

Joshua 12-13

“There has never been a greater war for a greater cause. The battle of Waterloo decided the fate of Europe, but this series of contests in far-off Canaan decided the fate of the world.” – Henry T. Sell

Joshua 12

V. 1

In this chapter we have the listings of the kings conquered under the leadership of Moses (2-6) and Joshua (7-24).

V. 2-3

We read about the defeat of **Sihon** king of the Amorites (Heshbon), in Numbers 21:21-32. Sihon’s defeat is mentioned often in the OT (Deut. 1:4; Josh 2:10; Ps. 135:11; Jer. 48:45).

The Amorites were one of the major tribes, or national groups, living in Canaan. The OT frequently uses ‘Amorites’ as a synonym for Canaanites in general. The **Ammorites** were primarily inhabitants of the land west of the Euphrates River, which included Canaan, Phoenicia, and Syria, but as time went on, many Ammorites settled in large areas both east and west of the Jordan river.

The defeat of Sihon was an area east of the Jordan river (see map of Ammorites, and then the cities/kings, and then the Conquest of Canaan,).

(90 miles long)

V. 4-5

We read about the defeat of Ok, king of Bashan (Amorites), in Numbers 21:33-35.

(60 miles long)

Moses commented after his defeat, in Deuteronomy 3:11, “For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of the giants. Indeed his bedstead was an iron bedstead. (Is it not in Rabah of the people of Ammon?) Nine cubits is its length and four cubits its width, according to the standard cubit.”

V. 6

(Map of 12 Tribes)

What a blessing and honor for Moses, twice in this verse to be called the Servant of the LORD in the context of conquering. As we faithfully serve the LORD, it’s so cool how we gain ground for the glory of God and the good of His people.

Ministry has often been compared to tennis, the one with the best “serve” – wins.

We might call Moses the great leader of the people, but in order to be an effective leader of the people, he needed to primarily be a servant of the LORD.

V. 7-24

31 kings in all, this time kings conquered under the leadership of Joshua.

16 kings defeated in the southern campaign (9-16)

15 kings defeated in the northern campaign (17-24)

Joshua 13

V. 1-6a

Joshua was old and advanced in years...

We don't know Joshua's exact age at this time, but he was probably around 100 years old. We know he died at the age of 110 (24:29), and the events in the final portions of the book might very well be a 10-year time frame.

But even at that age...there's still more for him to do; his servant-leadership responsibilities are not over.

Psalm 71:17-18, "O God, You have taught me from my youth; and to this day I declare Your wondrous works. Now also when I am old and gray-headed, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come."

Psalm 92:12-14, "The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, he shall grow like a Cedar in Lebanon. Those who are planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing."

Remaining land to be conquered (but what about 11:23?)

The apparent contradiction between verses 11:23 and 13:1 can easily be explained. Joshua and his army did take control of the whole land by destroying the key cities with their kings and people. Israel didn't take every little city or slay every citizen or ruler, but they did enough to break the power of the enemy and establish control over the land. Once this was accomplished and there was rest in the land, Joshua was able to assign each tribe its inheritance, and within each inheritance, the tribes had to gain mastery over the remaining inhabitants who were still there." - Warren W. Wiersbe. Be Strong (Joshua): Putting God's Power to Work in Your Life (p. 144). Kindle Edition.

The Spiritual parallel is fairly obvious: we were in bondage to Egypt, but God sent the deliverer, the Savior, and He set us free, He brought us out of Egypt with the blood of the Lamb.

We eventually make our way to the Promised-Land, after the dark days of doubt, the wandering in the wilderness, but still the battle is not over; the war is won, but the battles linger on; and although we have the core of victory, we still face "pockets of resistance."

“...and there remains very much land yet to be possessed...”

I still have a lot of growing to do

V. 6b-7

A couple of things to touch on here:

1. Land to be divided by Lot
2. The concept of inheritance

1. Land to be divided by Lot

In spite of the many references to casting **lots** in the OT, nothing is known about the actual lots themselves. They could have been sticks of various lengths, flat stones like coins, or some kind of dice...we don't know for sure, but this was one of their ways of determining God's will.

Proverbs 16:33, “The lot is cast into the lap, but its ever decision is from the LORD.”

And so, the LORD was the one who determined the division of the land, and He used lots to do so. This and thus determined the inheritance of each tribe.

2. The concept of inheritance

And we all have this type of inheritance on earth. An inheritance determined by God with certain boundaries we are not to pass, but certain areas of land that we are to possess.

And right off the bat I think of each one personally, I think of each one with their family, and then each one in the ministry.

This is your inheritance; this is who you are to be, personally – the godliness

This is your inheritance; this is the institution of family – the gang

This is your inheritance, this sacrifice in ministry – the gifts and gospel

And we all have this type of inheritance on earth. An inheritance determined by God with certain boundaries we are not to pass, but certain areas of land that we are to possess.

*Romans 12:3-8

(Humility must be balanced with responsibility)

Always keeping in mind that God is the one who chooses our inheritance with which we are to glorify Him.

In verses 8-14, we have a general statement about the east side of the Jordan:

V. 7b-13

(150 miles north and south; 50 miles east and west)

We read in verse 8 that these eastern tribes “received” their inheritance, referring to the fact that, at this point, they had received it by lot; these soldiers, from the half tribe of Manasseh, Reuben and Gad, won’t actually go back to their land, until Joshua 22.

This was based upon an agreement they had made with God through Moses, that they would cross over and help their brethren first, on the west side, at which point they could return and live within their inheritance on the East side (Numbers 32).

We have some detailed description as to their sphere of land (see map)

And this was pretty good, but it wasn’t all-good.

Look again at what we read in v. 13 (read).

This was not a good report. The children of Israel ***did not*** drive out their enemies, not that they ***could*** not...just that they ***did*** not.

And their enemies lived among them, a long time. How we need to, by faith, drive out the enemies, and pulverize the pockets of resistance that want to live “among us.”

James 4:1, “Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?”

Ephesians 5:3, “But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints;”

1 Corinthians 3:3, “For you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?”

“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.”

Nevertheless...O Lord, please, help us to never be less than what You want us to be, please never say nevertheless, about me.

The land east of the Jordan was given to the 2-½ tribes, but we read in v. 14:

V. 14

The tribe of Levi didn't get to own their own land, to fix up their house, theirs wasn't a relationship of that type of ownership, their inheritance wasn't a white picket fence...they actually got something bigger, something better. They got to serve the Lord, to see the Lord, up close and personal, even the sacrifices of the Lord made by fire (Deuteronomy 18:1-2)

Literally in the Hebrew – regarding the inheritance – “their source of food, and life.”

And not only would they be able to serve in these offerings, they would also be able to receive from these offerings, including the tithes and firstfruits.

V. 15-23

The land of Reuben

“Though Reuben was the firstborn and entitled to a double portion (Deut. 21:17), neither he nor his tribe received it. Now, after more than 4 centuries the punishment for Reuben’s sinful deed was passed on to his descendants; the right of the firstborn passed over to his brother Joseph who received 2 portions, one for Ephraim and the other for Manasseh (Gen. 48:12-20).” – Bible Knowledge Commentary

V. 24-28

The land of Gad

V. 29-31

The land of half the tribe of Manasseh

V. 32-33

Not only did the Levites get to work for God, they got God; they not only served Him, they received Him.

Since we are His people – we are His inheritance

Since we are His priests – He is our inheritance

5 Lessons:

1. The Lot (Let God choose)
2. The Land (Posses it, but don’t pass it)
3. The Leader (The effective leader is the Servant of the LORD)
4. The List (Praise God for past victories, Please God for future victories)
5. The Levites (God is our inheritance)