

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Good morning, this morning we will continue our study through the book of Joshua.

We have already completed the first half – and I mentioned the last time that we came together on Sunday that the second half of Joshua is all about the Children of Israel dividing up the land.

Everything that we have studied up to this point has been Joshua and the Israelites conquering the Promised Land that God gave to them.

Let's pray...

[Jos 13:1-7 NKJV] 1 Now 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.

I asked you to make a note that here in the scriptures, twice we are reminded that Joshua was old.

Now, the scriptures do not tell us exactly how old he is here in chapter 13, I have seen some estimates that Joshua's age was around 100 years old – the only thing that is confirmed in scripture is that Joshua dies at the age of 110 years old.

(Joshua 24:29)

Now, why the emphasis on his age?

For the first 12 chapters, we have seen Joshua, for the most part, guided by the word of God.

He did have a few hiccups, we saw that against Ai and against the Gibeonites – but for the most part, he has been obedient.

The emphasis on his age is a reminder to him and to us that there is no retirement age for those that are used by God.

God still had a job for Joshua – there was still unfinished business to take care of.

The major battles had already been won – however, much of the land that God had promised the Israelites had not been possessed yet.

God didn't want Joshua and the Israelites to simply settle with a partial inheritance, He wanted Joshua and the Israelites to continue to press on and possess it all.

We look back at the promise that God gave Joshua at the beginning of the book of Joshua -

[Jos 1:3 NKJV] 3 "Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses.

Their inheritance was contingent upon how much of it were the willing to walk by faith and possess.

And if we were to compare what God intended them to have with what they actually possessed and held, we would notice an appalling difference between the two.

Never in all their history did the Israelites ever achieve God's intentions for them.

Now, before we start shaking our heads at the Israelites – we must remember that the same applies to us.

In Jesus, we have a heavenly inheritance which God purposes that every believer should enjoy.

What the Promised Land was to the Israelites, Jesus Christ is to us.

Our inheritance in Christ is not part of Christ, but all of Christ.

And just like the Israelites, our possession is only that part of Christ which we claim by faith, and there will be no one who can make the claim that we have claimed all we should have.

It doesn't matter how much we have done for Him, as long as God gives us breathe, we continue to press on.

Turn with me to the book of Philipians

[Phi 3:12 NKJV] 12 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.

Church, we all have areas in our lives that are still waiting to be possessed, may we have a heart like Paul and continue to press on.

So starting in verse two, God reminds Joshua of the land that still needed to be possessed.

2 "This is the land that yet remains: all the territory of the Philistines and all [that of] the Geshurites, 3 "from Sihor, which [is] east of Egypt, as far as the border of Ekron northward ([which] is counted as Canaanite); the five lords of the Philistines--the Gazites, the Ashdodites,

the Ashkelonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites; also the Avites;

These five lords of the Philistines are the same ones that we have read about in our study through 1 Samuel –

Even though God points it out to them – they fail to take care of them and have to suffer the consequences of their inaction later on.

And I will point out the consequences of some of the groups as we come to them.

4 "from the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that belongs to the Sidonians as far as Aphek, to the border of the Amorites; 5 "the land of the Gebalites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrise, from Baal Gad below Mount Hermon as far as the entrance to Hamath;

6 "all the inhabitants of the mountains from Lebanon as far as the Brook Misrephoth, [and] all the Sidonians-- them **I will drive out** from before the children of Israel; only divide it by lot to Israel as an inheritance, as I have commanded you. 7 "Now therefore, divide this land as an inheritance to the **nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh.**"

So, not only is God pointing out to Joshua the land that had to be settled, He is also providing Joshua the means on how to accomplish it.

Divide the land up and have the individual tribes possess the land that was allotted for them.

In other words, each tribe was going to be responsible for taking possession of their own inheritance.

And it was up to each individual tribe to place their trust in God, because God had promised them that He was going to drive out the inhabitants – all He required from them was their obedience.

It is the same lesson that they had to learn in the first twelve chapters.

Now, why nine and a half tribes???

Because two and a half tribes had made a deal with Moses that they didn't want to go into the Promised Land they wanted to remain in that land that was on the eastern side of the Jordan River.

And they chose this land because it was better grazing land for all of their cattle.

In other words, their decision was not based upon God's best – the west side of the Jordan, it was based upon what was best for their cattle and for their bank accounts.

So Moses makes the deal was that they had to help the other 9.5 tribes conquer the land first and then they could return to the land on the eastern side of the Jordan.

However, choosing to reside on that side of the Jordan also made them more vulnerable because they were closer to their enemies and they were always the first ones that were attacked.

Show map...

What is meant by half tribes? Manasseh – half tribes, east and west

So starting in verse 8, we are going to see how the land was divided on the east side of the Jordan. Among the two and half tribes.

[Jos 13:8-14 NKJV] 8 With the other half-tribe 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: 9 from Aroer which [is] on the bank of the River Arnon, and the town that [is] in the midst of the ravine, and all the plain of Medeba as far as Dibon; 10 all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, as far as the border of the children of Ammon; 11 Gilead, and the border of the Geshurites and Maachathites, all Mount Hermon, and all Bashan as far

as Salcah; 12 all the kingdom of Og in Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth and Edrei, who remained of the remnant of the giants; for Moses had defeated and cast out these. **13 Nevertheless the children of Israel did not drive out the Geshurites or the Maachathites, but the Geshurites and the Maachathites dwell among the Israelites until this day.**

The two and a half tribes are given their portion of land – however, we see in verse 13 that they failed to drive out two tribes from their inheritance.

Consequences???

The Geshurites:

[2Sa 3:3 NKJV] 3 his second, Chileab, by Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite; the third, Absalom the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur;

In a few weeks, once we start 2 Samuel on Wednesday night, we will see the sad relationship between King David and his son Absalom.

And when Absalom gets into trouble, one of the places that he runs to is Geshur and it is here where plots against his father and ultimately returns and makes himself king over Israel.

Again, sometimes we don't see the consequences of our inactions until much later.

14 Only to the tribe of Levi he had given no inheritance; the sacrifices of the LORD God of Israel made by fire [are] their inheritance, as He said to them.

Jacob had twelve sons – these twelve sons represented the twelve tribes of Israel. However, you might recall from our study through Genesis that Joseph is represented by two of his sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, which technically, means that there were 13 tribes.

Yet, the Levites, the priestly tribe, they were given no physical territory as an inheritance in order so that they could minister throughout the nation.

They were given cities within the inheritance of the other tribes but they never received territory like the other tribes.

Now, I am not going to go over verse 15-33 as it chronicles the names and places of how the land was divided among the two and a half tribes.

You guys can have fun trying to pronounce the names.

[Jos 14:1-15 NKJV] 1 These [are the areas] which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel distributed as an inheritance to them. 2 Their inheritance [was] by lot, as the LORD had commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes and the half-tribe.

We begin chapter 14 with the gathering of leaders that come together to divide the land that was on the west side of the Jordan among the 9.5 tribes.

And there is a representative of each tribe as the lands are divided out.

And we also see that the lands are divided out though the casting of lots.

I asked you to make a note of the word lots because the Hebrew word that is used here means pebble, and the casting of lots was similar to what we know now as rolling dice.

This was a common practice in the Old Testament.

We saw this a few weeks ago in 1 Samuel as they cast lots to determine who had broken the fast that King Saul had imposed. And we saw that the lot fell on Jonathan as he was the one that dipped his stick in the honey and ate of it.

We saw it in the book of Jonah as the sailors cast lots to determine who was responsible for the storm that was threatening their lives and the lot fell on Jonah.

We even see it among the disciples as they try to fill Judas' shoes with another disciple – after he hangs himself and we find in Acts 1 that they cast lots to fill the vacancy and the lot fell on Matthias – and that is the last time we see the name Matthias.

The error that the disciples made was that they didn't wait until chapter two. Because in Acts two, God gives us a better way to discern than lots and that is through the Holy Spirit.

3 For Moses had given the inheritance of the two tribes and the half-tribe on the other side of the Jordan; but to the Levites he had given no inheritance among them. 4

For the children of Joseph were two tribes: Manasseh and Ephraim. And they gave no part to the Levites in the land, except cities to dwell [in], with their common-lands for their livestock and their property. 5 As the LORD had commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did; and they divided the land.

6 Then the children of Judah came to Joshua in Gilgal. And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him: "You know the word which the LORD said to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh Barnea.

Joshua and Caleb were two of the twelve spies that Moses sends into the Promised Land at Kadesh.

They were the two spies that believed in the promises of God, they were the ones that believed that God was faithful and that He was going to give them their inheritance.

However, as you know, the congregation listened to the other ten spies who brought a bad report.

A report that instead of focusing on God's promises, focused on the giants that were in the land.

And the consequences of following the report of the ten spies was a 40 year death march in the wilderness as everyone who was older than twenty died, except Joshua and Caleb.

And here we have Caleb reminding Joshua of their story.

7 "I [was] forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as [it was] in my heart. 8 "Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I wholly followed the LORD my God.

I asked you make a note of Caleb reminding Joshua that he had indeed wholly followed the Lord my God.

Caleb isn't bragging – he is simply repeating what the Lord had already said about him back in Numbers 14.

And one of the things that we learn from the life of Caleb is that his faith in the promises of God never wavered.

He never complained or murmured when God promises were delayed – he just held unto the word of God and walked in obedience.

He never compromised by worshipping other gods like many of the Children of Israel did.

He never made excuses.

God's promises were sufficient to keep Caleb true for all the rest of his life.

It is easy to walk in obedience when things are going our way – but Caleb endured 45 years of waiting upon the promises of God – not through any fault of his own.

9 "So Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance

and your children's forever, because you have wholly followed the LORD my God.' 10 "And now, behold, the LORD has kept me alive, as He said, these forty-five years, ever since the LORD spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old. 11 "As yet I [am as] strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength [was] then, so now [is] my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in. 12 "Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the LORD spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim [were] there, and [that] the cities [were] great [and] fortified. **It may be that the LORD [will be] with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the LORD said."**

The time has come for Caleb to receive his inheritance. He is 85 years young he promptly tells Joshua to give him that beach house on the Mediterranean to live out the rest of his days right?

No of course not.

He tells Joshua to give him a villa on the Sea of Galilee so he can go fishing everyday.

Nope.

He tells Joshua to give him this mountain – he is 85. 85 year olds don't pick mountains – they pick flat lands.

Not only does he pick a mountain – the mountain contains the same giants that deterred the people 45 years earlier.

Caleb tells Joshua – give me the giants in their fortified cities. I will continue to walk by faith and trust in God's promises.

Caleb wanted to continue to fight – he knew there was still work to be done and even though he could have easily said, “I am just an old man – let the young kids take care of the giants” – he chose to take up the fight himself.

He knew the Lord could still do a mighty work through him.

This is how the Lord wants us to be in our spiritual life as we get older. Yes, we grow older but we never grow weaker in Christ.

That is how Caleb was able to proclaim that he was just as strong as he was 45 years earlier.

13 And Joshua blessed him, and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as an inheritance. 14 Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel. 15 And the name of Hebron formerly was Kirjath Arba ([Arba was] the greatest man among the Anakim). Then the land had rest from war.

When the 12 spies went into Promised Land and spied out the land for 40 days – one of the areas that Caleb spied out was Hebron.

He knew what he was getting into. He saw all the giants.

The name Hebron means fellowship;

And one of the things that Caleb understood during the 45 years of waiting upon God's promises was that what God's people needed is not comfort, but challenges.

Because it is these challenges, these difficulties, these heartaches, these heartbreaks that bring us into fellowship.

They bring us to the place where we cry out to the Lord, they bring us to the place where we call upon the Lord and the place where we look upon the Lord.

They bring us into Hebron.

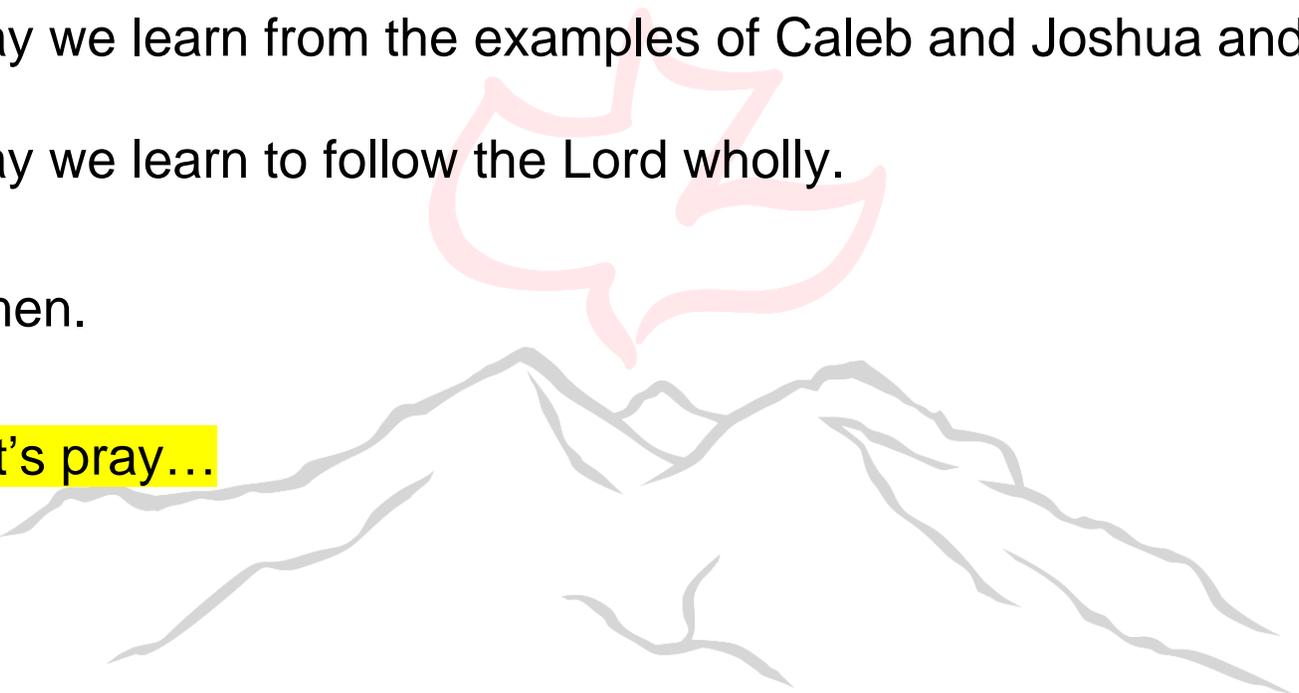
When everything is going ok, when things are smooth and there are no giants – we tend to place our spiritual feet up and become complacent in our spiritual walk. We forget about our fellowship with Him.

And this is why God allows us to have giants in our lives – that is why we have storms in our lives, to strengthen us, to build us and bring us into fellowship with Him.

May we learn from the examples of Caleb and Joshua and may we learn to follow the Lord wholly.

Amen.

Let's pray...



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