, p. 104-105.)*

The story above illustrates an account from the Old Testament book of Joshua, where teamwork and cooperation were needed in order to accomplish a God-given mission. In this account, God allowed 2-and-a-half of the 12 tribes of Israel to settle east of the Jordan River because these tribes were cattle ranchers. The best grazing land was on the east side. But God gave them one stipulation: Their warriors had to fight on

the west side of the river with the other tribes, to help them drive out the Canaanites so they could settle in the land. The map shows where the tribes settled. Read **Joshua 1:12-18**, then discuss the questions.



1. In your own words summarize the instructions the 2½ tribes received from Joshua:
2. What would have been a major temptation for the men of these 2½ tribes to give in to?
3. If you were one of them, how strong would that temptation have been for you?

4. What are some of the struggles Christians around the world are facing today?
5. For those Christians who are in safer and more comfortable situations, what might be a big temptation they face?
6. How is the account of the 2½ tribes a lesson in “The Power of We?”

The temptation we all face is to not get involved with our fellow believers. We are busy people with our own families and careers to manage. It takes time and effort to build authentic relationships. But the alternative is much worse! God made us to be social beings, people who need one another and benefit from relating to one another. Americans are said to be the loneliest people on earth. We don't know our neighbors. We screen our phone calls, enter our homes through automatic garage doors, and socialize only with a small circle of others on our back deck rather than widening our social contacts on the front porch. Social media on the Internet gives the illusion of connection but easily degenerates into “likes” or sound bites rather than face-to-face relationship building.

But by God's grace, such loneliness has been dealt a death-blow! Jesus took on the deepest levels of loneliness and disconnect imaginable as He paid the penalty of our self-centered rebellion against our Triune, “relational” God. Read these passages and describe the kind of isolation Jesus took on so that we would not have to:

**Matthew 8:20**

**Mark 14:50-51**

**Mark 15:34**

Back to Joshua and the eastern 2½ tribes. How did *the power of we* work out for them? Read **Joshua 4:1-14** and **6:20-25**. Discuss:

7. According to **4:12** who led the march into battle?
8. According to **6:20-25**, how successful was this military campaign?
9. Discuss what you think the outcome would have been if those 2½ tribes had refused to join the others in battle:

Read **Hebrews 10:24-25**.

10. What connection is there between this passage and the account of the 2½ tribes joining the others for battle?
11. Jesus fought the ultimate battle by dying on the cross and rising again to take away our sins. But while we’re living on earth, there are battles against evils inside of us and all around us that Christians face every day. What warning, and what blessing, does **Hebrews 10:25** give us for these battles we all face?
12. Name some things that groups of Christians do better together than any individual Christian could do alone?
13. How does this cartoon image illustrate the main point of this study?
14. What, if anything, will our group do from now on to be more intentional in harnessing *the power of we*?

