

Receiving Our Inheritance (Joshua 13:1-33 & Ephesians 1:11-14) 28-Jun-26

Land Still to Be Taken

13 When Joshua had grown old, the Lord said to him, “You are now very old, and there are still very large areas of land to be taken over.

² “This is the land that remains: all the regions of the Philistines and Geshurites, ³ from the Shihor River on the east of Egypt to the territory of Ekron on the north, all of it counted as Canaanite though held by the five Philistine rulers in Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron; the territory of the Avvites ⁴ on the south; all the land of the Canaanites, from Arah of the Sidonians as far as Aphek and the border of the Amorites; ⁵ the area of Byblos; and all Lebanon to the east, from Baal Gad below Mount Hermon to Lebo Hamath.

⁶ “As for all the inhabitants of the mountain regions from Lebanon to Misrephoth Maim, that is, all the Sidonians, I myself will drive them out before the Israelites. Be sure to allocate this land to Israel for an inheritance, as I have instructed you, ⁷ and divide it as an inheritance among the nine tribes and half of the tribe of Manasseh.”

Division of the Land East of the Jordan

⁸ The other half of Manasseh, the Reubenites and the Gadites had received the inheritance that Moses had given them east of the Jordan, as he, the servant of the Lord, had assigned it to them.

⁹ It extended from Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Gorge, and from the town in the middle of the gorge, and included the whole plateau of Medeba as far as Dibon, ¹⁰ and all the towns of Sihon king of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon, out to the border of the Ammonites. ¹¹ It also included Gilead, the territory of the people of Geshur and Maakah, all of Mount Hermon and all Bashan as far as Salekah— ¹² that is, the whole kingdom of Og in Bashan, who had reigned in Ashtaroth and Edrei. (He was the last of the Rephaites.) Moses had defeated them and taken over their land. ¹³ But the Israelites did not drive out the people of Geshur and Maakah, so they continue to live among the Israelites to this day.

¹⁴ But to the tribe of Levi he gave no inheritance, since the food offerings presented to the Lord, the God of Israel, are their inheritance, as he promised them.

¹⁵ This is what Moses had given to the tribe of Reuben, according to its clans:

¹⁶ The territory from Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Gorge, and from the town in the middle of the gorge, and the whole plateau past Medeba ¹⁷ to Heshbon and

all its towns on the plateau, including Dibon, Bamoth Baal, Beth Baal Meon, ¹⁸ Jahaz, Kedemoth, Mephaath, ¹⁹ Kiriathaim, Sibmah, Zereth Shahar on the hill in the valley, ²⁰ Beth Peor, the slopes of Pisgah, and Beth Jeshimoth—²¹ all the towns on the plateau and the entire realm of Sihon king of the Amorites, who ruled at Heshbon. Moses had defeated him and the Midianite chiefs, Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur and Reba—princes allied with Sihon—who lived in that country. ²² In addition to those slain in battle, the Israelites had put to the sword Balaam son of Beor, who practiced divination. ²³ The boundary of the Reubenites was the bank of the Jordan. These towns and their villages were the inheritance of the Reubenites, according to their clans.

²⁴ This is what Moses had given to the tribe of Gad, according to its clans:

²⁵ The territory of Jazer, all the towns of Gilead and half the Ammonite country as far as Aroer, near Rabbah; ²⁶ and from Heshbon to Ramath Mizpah and Betonim, and from Mahanaim to the territory of Debir; ²⁷ and in the valley, Beth Haram, Beth Nimrah, Sukkoth and Zaphon with the rest of the realm of Sihon king of Heshbon (the east side of the Jordan, the territory up to the end of the Sea of Galilee). ²⁸ These towns and their villages were the inheritance of the Gadites, according to their clans.

²⁹ This is what Moses had given to the half-tribe of Manasseh, that is, to half the family of the descendants of Manasseh, according to its clans:

³⁰ The territory extending from Mahanaim and including all of Bashan, the entire realm of Og king of Bashan—all the settlements of Jair in Bashan, sixty towns, ³¹ half of Gilead, and Ashtaroth and Edrei (the royal cities of Og in Bashan). This was for the descendants of Makir son of Manasseh—for half of the sons of Makir, according to their clans.

³² This is the inheritance Moses had given when he was in the plains of Moab across the Jordan east of Jericho. ³³ But to the tribe of Levi, Moses had given no inheritance; the Lord, the God of Israel, is their inheritance, as he promised them.

Ephesians 1:11-14

¹¹ In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, ¹² in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. ¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were

marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

There are **Bibles** in front of you

And a sermon **outline**

Please have your **Bibles opened** up at **Joshua chapter 13**

Let me pray first...

Context (Joshua 13:1-5)

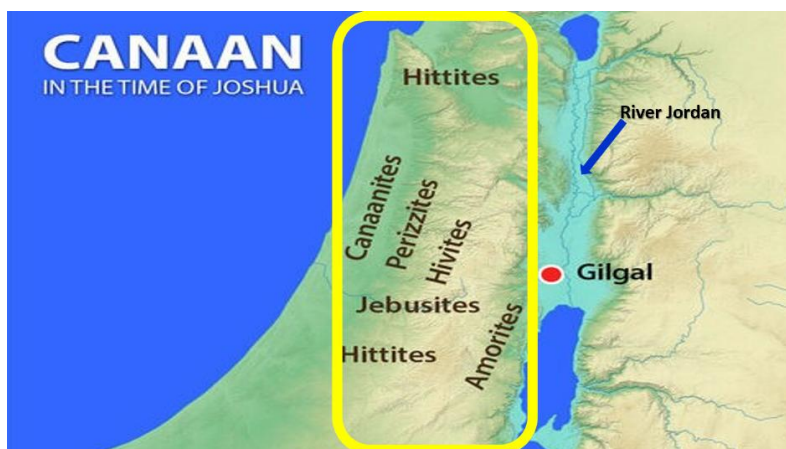
Let's just get the **context** before we begin...

About **2000BC** – **God promised Abraham** that Abraham would have **many descendants** and would one day be a **great nation** – that would occupy a **land** called **Canaan**.

The Bible calls this land – the **Promised Land**.

And it's **promised to God's people** the Israelites.

Slide-West Side



In **chapters 1 to 11 of Joshua** – we have seen how **Joshua and the Israelites** **with God's** help have systematically **wiped out the nations** of the **Canaanites**,

Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites and Jebusites that were occupying Canaan and have **taken control** of all the **land** on the **Western side of the River Jordan**..

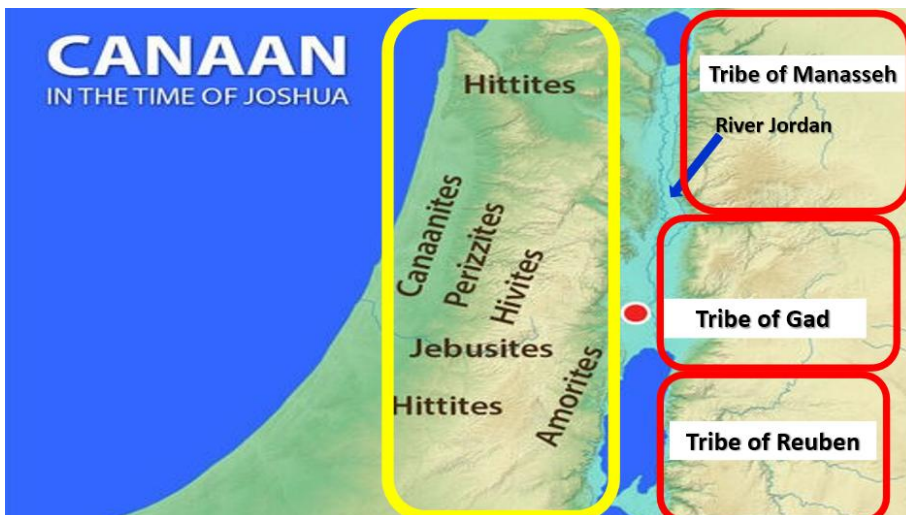
And we said this conquest of Canaan was God's judgment on these wicked nations – who had rejected the one True God of Israel – Yahweh – because they worshipped false gods and idols.

This conquest of Canaan - – **took about 7 years**.

Then last week – in chapter 12 – we talked about how the Israelites also occupied land on the **East side of the Jordan**

[Slide-East Side of the Jordan]

And this land was given to the tribes of **Reuben** and **Gad** and **half the tribe of Manasseh!**



This week we pick up the story in **chapter 13**

And we are going to go into a bit more detail on this land on the East side but first...

We pick up the story in v1 - where the Lord says to Joshua “*You are now very old, and there are still very large areas of land to be taken over*”

[Slide-Map-Still to be taken]

We know from Joshua 14:10 that **Joshua is 85 years old**.

And this land still to be taken is on the **West** side of the Jordan in the land of Canaan.

[Explain areas still to be taken from vv2-5]



Even though God acknowledges Joshua's advanced years, God tells Joshua about a job that still needs to be done.

There are areas in Canaan that have not been taken.

Notably, the land of the **Philistines** – along the coast – and because the Israelites don't fully take that land – the Philistines become an arch enemy and thorn in the side for both King Saul and King David later.

For us - no matter how much we have done to serve the Lord - in our Christian walk, there always remains more to do for the Lord! [For example - we'll be talking about the implantation of the recent Consultancy after morning tea]

As Christians – we need to realize there is no retirement from the Lord's work – retirement is not mentioned in the Bible!

Even though, Joshua and the Israelites have experienced many victories, God's work is not yet complete. The focus now shifts from **conquering** the land to **distributing the inheritance** among the tribes. And it will now be the responsibility of each **individual tribe** to complete the **occupation**.

God wants the Israelites and us to keep pressing on to claim our **inheritance**.

For the Israelites – **their inheritance is the Promised Land**

For us – **our inheritance is the eternal Promised Land of Heaven!**

Inheritance is Promised by God's Grace (Joshua 13:6-7 & Ephesians 1:11-12)

[Slide-1st Point]

My first point this morning is “**Inheritance is Promised by God's Grace**” (Joshua 13:6-7 and Ephesians 1:11-12)

You see—even though there is still land for the Israelites to possess.

The question is: why is there any land for them to possess in the first place?

Isn't it because of a **divine promise**?

The Israelites inheritance is promised by God's grace

[Slide-Deut Readings]

Back in Deuteronomy 7:7-8 Moses explains why God chose Israel.

⁷ The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. ⁸ But it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors.

And in Deuteronomy 9:6 Moses also explains

Understand, then, that it is not because of your righteousness that the Lord your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stiff-necked people.

So, the Israelites are not chosen because they are huge in numbers nor because they are in any way good. They are chosen because of God's grace – God's undeserved favour!

[Slide-Joshua 13:6]

And because the Israelites are God's people – here in **Joshua 13 v6** – God tells Joshua - ***I myself will drive them out before the Israelites.***

And it's the same for us – in our NT reading from Ephesians 1

The Apostle Paul tells the Ephesians in v11

[Slide Ephesians 1:11]

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.

We are **chosen** – and we are **pre-destined** for our **inheritance** according to God's plan – not because of anything good in us – but because of God's grace - and **God is the one who works out everything because He wills it to happen!**

[Slide Ephesians 1:12]

And God's will according to Ephesians 1:12 is that *we put our hope in Jesus* – the one who purchased our inheritance – and His will is that *we bring honour to Him as we live out our lives.*

Yet God's gracious promise does not eliminate human responsibility – see Joshua 13:6-7 – God tells Joshua...

[Slide-Joshua 13:6-7]

Be sure to allocate this land to Israel for an inheritance, as I have instructed you, and divide it as an inheritance among the nine tribes and half of the tribe of Manasseh.

Here God lays down His will for His people.

God's sovereignty in making a promise is working in parallel with human responsibility.

These verses remind us that God's promises require a response.

God has given Israel the Promised Land, but they still needed to take possession of it. In a far greater way, God has given us a Saviour, through the Lord Jesus, who has secured our eternal inheritance in the Promised Land of Heaven - not because of anything we've done - but by his grace through His death and resurrection. Now we are called to live by faith until the day we receive that eternal inheritance in full.

Which brings us to the **second point** – “**Inheritance is received by obedient faith**” – that’s Joshua 13:8-33

Inheritance is Received by Obedient Faith (Joshua 13:8–33)

Here the chapter turns its attention back to the East side of the Jordan
And goes into great detail about how half the tribe of Manasseh, the tribe of Reuben and the tribe of Gad – were given their inheritance on the East side of the Jordan.

[Slide-land on the East]

Vv8-13 are a **summary** of the whole occupation of the East side

Vv15-23 give great detail on the land to be occupied by the tribe of **Reuben**

Vv24-28 give great detail on the land to be occupied by the tribe of **Gad**

Vv29-32 give great detail on the land to be occupied by the tribe of **the half-tribe of Manasseh**

Why is this detail given?

Because God requires the Israelites to have **obedient faith** – and to not miss one of His detailed instructions

Likewise for us as Christians – **God requires obedient faith** from us – and He has given us detailed instructions in His Word.

As Christians we are to...

- **Make disciples** – We advance Christ's kingdom by proclaiming the gospel (Matthew 28:18–20)
- **Walk worthy of our calling** – Live consistently with the inheritance you've received (Ephesians 4:1, Colossians 1:10)
- **Put sin to death** – Take possession of the holy life Christ has won for us (Romans 8:13, Colossians 3:5)
- **Stand firm** – Don't give ground to sin, false teaching, or the devil (Ephesians 6:10–18, Philippians 1:27)
- **Love one another** – The defining mark of God's people (John 13:34–35)
- **Persevere in faith** – Continue trusting until the inheritance is received in full (Hebrews 3:14, Hebrews 10:35–39)
- **Seek first God's kingdom** – Live for God's priorities rather than earthly ones (Matthew 6:33)
- **Abide in Christ** – Fruitfulness comes from remaining in him (John 15:1–8)
- **Present ourselves as living sacrifices** – Offer your whole lives to God (Romans 12:1–2)
- **Be holy** – God's redeemed people are to reflect his character (1 Peter 1:13–16)

We can only obey these detailed instructions if we actually know about them – by reading and following God's Word.

In this chapter of Joshua – in amongst all these lists of places to be occupied – there are **two incidents** that can easily be missed – but both of them are super important...

[Slide-1st Incident]

1st incident I'd like to highlight is in v13 - *But the Israelites did not drive out the people of Geshur and Maakah, so they continue to live among the Israelites to this day.*

Here we see that the Israelites failed to drive out the people of Geshur and Maakah.

Partial obedience to God – is not good enough – it's sin!

And sin ALWAYS has consequences.

The people of **Geshur** and **Maakah** might live peacefully among the Israelites in Joshua's time

But 400 years after Joshua – King David married a princess from **Geshur**, and she was the mother of his son **Absalom** (2 Samuel 3:3). Absalom was a shocker and rebelled against his father David – and returned to Geshur and used it as a place to plot against his father David (2 Samuel 13:37-38, 14:23, and 14:32).

Also, in King David's time, when a troublemaker called **Sheba** rebelled against King David, he took refuge in the city of **Maakah** – because it wasn't part of Israel.

What we have here in v13 - is an early hint of a recurring problem of disobedience.

And it all stems from not following God's detailed instructions when they first entered the Promised Land.

I recently conducted a wedding of a young couple – and I asked “***How will their marriage go?***” –the answer I said – “***depends on how closely they follow God's instruction manual and love each other like Jesus loves us!***”

As Christians we have victory in Christ, yet we continue to battle with sin. We must not settle for partial obedience. We are called to persevere in faith and holiness.

Joshua 13 v13 warns against **being satisfied with incomplete spiritual progress.**

What the land was to Israel, Jesus is to us.

We are to possess all of Him, and to keep pressing on to have all of Jesus.

How much of Jesus do we have right now? Don't we want more?

How much of the Bible do we possess as ours? Do we hunger for more?

Do we walk in the blessing of leading others to Jesus?

Are we faithfully praying for others?

Are we looking to serve others in God's family?

Are we shining the light and love of Jesus to others?

Are we sharing the Good News of Jesus with others?

Or have we become **cruise-control Christians?**

[Slide-2nd Incident]

The 2nd incident I'd like to highlight is in v22 - *In addition to those slain in battle, the Israelites had put to the sword Balaam son of Beor, who practiced divination*

Balaam was a prophet-for-hire from Mesopotamia whom King Balak of Moab hired to curse Israel (Numbers 22–24). This happened a few years before the Israelites crossed the Jordan.

God prevented Balaam from cursing Israel [by using Balaam's donkey to talk to Balaam] and God made Balaam pronounce blessings on Israel instead. However, later, Balaam advised King Balak of Moab of a way to lead Israel into sin through idolatry and sexual immorality (Numbers 31:16; Revelation 2:14). As a result, many Israelites fell under God's judgment – because of Balaam!

Balaam might have thought that he'd got away with this – but no!

His death in Joshua 13 v22 shows that God's judgment eventually came upon the one who opposed God's purposes and led God's people into sin.

This should give us confidence that God will not permit wickedness to continue forever unchecked – and shows that wickedness will be judged.

God Himself says “*Vengeance is mine, I will repay!*” (Deuteronomy 32:35; Romans 12:19)

Balaam is a warning that there are only two destinies: either receiving God's inheritance through obedient faith or facing God's judgment for disobedience!

There's no third option – no sitting on the fence!

Inheritance is Received by Obedient Faith

Which brings us to the 3rd and final point – **Our Inheritance is Secured Forever in Jesus** – that's in Joshua 13:14 and 33 and Ephesians 1:13-14.

Our Inheritance is Secured Forever in Jesus (Joshua 13:14, 33; Ephesians 1:13–14)

[Slide-Joshua 13:14, 33]

What we see in Joshua 13:14 and 13:33 is something remarkable. The priestly tribe of Levi, who served the LORD in the tabernacle during the wilderness years and later in the temple, did not receive any tribal allotment of land like the other tribes.

Instead, they were supported by the tithes and offerings of God's people. But these verses tell us something even more significant: "*The LORD, the God of Israel, is their inheritance.*"

What an extraordinary statement.

The greatest inheritance was never the land itself—it was God.

The Levites were reminded that while the other tribes received fields, vineyards, and cities, they received something infinitely better. **They belonged to God, and God belonged to them.**

That is a wonderful reminder for us as well. Our greatest inheritance is not what God gives us, but God himself.

Every earthly possession will one day pass away, but to know God, to belong to him, and to enjoy him forever is an inheritance beyond compare.

That truth doesn't end with the Levites.

In our New Testament reading, Paul shows us that every believer has an inheritance that is even greater than the Promised Land.

[Slide-Ephesians 1:13-14]

In Ephesians 1:13–14 Paul says that those who have heard the gospel and believed in Jesus are **sealed with the promised Holy Spirit**, who is a **deposit guaranteeing our inheritance** until the day Jesus returns and completes our salvation.

Think about that for a moment.

The Holy Spirit living within every Christian is God's guarantee that one day we will receive our full inheritance in his eternal kingdom.

Now, that's not like one of those dodgy guarantees on your car. You take it back to the dealership only to discover the guarantee doesn't cover the very part of the engine that's failed!

No, God's guarantee never fails.

The Holy Spirit is God's own, rock-solid guarantee that everyone who belongs to Jesus will receive the inheritance He has promised.

One of the saddest things I encounter is talking with people who are nearing the end of their lives and asking them whether they believe they will go to heaven. Often they simply don't know. They hope so, but they have no real **assurance**.

But Paul wants believers to have **assurance**. If you have repented of your sins, trusted in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and believe that he rose

again to give you eternal life, then God has given you his Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit is God's guarantee that your inheritance is secure.

You don't have to wonder. You don't have to hope you've done enough. If your trust is in Jesus, you can have complete confidence that the inheritance God has promised will one day be yours.

There's one more wonderful gift the Holy Spirit gives every believer. Not only does He guarantee our future inheritance, but **He also transforms our lives now.**

As the Holy Spirit works within us, **He produces his fruit: *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.***

These qualities don't earn our inheritance—they are the evidence that God's Spirit is at work in us as we await the inheritance that is to come.

Conclusion (1 Peter 1:3-5)

Let me finish with these verses from 1 Peter 1:3-5 which explain why our inheritance in Heaven is secure...

[Slide-1 Peter 1:3-5]

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are

shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

Let's pray

Heavenly Father, thank You that You are the faithful God who keeps Your promises and gives good inheritance to Your people. Help us not to become settled or complacent, but to keep trusting You for all You have called us to. Thank You that in Christ we have a far greater inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. Teach us to walk in obedience, to be faithful in what You have given us, and to rest in Your ongoing work in our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Benediction (Romans 8:16-17)

¹⁶The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. ¹⁷Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.

AMEN.