

Joshua 13:1-7

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 Sihor, 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." *ESV*

Please read Joshua 13.

God has an enduring claim of the inheritance. In the context of the book of Joshua and Israel's advance into Canaan, we are speaking of the *land* being the "inheritance" from God to Israel. However, **there are also some parallel thoughts to be drawn to a biblical understanding of a personal relationship with God through eternal salvation as well.**

The word "possess" (verb) occurs in the book of Joshua more times than any other book in the Bible. This seems to imply the centrality of this book to understanding, perhaps more than just Israel's history. The basic "stem" of this word means "to obtain something as a possession." The *noun* form of the word means "inalienable," or "without ability to be separated from." The idea is similar to a grant or inheritance, or through dispossession of the prior owner. From an understanding of this word we learn that ownership is the central part.

God is the Legal Agent of the inheritance. God owned the land and gave it to His people as part of His sovereign prerogative. This means that this possession from God is unique and permanently binding. It is important to understand that God did not "inherit" the land from anyone else.

Speaking of inheritance in these terms, we also note that **Israel is God's inheritance.** Israel belonged to God and not to any other gods. He set them apart from all the nations of the world to be a special people to display His grace for the hope of the nations. When Israel departed from God in their disloyalty, we read in several prayers that there is the promise that God would restore His people since they were His "inheritance." (Ex. 34:09, 1 Kings 8:52-53, Isa. 63:17)

Overall, **God is the Giver of the Inheritance.** But, it was necessary that God drive out the previous occupiers of the land so that it could be granted to Israel. Implicit within an understanding of an inheritance is the action of "dispossessing." First, by the obedience of God's people, the land would need to be possessed as they removed it from the control of those who were presently in the land. When we see the action of God in "driving out" throughout the Scripture there are special implications to be observed. The driving out is usually displayed as an act of judgment upon those being expelled. God drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:24). God drove Cain from his land (Gen. 4:14). God banished Jonah from His sight (Jonah 2:4). And, in Joshua, God drove the Canaanites from their land because of their persistent rebellion toward Him. Their time was up. God expelled

the people of Canaan so that Israel could occupy it. But in this instance, it implies a judgment as a central part of the possession.

The inheritance was underneath God's control, through the casting of Lots. Since it was a gift, all that remained was for Israel to possess it, or receive it. As Israel *possessed* the land, they *dispossessed* it as part of the judgment of the Canaanites. Israel's inheritance of the land meant that they owned legal title to it. This was only possible because the "Owner," God, gave it to them.

Also, **God is Israel's inheritance.** This is a reversal of the idea of inheritance. More specifically Levi's inheritance. (Num. 18:20, Deut. 18:2). The special provisions for the tribe of Levi are a picture of the special relationship that Israel had with God.

There was special provision made for the tribe of Levi. (13:14:3-4, 32-33) The Levites were a chosen tribe dedicated to the service of the Lord. They were a picture of the replacement for the firstborn (Num. 8:15-22, Deut. 10:8-9) that God required at the Passover from every family. They are included as representatives of all of the Tribes including those who were east of the Jordan. As first-born representatives they therefore link all tribes together at the point of honor for each family. Their service to the Lord provides the theological theme for the inheritance. All tribes worship God with the help of the Levites, who assist in the sacrifices and blessings. They received an allotment of towns (14:4) throughout the land as a scattered presence in each of the tribes, representing the unity of the people together with God.

The parallels of Israel possessing the land of Canaan with the biblical understanding of the spiritual nature of eternal salvation are clear. **When one will obey, believing upon God alone for their soul's deliverance from the condemnation and enslavement to sin, God will sovereignly deliver them through the redeeming work of His Son Jesus Christ unto an inheritance that is secure and eternal.** (1 Peter 1:3-5)

LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

1. **Why does God have an enduring claim upon the land of Israel?**
2. **What is unique and binding about the inheritance?**
3. **What does it mean that Israel is God's inheritance?**
4. **What part does the action of "dispossessing" play in the picture of an inheritance?**
5. **Who is Israel's inheritance?**
6. **According to Hebrews 4:1-11 what is the result of believing upon God's provision of an inheritance that is greater than a geographical territory?**
7. **How can someone "rest" in God as their inheritance?**
8. **Review 1 Peter 1:3-5.**

If you have any questions or want to discuss anything in these weekly lessons, please be sure to contact me! Brad.Jury@Capitol.Com.org

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