

JOSHUA – THE POWER OF PROMISED INHERITANCE

Introduction

Chapters 13-21 of the book of Joshua can be a bit tedious for us to read. They detail the inheritance of land that God had promised to the Israelites hundreds of years before. We might find the details boring, but imagine the Israelites who would be the beneficiaries of this inheritance that came from God whom they trusted and had shown himself powerful in the past months. These chapters are of great import to them.

And we should heed the words in them because, if you are a Christian, you also are heirs who have a promised inheritance. We need the message of these chapters in Joshua because we must trust in our benefactor and have faith in the promises that come with being a Christian. You have an infinite inheritance from an perfectly trustworthy source. To ignore your inheritance, to be nonchalant about the details, or to dismiss God, the benefactor, would be an enormous error.

Let's look at these chapters in Joshua to appreciate the power of a promised inheritance when the One promising it is God and the promises are exceedingly excellent.

Summary:

- Chapter 1-4 = Enter the Land
 - Joshua assumes command
 - Story of Rahab
 - Crossing the Jordan
- Chapter 5-12 = Take the Land
 - Destruction of Jericho
 - Defeat and victory at Ai
 - Sun stands still and the victory over the 5 kings
- Chapter 13-21 = Possess the Land

Joshua 13 - 21

Joshua 13:1-7 (ESV) [1] Now Joshua was old and advanced in years, and the LORD said to him, “You are old and advanced in years, and there remains yet very much land to possess. [2] This is the land that yet remains: all the regions of the Philistines, and all those of the Geshurites [3] (from the Shihor, which is east of Egypt, northward to the boundary of Ekron, it is counted as Canaanite; there are five rulers of the Philistines, those of Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron), and those of the Avvim, [4] in the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that belongs to the Sidonians, to Aphek, to the boundary of the Amorites, [5] and the land of the Gebalites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrise, from Baal-gad below Mount Hermon to Lebo-hamath, [6] all the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon to Misrephoth-maim, even all the Sidonians. I myself will drive them out from before the people of Israel. Only allot the land to Israel for an inheritance, as I have commanded you. [7] Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance to the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh.”

Details of the Promise – Joshua 13-21:

- Land allotment east of the Jordan
 - Reubenites
 - Gadites
 - Half tribe of Manasseh
- Land allotment west of the Jordan:
 - Caleb’s inheritance
 - Judah, Ephraim, Benjamin, Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, Dan
 - Cities of Refuge
 - Levites inheritance

Joshua 21:43-45 (ESV) [43] Thus the LORD gave to Israel all the land that he swore to give to their fathers. And they took possession of it, and they settled there. [44] And the LORD gave them rest on every side just as he had sworn to their fathers. Not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for the LORD had given all their enemies into their hands. [45] Not one word of all the good promises that the LORD had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass.

The Israelites needed to trust in God's promises. He would win the battles. But they needed to trust Him enough to obey him. If you are a Christian, you are also a person of promise. In fact, the Bible says "But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises" (Hebrews 8:6). We can see Jesus as we read the book of Joshua by keeping in mind that we are also recipients of great promises.

WE NEED TO PUT OUR FAITH IN THE POWERFUL PROMISES OF GOD

Our Inheritance: Promises through Christ

Through Christ, I am dead to sin (Romans 6:11).

Through Christ, I am spiritually alive (Romans 6:11; 1 Corinthians 15:22).

Through Christ, I am forgiven (Colossians 2:13; 1 John 2:12).

Through Christ, I am declared righteous (1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21).

Through Christ, I am God's possession (Titus 2:14).

Through Christ, I am an heir of God (Romans 8:17).

Through Christ, I am blessed with all spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3).

Through Christ, I am a citizen of heaven (Philippians 3:20).

Through Christ, I am free from the law (Romans 8:2).

Through Christ, I am crucified with him (Galatians 2:20).

Through Christ, I am free from the desires of the flesh (Galatians 5:24).
Through Christ, I am declared blameless and innocent (Philippians 2:15).
Through Christ, I am a light in the world (Matthew 5:14-15; Philippians 2:15).
Through Christ, I am victorious over Satan (Luke 10:19).
Through Christ, I am cleansed from sin (1 John 1:7).
Through Christ, I am set free in Christ from the power of sin (Colossians 2:11-15).
Through Christ, I am secure in him (1 Peter 1:3-5).
Through Christ, I am at peace with God (Romans 5:1; Philippians 4:6-9).
Through Christ, I am loved by God (1 John 4:10).
- From: *Gospel Coach: Shepherding Leaders to Glorify God* by Scott Thomas and Tom Wood (71-72)

Three details about the promises in Joshua

1. God's promises require faith!

Israel's problem:

Joshua 13:1 (ESV) [1] Now Joshua was old and advanced in years, and the LORD said to him, "You are old and advanced in years, and there remains yet very much land to possess.

1. Enemies - Joshua is old which points to his inability, his weakness
2. Very much land remains to be possessed

These land allotment promises are too big for Israel!

God's solution:

Joshua 13:6 (ESV) [6] I myself will drive them out from before the people of Israel. Only allot the land to Israel for an inheritance, as I have commanded you.

1. God will do it
2. The Israelites must put their faith in the promises

Our problem:

1. Sin - We are too weak. We are unable to solve our problem.
2. There is still sin.

God's solution:

1. God has saved us; Jesus did the work.
2. We need to believe with faith in the promises of God

2 Corinthians 1:20 For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.

2. God's promises demand perseverance!

Joshua 13:1 (ESV) [1] Now Joshua was old and advanced in years, and the LORD said to him, "You are old and advanced in years, and there remains yet very much land to possess.

- Commentator: "It was one thing to invade and conquer a territory; it was another to persevere over a period of time to occupy the whole territory allotted to a tribe ... here is a testimony to all God's people: we frequently and strangely prove faithful in the great crisis of faith, remain steadfast in severe storms, perhaps even relish the excitement of the heaviest assaults, yet lack the tenacity, the dogged endurance, the patient plodding often required in the prosaic affairs of believing life; we are often loathe to be faithful ... "
- Salvation is by God alone. But once he has saved us he calls us to work out our own salvation. It is by grace we have been saved, and yet grace is opposed to earning our salvation, not effort in our salvation. We, like the Israelites, are called to persevere in light of the powerful promises of God.

Hebrews 6:11-12 (ESV) And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

3. God's promises include encouragement!

- God begins the details with the land east of the Jordan – v 1-5
- God reminds the Israelites of their past victories which emphasizes God's faithfulness to them.
- God reminds the Israelites of their conquered enemies—Sihon and Og—as well as Balaam.
- Commentator: “... *faith finds both steadfastness and expectancy by rehearsing and revelling in Yahweh's past acts of faithfulness.*”
- Our faith in the promises of God will find hope and hardiness by rehearsing and revelling in Christ's past act of faithfulness. The gospel! The goodness of the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Son of God! Preach the gospel to yourself daily! Remind yourself of Jesus' victory over your sin. Never stray from the cross.
- Spurgeon: *I know one who said I was always on the old string, and he would come and hear me no more; but if I preached a sermon without Christ in it, he would come. Ah, he will never come while this tongue moves, for a sermon without Christ in it—a Christless sermon! A brook without water; a cloud without rain; a well which mocks the traveler; a tree twice dead, plucked up by the root; a sky without a sun; a night without a star. It were a realm of death—a place of mourning for angels and laughter for devils. O Christian, we must have Christ! **Do see to it that every day when you wake you give a fresh savor of Christ upon you by contemplating his person. Live all the day, trying as much as lieth in you, to season your hearts with him, and then at night, lie down with him upon your tongue.***

The promises are God himself!

- The tribe of Levi were not promised any land ... no allotment for them.
- **Joshua 13:33 (ESV)** [33] But to the tribe of Levi Moses gave no inheritance; the LORD God of Israel is their inheritance, just as he said to them.
- This is a reminder to us to not prize the promises above the Promise-Giver.
- The positional promises are with value if it is not entailed in the promises that we get the Promiser as well.
- “[The] saving events and all the saving blessings of the gospel are means of getting obstacles [like our sin and God’s wrath] out of the way so that we might know and enjoy God most fully. Propitiation, redemption, forgiveness, imputation, sanctification, liberation, healing, heaven - none of these is good news except for one reason: they bring us to God for our everlasting enjoyment of him. If we believe all these things have happened to us, but do not embrace them for the sake of getting to God, they have not happened to us. Christ did not die to forgive sinners who go on treasuring anything above seeing and savoring God. And people who would be happy in heaven if Christ were not there, will not be there. The gospel is not a way to get people to heaven; it is a way to get people to God. It’s a way of overcoming every obstacle to everlasting joy in God. If we don’t want God above all things, we have not been converted by the gospel.”