

Joshua 13:1-33

“Take one step further”

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I. Intro

In the first chapter Joshua was given two mandates from the Lord:

- A. Vs. 2-3 **Conquer**: “*Arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them--the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses.*” Conquer the inhabitants of the land that was in control of the cities this took approximately 7 years.
- B. Vs. 6 **Settle**: “*Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.*” The second part of Joshua’s commission was to settle the land which took 8 years. Did you get that? **It took longer to “settle in” then it did to “root out” the enemy!** It was going to take as much strength and courage to possess the land as it did to win the land.

The battle is not over once the enemy’s cities have been overthrown and he has been tossed out of the ground of your heart. The battle has just begun, it always takes more energy and effort to keep the enemy out of the land won as it does to root him out in the first place. Those big cities are taken and God tells them to go after the little cities. That’s the way it is in our lives you may have conquered the walled cities of Alcohol and Pornography but what about the cities of “helping your wife”, or the city of “gossip”?

As we enter into the settling phase of this book what should we take from the long list of names alongside the long list of land? I suggest that what this should speak to us with regards to the fact God specifically and individually has blessing set aside for each of us. Everyone of us has a home address and there are no 2nd class citizens in God’s kingdom. Isaiah praised the Lord in Isaiah 26:15 as he said, “*You have increased the nation, O Lord, You have increased the nation; You are glorified; You have expanded all the borders of the land.*” Saint’s you can have as much of the Lord as your faith will carry you, without limitation, He will grant you increase upon increase and expand all the borders of the land. Time had come for the people to build homes upon the land won by the Lord, it was time for them to LIVE with their God in the land of promise.

II. Vs. 1-15 Open house

Vs. 1 We now move into the 2nd half of the book which deals with settling the land won.

Remember the closing remarks of Joshua in 11:23 where we are told that “*Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord had said to Moses; and Joshua gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. Then the land rested from war.*” While here in the 13th chapter we are told that “*Joshua was old, advanced in years. And the Lord said to him: “You are old, advanced in years, and there remains very much land yet to be possessed.”*” Some may be tempted to cry “CONTRADICTION” but the truth is that positionally **the land rested from war** as Joshua had taken the whole land but individually and practically *there remained very much land yet to be possessed*. What we have here then is the difference between the standing of Israel positionally verses their standing practically. The importance of this is more than just mind games as God wanted the nation to possess all that He has already won them through Joshua. **They were to fight from victory not for victory!!**

“*Josh you’re old but you got a lot of work to do*”, the Lord says. I like this personally especially the older I get as **I plan on burning up not rusting out!** On the spiritual front though we may have gained much ground as believers with regards to our inheritance there is still much more work to be done. There remains for all of us much more blessings to inherit, like a beautiful sunset you can never enjoy enough of them. **One of the greatest mysteries of the human existence is why in the physical world folks can never have enough while in the realm of eternity there willing to settle for being beggars.** Oh that we would be greedy for His grace,

lust after his love. That we would as Jesus said in Matthew 5:6 be “*Blessed*” because we “*are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness*” and because of this we are “*filled*”.

Someone said, “*What land was to Israel Jesus is to us thus we ought to continue to desire to possess all of Him and keep pressing after Him.*” Or as Paul put it in Philippians 3:12-14 “*Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*” Frances Jane Crosby (1820-1915) better known as “**Fanny**” that great American hymn writer and poetess who wrote over 8,000 hymns during her life was born blind. Once a preacher sympathetically remarked, “*I think it is a great pity that the Master did not give you sight when He has showered so many other gifts upon you.*” She without hesitation replied, “*Do you know that if at birth I had been able to make one petition, it would have been that I should be born blind?*” The preacher was surprised by her answer and asked, “*Why?*” “*Because*”, she continued, “*When I get to heaven, the first face that shall ever gladden my sight will be that of my Savior!*”

Vs. 2-6a The word “*inheritance*” is found over 50 times in the remaining 9 chapters of Joshua. This is an important word as it reminds the Israelites that they inherited their land. They didn’t win their land as spoils of battle or purchase their land as in a business transaction. The sole owner of the land is the Lord who then gave it to them as His children. In Lev. 25:23, they were told by the Lord that “*The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is Mine and you are but aliens and My tenants*”. That means that **the Lord was their landlord!** The rent they were to pay the Lord for the land was obedience to His word as long as the people were willing to do this then they would enjoy the blessings of a fruitful life in peace with their neighbors in the land given them. Their ownership of the land was purely the gracious act of God; but their possession and enjoyment of the land depended on their submission and obedience to the Lord. “*Ok folks you can live here rent free and I’ll provide everything you need to enjoy your life all you got to do is follow Me.*” In Deut. 4:39-40 the Lord told the people the “*conditions of the lease*” when He said, “*Know this day, and consider it in your heart, that the Lord Himself is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other. You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which the Lord your God is giving you for all time.*” When in the future the nation broke the terms of the lease God removed them from the land for 70 years the same amount of time that they refused to give the land rest. In Hebrews 4:8-11 that “*if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.*” That is what shall be examined through the rest of the book “*Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest*”.

The distribution of the inheritance was **by lot** which reminds us that God had in mind to **each tribe a specific area that they should dwell in and each tribe was responsible to settle the land using the principles they had learned during the first 7 years.** It is safe to say that the trials and warfare to each individual tribe was as unique as the land given to each. Friends never be envious of another person’s “**lot**” as each comes with the specific trials that go with it. Our Master knows what land is best suited for us and what challenges He will enable us to be victorious to inhabit all of what He has given us. Far too many folks feel that they got the short end of the “**lot**” given to them and are always coveting someone else’s lot but how do you know that you would be able to handle the extradition of the enemy that still dwells in your brother’s lot? Oh how much better it is that the Lord choose my lot in life than me directing Him!

Vs. 6b-7 God’s promise is that He would drive them out but they would have to trust Him to do it through them. That’s always the hardest part of our walk with the Lord isn’t it? We tend to either do things in our own strength or we tend to do nothing and expect things to happen apart from us moving forward in His power and provision. Each tribe needed to take the initiative and move after the land given to them.

Our lack of inheritance of the blessings and presence of God my friend’s is in direct proportion to the lack of our imitative to go for it! On January 20th 1961 John F. Kennedy as his inaugural address uttered some of the most profound words to a nation and a world that looked at

...magnum address uttered some of the most profound words to a nation and a world that looked at the responsibility of government to solve their problems put the responsibility back upon the people when he declared to the nation and the world these words, “*My fellow Americans: **ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country.** My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man. Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. **With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own.**” Hey saint’s this ought to be the heart attitude of believers towards God’s work instead of waiting upon the Church to do it.*

III. Vs. 16-33 Settling for what is best

Vs. 8-13 According to verses 8 the “*half tribe of Manasseh and the Reubenites and the Gadites received their inheritance, which Moses had given them, beyond the Jordan eastward, as Moses the servant of the Lord had given them*”. Here we are given the land which formerly under the authority of Sihon and Og that was given to the two and half tribes on the Eastern side of the Jordan. Further more in verse 13 only two small bands of peoples remained the **Geshurites** and the **Maachathites**. Geshur means “*bridge*” and in 2 Sam 3:3 we are told that David married a princess from Geshur and she gave birth to his son Absalom who later returned to his mother’s home land to plot his father David’s overthrow (2 Sam 13 and 14). Hey saints let this be a word from the Lord for us that there is no area of our flesh that can be allowed to have a foot hold for sooner or later it will become a “bridge” to overthrow the King from your heart. The Maachathites come from an area named Maacha which means “*oppression*” and it is here in 2 Sam 20 that Sheba who rebelled against David’s rule saying he had “*no share in David*” fled. Again dear ones we can see what happens when we allow “*rebellion*” to exist in our lives as it will soon become our “*oppressor*”.

What may not appear to be obvious is that this according to Numbers 32:1 that **this was a decision based upon what they thought was best for them instead of what was better for them which was to receive an inheritance with the rest of the 9 and half tribes in the land of promise.** According to Number 32 Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh had agreed to help the other tribes conquer the land before they returned to the east side of the Jordan to enjoy their inheritance. They had asked for this land outside the boundaries of Canaan because it was especially suited to the raising of cattle. The fact that these two and a half tribes would not be living within God’s appointed land didn’t seem to worry them. When we study the twenty-second chapter of Joshua, we’ll learn that while their choice may have been good for their cattle, it created serious problems for their children. Again according to 1 Chron. 5:25-26 these tribes became a sort of “*buffer zone*” between the Jews in Canaan and the heathen nations like Moab and Ammon. Of course, their location made them extremely vulnerable both to military attack and ungodly influence; and both of these liabilities eventually brought about their downfall.

Hey saints, don’t become a “*borderline believer.*” Enter into the inheritance God appoints for you and rejoice in it. Ps. 47:4 reminds us that God “*will choose our inheritance for us*”, **what God has for us is always better than what we think is best.** The Lord will take you as far as you want to go with Him, and as deep into the land of blessings as you want to go but not one step further that you want to go. These 2 ½ tribes were willing to settle in a land in which all the enemies had been slain by Moses a land in which they thought fit their life style so **they settled for what they believed was best and gave up what was far better!** So what will it be dear ones will you reflect upon your life and see that **you took what was best at the expense of what was better?** Yet as we have read in verse 1 “*there remained very much land yet to be possessed*”. The enemy will continually need to be rooted out of our lives for us to be able to possess more of what the Lord has for us. And just who is the enemy? Well that would be our old fallen nature that still wants to rule and reign over the areas of our life. It is for this reason that Paul wrote in Philip. 2:12 “*Therefore, my beloved,work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*”.

A. Verses 15-23 The boundaries are given for Reuben in the south: Since the tribe of Reuben had taken its territory from Moab, it was logical for the story of Balaam to be mentioned here (Josh. 13:22-23; see Num. 22-25). When Balaam saw that God was turning his curses into blessings, he advised Balak to be friendly to the Jews and invite them to one of the Moabite religious feasts. This resulted in some of the Jewish

men taking Moabite women for themselves and thus violating the Law of God. What Satan couldn't accomplish as a lion, cursing Israel, he accomplished as a serpent, beguiling Israel and leading the men into wicked compromise.

B. Verses 24-28 The boundaries of Gad sandwiched in between Ruben in the South and Manasseh in the North.

C. Verses 29-32 The boundaries of Manasseh in the south.

Vs. 14, 33 Levi, the priestly tribe, was the only tribe that was not to be given an inheritance of land because they were given an inheritance from the altar. According to the 20 and 21st chapters they would be given cities within the other tribe's boundaries. They were given a greater security not of the land but of the sacrifices upon the altar. They are like Abraham who we are told in Hebrews 11:10 "*waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*"

In verse 33 we are told that "*the tribe of Levi Moses had given no inheritance; the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance, as He had said to them.*" According to 1 Peter 2:5 we are related to the priestly tribe ourselves as Peter says that we are, "*living stones...being built up into a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*" As such according to Paul in Ephes. 1:11 in Christ "*we have obtained an inheritance*" as we are also reminded by Paul in Col. 1:12 where we are told that the "*Father... has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.*" Of that inheritance Peter wrote of it in 1 Peter 1:4 telling us that it is "*an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you*". So Levites don't feel left out if in this life you just don't seem to be able to keep up with Jones because in the life to come you will be kept by Jesus and enjoying your inheritance "*incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away*". The author of Hebrews tells us in 11:26 that the "*the reproach of Christ is greater riches than the treasures in Egypt*". Hear what Paul encouraged the Philippians in 4:19 when he prayed "*And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*"

The only inheritance that God gave Levi, the priestly tribe according to verse 33 is "*the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance, as He had said to them.*" This tribe was called to a life of worship and service to the Lord and His people, oh to be content with nothing less than this! **They may have had no land to call their own but they had all of the Lord to call their home!** According to Number 35:2 the other tribes were to set aside 48 cities for the Levites to live in and serve God people. Fresh from worshipping the Lord they were to come home and dwelling next to their brethren. Wow, **in the sanctuary they brought their neighbors before God, ah but in their homes they brought God before their neighbors.** Saints that is our calling, our divine inheritance **to take our neighbors before God and take God to our neighbors.**