

Joshua 12 to 21 – The Inheritance – Part 2

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Union Baptist Church – 2/25/2018

WHAT WE'VE ALREADY COVERED (Joshua 12 to 15)

Well, this week we're going to continue and finish what we started last week, which is a high speed journey through chapters 12 through 21 of Joshua. This is quite different than my usual style of preaching and has been an interesting challenge to try and organize, summarize and hit the high points of 10 chapters in two weeks. I'm used to taking my time a little more and really digging deep in a more manageable passage. But considering that probably around 90% of these chapters are names and descriptions of places and tribes and people, this seems to be the best way to tackle this section of Scripture, so I hope I haven't lost you and that you'll be able to stay with me as we cover chapters 16 to 21 chapters today. I've given an outline again this week that I hope will help you map out and follow what we're covering. I've called these messages: *The Inheritance – Parts One and Two*. This is what we've already covered:

- I. THE CONQUERED AND UNCONQUERED LAND (12:1-13:7)
 - A. Land conquered under Moses (12:1-6)
 - B. Land conquered under Joshua (12:7-24)
 - C. Land still unconquered (13:1-6a)
 - D. The LORD's promise and command to divide the land (13:6b-7)

- II. THE DIVIDING OF THE LAND (13:8-21:42)
 - A. The inheritance east of the Jordan (13:8-33)
 - 1. The full extent of the eastern land (13:8-14)
 - 2. The land inherited by Reuben (13:15-23)
 - 3. The land inherited by Gad (13:24-28)
 - 4. The land inherited by ½ Manasseh (13:29-31)
 - 5. Summary statements regarding eastern land (13:32-33)
 - B. The inheritance west of the Jordan (14:1-21:42)
 - 1. Introductory statements regarding allotment of western land (14:1-5)

2. Caleb's request and inheritance (14:6-15)
3. The land inherited by Judah (15:1-63)

THIS WEEKS MATERIAL (Joshua 16 to 21)

So let's pick up in chapter 16, with the land inherited by Joseph. And as we move through these chapters today, I really want to challenge you each to be thinking of what spiritual applications you can make to your own life and walk with God. Think especially in terms of the inheritance God has for you through Christ and how you can more fully live in and pursue that inheritance.

4. The land inherited by Joseph (16:1-17:18)

Well, as we consider the land described as inherited by Joseph, we're really talking about is the land inherited by the two separate tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, the two sons of Joseph. Even though Joseph was only one of the twelve sons of Jacob, his descendants received 2/12ths of the land inheritance. This was possible because the descendants of Levi, the priests, didn't receive a land inheritance.

a) The full extent of Joseph's land (16:1-4)

b) The portion allotted to Ephraim (16:5-10)

Josh 16:10

10 However, they did not drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer, so the Canaanites have lived in the midst of Ephraim to this day but have been made to do forced labor.

This sounds familiar, doesn't it? In disobedience to the command of the LORD, the tribe of Ephraim didn't drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer. Gezer was a strategic city located in the Shephelah, which was a transitional area of low, sloping hills between the mountainous area around Jerusalem and the coastal plain. Joshua had defeated the king of Gezer in chapter 12, but somehow the Canaanites had reestablished themselves in the city and Ephraim didn't drive them out when they took possession of it. They made

them serve as slaves, rather than devoting them to destruction as the LORD had commanded.

c) The portion allotted to ½ Manasseh (17:1-13)

Josh 17:3-4

3 Now Zelophehad the son of Hopher, son of Gilead, son of Machir, son of Manasseh, had no sons, but only daughters, and these are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. 4 They approached Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun and the leaders and said, "The Lord commanded Moses to give us an inheritance along with our brothers." So according to the mouth of the Lord he gave them an inheritance among the brothers of their father.

As we consider what happened here in these verses, it's important for us to understand how important a family's land inheritance was in Jewish culture. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary* gives us some good insight here, pointing out that "...the preservation of family property holdings was one of the highest values in Israelite society. That is because the land was the gift of [God's] covenant, so each family's allotment was its share in the covenant." Therefore for a family to lose their land inheritance simply because they had no sons, was a big deal.

Fortunately, back in the book of Numbers, chapter 27, God's Law given through Moses had made provision for such cases, and had established that when a man died and had no sons, his inheritance would be passed on to any daughters that he had. A later provision was added in Numbers, chapter 36, requiring daughters receiving a land inheritance to only marry within their own tribe. This prevented any transfer of land from one tribe to another through marriage. Each tribe was to always retain their land inheritance given by God.

Here again we see Joshua knowing and obeying God's Word in how responded to the daughters of Zelophehad: ...according to the

mouth of the Lord he gave them an inheritance among the brothers of their father. Joshua fully knew the terms of God's covenant and was committed to following God's Word and commands completely. Sounds a lot like Jesus in his wilderness temptation, doesn't it?

But as we continue on to verses 12 and 13 of Joshua, chapter 17, we see a stark contrast between Joshua's obedience to God's Word and the obedience of the people from the various tribes. Let's read verses 12 and 13 of Joshua chapter 17:

Josh 17:12-13

12 Yet the people of Manasseh could not take possession of those cities, but the Canaanites persisted in dwelling in that land. 13 Now when the people of Israel grew strong, they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but did not utterly drive them out.

Still struggling with unbelief in God's power to defeat and drive out their enemies and still refusing to follow the path of complete obedience no matter the cost, the people of Manasseh were not able to take possession of the all the cities God had given them. And even when they grew strong enough to rule over the Canaanites and dwell in their cities, they decided to use them as slaves rather than utterly drive them out. Human wisdom was overruling the wisdom of God and they were already experiencing the weakness and problems that always result.

d) The people's complaint and Joshua's response (17:14-18)

Well, as the allotment of land to the sons of Joseph came to a close, the tribe of Ephraim approached Joshua with dissatisfaction about the amount of land they had been given, especially considering their large population and what a small portion they had received compared to Manasseh. Let's read what happened in verses 14 to 18:

Josh 17:14-18

14 Then the people of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, "Why have you given me but one lot and one portion as an inheritance, although I am a numerous people, since all along the Lord has blessed me?" 15 And Joshua said to them, "If you are a numerous people, go up by yourselves to the forest, and there clear ground for yourselves in the land of the Perizzites and the Rephaim, since the hill country of Ephraim is too narrow for you." 16 The people of Joseph said, "The hill country is not enough for us. Yet all the Canaanites who dwell in the plain have chariots of iron, both those in Beth-shean and its villages and those in the Valley of Jezreel." 17 Then Joshua said to the house of Joseph, to Ephraim and Manasseh, "You are a numerous people and have great power. You shall not have one allotment only, 18 but the hill country shall be yours, for though it is a forest, you shall clear it and possess it to its farthest borders. For you shall drive out the Canaanites, though they have chariots of iron, and though they are strong."

The first thing we notice in these verses is Ephraim's dissatisfaction with the amount of land they had received in proportion to their population. Things just weren't adding up in this distribution of land, especially as they compared themselves to Manasseh. But the second thing we notice is their unbelief in the power of God to fight for them in taking the additional land Joshua offered to them. Despite how powerfully God had already defeated all the enemies they had come against, still the human tendency to see things from an earthly perspective and be intimidated by powerful looking enemies, was taking hold of the Ephraimites. Clouding their vision of what God could do were the iron chariots and the giants, the Rephaim.

But Joshua, like a good and godly leader, full of confidence in the power of God, rejected the fears and excuses of the Ephraimites and challenged them to do the same. If they wanted to take possession of their full inheritance and have plenty of room for their large population, they would need to actively reject that fear

of iron chariots and giants and follow the Lord into battle. He would fight for them if they were willing to trust and follow him. No matter how well equipped and powerful the enemy, victory would be certain.

5. Assembly at Shiloh and exploration of remaining land (18:1-10)

Well, as we move to chapter 18, we find all the Israelites gathered together at Shiloh, which was in the hill country of the land allotted to Ephraim. SHOW ON MAP. There at Shiloh they had set up the tabernacle or the tent of meeting. Let's read verses 1 through 10 of Joshua chapter 18:

Josh 18:1-10

Then the whole congregation of the people of Israel assembled at Shiloh and set up the tent of meeting there. The land lay subdued before them. 2 There remained among the people of Israel seven tribes whose inheritance had not yet been apportioned. 3 So Joshua said to the people of Israel, "How long will you put off going in to take possession of the land, which the Lord, the God of your fathers, has given you? 4 Provide three men from each tribe, and I will send them out that they may set out and go up and down the land. They shall write a description of it with a view to their inheritances, and then come to me. 5 They shall divide it into seven portions. Judah shall continue in his territory on the south, and the house of Joseph shall continue in their territory on the north. 6 And you shall describe the land in seven divisions and bring the description here to me. And I will cast lots for you here before the Lord our God. 7 The Levites have no portion among you, for the priesthood of the Lord is their heritage. And Gad and Reuben and half the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance beyond the Jordan eastward, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave them." 8 So the men arose and went, and Joshua charged those who went to write the description of the land, saying, "Go up and down in the land and write a description and return to me. And I will cast lots for you here before the Lord in Shiloh." 9 So the men went and passed up and down in the land and wrote in a book a description of it by towns in seven divisions. Then

they came to Joshua to the camp at Shiloh, 10 and Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the Lord. And there Joshua apportioned the land to the people of Israel, to each his portion.

The land was described in these verses as subdued before the Israelites. Conditions were prime for conquering the rest of the land, because all the remaining inhabitants had seen how powerfully God had defeated every enemy the Israelites had encountered. So as Joshua met with the Israelites here at Shiloh, he began something like this (in a loose paraphrase): *What gives? God's given you all this land and promised to continue fighting for you as you follow him into battle, and yet here you sit with so much land still unconquered. What are you waiting for? Quit putting it off and let's get after it? Do you not want the inheritance God has already set aside for you?*

Well, to help kick start the process, Joshua outlined a plan: 3 men from each of the remaining seven tribes would set out on journey of exploration to describe the land and divide it into seven portions. Then the seven portions would be divided among the tribes by the casting of lots. Perhaps the people would be more motivated to take action if they knew exactly which land was designated for each tribe. They would know exactly what they were fighting for and could have the vision of imagining themselves dwelling in a specific place God had set aside just for them. Excuses and procrastination were starting to take root and Joshua was doing everything he could to encourage the tribes to actually take possession of the inheritance God wanted to give them.

Well, the exploration journey was a success and when it was completed Joshua did as he had promised and divided the land by lot among the remaining seven tribes.

6. **The land inherited by Benjamin (18:11-28)**
7. **The land inherited by Simeon (19:1-9)**
8. **The land inherited by Zebulun (19:10-16)**
9. **The land inherited by Issachar (19:17-23)**
10. **The land inherited by Asher (19:24-31)**
11. **The land inherited by Naphtali (19:32-39)**
12. **The land inherited by Dan (19:40-48)**

You may not know this, but Dan is the one tribe that completely failed to possess their inherited land. Though God had specifically set land aside for them, their fear and unbelief in the power of God kept them from ever possessing it. Look for a moment at Joshua 19, verse 47:

Josh 19:47

47 When the territory of the people of Dan was lost to them, the people of Dan went up and fought against Leshem, and after capturing it and striking it with the sword they took possession of it and settled in it, calling Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their ancestor. [See how this came about in Judges 18]

Cf: Judg 1:34 - The Amorites pressed the people of Dan back into the hill country, for they did not allow them to come down to the plain.

And there was a point where the tribe of Dan just gave up their inherited land as lost and went looking for other land...land by the way that wasn't set aside for them by God. Taking matters into their own hands and turning away from obedience to God, they found a remote, quiet and unsuspecting city in the northern regions above the Sea of Galilee, took it by force, installed a wayward priest they had recruited from the hill country of Ephraim, and set up a false idol to worship.

Perhaps this is why the tribe of Dan is mysteriously missing from the list of tribes in Revelation chapter 7. They had allowed fear and doubt in the power of God to keep them from possessing God's inheritance, and decided to settle for a city they could conquer in their human strength without having to rely on God. And it's no surprise that having chosen that path they gave up worshiping the one true God and turned to a false idol. They gave up their prime seafront property, which, by the way, includes the area where the modern city of Tel Aviv is situated, and settled for a much lesser inheritance they could easily conquer.

13. The land inherited by Joshua (19:49-50)

Well, when Joshua had finished distributing all the land to the tribes, it was time for his inheritance. Let's read verses 49 and 50 of Joshua chapter 19:

Josh 19:49-50

49 When they had finished distributing the several territories of the land as inheritances, the people of Israel gave an inheritance among them to Joshua the son of Nun. 50 By command of the Lord they gave him the city that he asked, Timnath-serah in the hill country of Ephraim. And he rebuilt the city and settled in it.

Joshua was a true servant-leader like Jesus. Refusing to use his power and authority to benefit himself and get the best land for himself, he made sure everyone else was taken care of, trusting the Lord to take care of him and provide him what he needed in his good time. And the Lord did just that. By the Lord's command, the people of Israel gave him whatever city he asked for, which ended up being Timnath-serah in the hill country of Ephraim. God rewarded Joshua's faithful leadership and provided a pretty sweet inheritance: name your city and it's yours!

14. Summary statements regarding division of western land (19:51)

Well, in verse 51 of chapter 19, we get a final summary statement about the division of the western land:

Josh 19:51

51 These are the inheritances that Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun and the heads of the fathers' houses of the tribes of the people of Israel distributed by lot at Shiloh before the Lord, at the entrance of the tent of meeting. So they finished dividing the land.

There at the tent of meeting, the place where they would meet with God and seek his direction, Joshua, Eleazar and the heads of the fathers' houses allowed God to divide up the land according to his plan.

A. The special cities and pasturelands

Well, as we move into our final chapters for today, chapters 20 and 21, the Lord finishes the division of the land with the allotment of the special cities and pasturelands. First up were the cities of refuge.

1. The cities of refuge (20:1-9)

Let's look at verses 1 to 3 of chapter 20, and then verse 9:

Josh 20:1-3, 9

1 Then the Lord said to Joshua, 2 "Say to the people of Israel, 'Appoint the cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses, 3 that the manslayer who strikes any person without intent or unknowingly may flee there. They shall be for you a refuge from the avenger of blood...9 These were the cities designated for all the people of Israel and for the stranger sojourning among them, that anyone who killed a person without intent could flee there, so that he might not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, till he stood before the congregation.

Interestingly, we see the Lord again here speaking directly to Joshua and it was about the cities of refuge, which were evidently quite important to him. The Lord's mercy and care for people is evident in his provision for these cities of refuge; places where people could flee and find protection in the event they accidentally caused someone else's death. There in those cities such people would also be able to present their cases and receive fair trials. These six cities of refuge were distributed throughout the Promised Land and would be managed by the Levites.

2. The cities and pasturelands allotted to Levi (21:1-42)

After appointing the 6 cities of refuge, the final task was to give cities and pasturelands to the Levites, who had no land inheritance, but still needed a place to live and provide religious instruction and keep their livestock. Let's read verses 1 to 3 of chapter 21:

Josh 21:1-3

1 Then the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites came to Eleazar the priest and to Joshua the son of Nun and to the heads of the fathers' houses of the tribes of the people of Israel. 2 And they said to them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, "The Lord commanded through Moses that we be given cities to dwell in, along with their pasturelands for our livestock." 3 So by command of the Lord the people of Israel gave to the Levites the following cities and pasturelands out of their inheritance.

Then verses 4 through 42 detail and summarize the various cities, 48 in all, given to the Levites out of the inheritance of each of the other tribes. Though their true inheritance was the Lord himself, the Lord still provided places for the Levites to live and raise their livestock and ensured that priests were disbursed throughout the land to keep his people worshipping him in step with his guidelines he had laid out in the Law. And with that, the dividing of the land was complete. Now the people would need to continue trusting the Lord, following his lead and engaging in courageous warfare if they wanted to actually possess the full extent of the land God had set aside for them.

I. THE GREAT GIFTS AND FAITHFULNESS OF THE LORD (21:43-45)

And this brings us to our final three verses for today and the end of our bullet train trip through Joshua chapters 12 to 21. These verses end the division of the land with the full focus exactly where it should be: on the great gifts and faithfulness of the Lord!

A. The LORD gave them the land (21:43)

We'll do these verses one at a time, beginning with verse 43:

Josh 21:43

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.

God himself had decreed and ordained that the full extent of this land belonged to his people, Israel, and he outlined exactly which parts belonged to which tribes. He gave it to them and had already allowed them to conquer and take possession of a large portion of it. Now he called them to finish the job in the same way they'd begun it.

B. The LORD gave them rest (21:44)

Let's read verse 44, and see what else the Lord gave them:

Josh 21:44

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.

As we've seen over and over again in the book of Joshua, not only did the Lord give the Israelites the deed of ownership of the land, he also gave them everything they needed to take possession of it and defeat all their enemies. All they needed to do was follow his lead, trust and obey his word, and courageously engage in battle. He would do the rest and bring certain victory. He'd shown them how faithful he was to do just that in the land that had already been conquered and was now giving them a

brief period of rest as the land laid subdued before them and all the remaining enemies were in a state of fear and ripe for conquering.

C. The LORD kept all his promises (21:45)

And finally, a perfect wrap up verse for these chapters, verse 45:

Josh 21:45

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*.**

God had faithfully kept the promises he had made so long ago to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, not one of them had failed.

Now his people needed to walk out with continued trust that their promise-keeping God would continue to keep his promises and fight with awesome power on their behalf as they courageously moved to take possession of their remaining inheritance and fully remove its previous inhabitants. No people had ever had more evidence of God's power and faithfulness and commitment to fight for his people, and now it was time to boldly continue the battle on the basis of that evidence!

APPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

Have you seen any applications to your own life from what we've studied today and last week? I certainly hope so. The reality for each of us today who are in relationship with our faithful God through Jesus Christ, is that we also have an incredible inheritance with our name written on it. And like the Levites, our inheritance is so much greater than earthly possessions and land. Our inheritance is the Lord himself. Do you believe that today and is that the inheritance you want most of all and are seeking with your whole heart? May the Lord enable us to understand and comprehend what it truly means to have the Lord himself as our inheritance!

If we've been saved through repentance and faith in Christ's work on the cross, God has made us new creations with a new purpose a new focus in life. He's made us his children, his ambassadors, his hands and feet in this world, his saints called to accomplish his will by his power dwelling within. He invites us through

Christ to live all of our lives from now and into eternity in his very presence, experiencing his steadfast love and faithfulness, receiving his wisdom for navigating life, being filled with his power to defeat sin in our lives and accomplish his will, and finding joy, peace and hope in a world that's filled with emptiness, anxiety, and despair. And when our earthly lives end, the true, full extent of our glorious inheritance will unfold before us throughout eternity as we settle into the Promised Land of Promised Lands that God is preparing for us right now.

But the question we all need to answer today is this: Am I taking possession of the inheritance God has set aside for me? Is that the true focus of my life and energies? Am I fully committed to following God's lead in everything, knowing and obeying his Word, and courageously engaging in the battle for my true inheritance? Or am I, like the tribe of Dan, missing out on my inheritance because I'm too afraid to do the things God's calling me to do? Because I'm full of unbelief that God's actually going to provide me with what I need to accomplish his will? Or am I, like the other tribes, missing out on my inheritance because I'm allowing sinful attitudes and actions to remain in my life, rather than actively repenting of them and working to root them out by the power of the Holy Spirit?

The Lord is the faithful promise-keeper who is fully committed to fighting for us and providing us with everything we need to root out sin from our lives and accomplish the good works he's personally prepared for each of us to do. And there's nothing better than living in unhindered relationship with him, leaving destructive and painful sin patterns behind, and watching him work through us to bring hope, joy and salvation to a lost world. Let's live in the fullness of the inheritance God has given us and be about the business of sharing that inheritance others! He will give us everything we need to do just that as we start stepping out in faith.

Joshua 12 to 21 – Sermon Outline

- II. THE CONQUERED AND UNCONQUERED LAND (12:1-13:7)
 - A. Land conquered under Moses (12:1-6)
 - B. Land conquered under Joshua (12:7-24)
 - C. Land still unconquered (13:1-6a)
 - D. The LORD's promise and command to divide the land (13:6b-7)

- III. THE DIVIDING OF THE LAND (13:8-21:42)
 - B. The inheritance east of the Jordan (13:8-33)
 - 1. The full extent of the eastern land (13:8-14)
 - 2. The land inherited by Reuben (13:15-23)
 - 3. The land inherited by Gad (13:24-28)
 - 4. The land inherited by ½ Manasseh (13:29-31)
 - 5. Summary statements regarding eastern land (13:32-33)

 - C. The inheritance west of the Jordan (14:1-21:42)
 - 1. Introductory statements regarding allotment of western land (14:1-5)
 - 2. Caleb's request and inheritance (14:6-15)
 - 3. The land inherited by Judah (15:1-63)
 - 4. The land inherited by Joseph (16:1-17:18)
 - a) The full extent of Joseph's land (16:1-4)
 - b) The portion allotted to Ephraim (16:5-10)
 - c) The portion allotted to ½ Manasseh (17:1-13)
 - d) The people's complaint and Joshua's response (17:14-18)
 - 5. Assembly at Shiloh and exploration of remaining land (18:1-10)
 - 6. The land inherited by Benjamin (18:11-28)
 - 7. The land inherited by Simeon (19:1-9)
 - 8. The land inherited by Zebulun (19:10-16)
 - 9. The land inherited by Issachar (19:17-23)
 - 10. The land inherited by Asher (19:24-31)
 - 11. The land inherited by Naphtali (19:32-39)
 - 12. The land inherited by Dan (19:40-48)
 - 13. The land inherited by Joshua (19:49-50)
 - 14. Summary statements regarding division of western land (19:51)

 - D. The special cities and pasturelands
 - 1. The cities of refuge (20:1-9)
 - 2. The cities and pasturelands allotted to Levi (21:1-42)

- IV. THE GREAT GIFTS AND FAITHFULNESS OF THE LORD (21:43-45)
 - A. The LORD gave them the land (21:43)
 - B. The LORD gave them rest (21:44)
 - C. The LORD kept all his promises (21:45)

SERMON APPLICATION AND DISCUSSION GUIDE – 2/25/2018
The Inheritance – Part 2 – Joshua 16 to 21

Read Joshua 16 to 21, asking the Holy Spirit to guide you as you read. Look at the surrounding verses, take your time and talk to God as you read and meditate on it. Then think through the following, writing notes and thoughts and looking up related Scriptures as needed:

Write down from the passage or from what was shared in the sermon: 1) a truth that stands out to you; 2) anything you believe God is showing you or telling you personally through it; 3) any related Scripture that comes to mind; 4) any questions you have.

Study and meditate on the following Scriptures, and summarize below what they teach you about your inheritance and God's purposes for you in Christ: Ephesians 1:1-2:10; Colossians 1:1-29.

In light of what you've discovered about the inheritance God has for you and his purposes for your life right now in Christ, does anything need to change in the priorities and focus and use of time in your life? Describe.

Summarize below anything God is calling you personally to believe, any actions God is asking you to take, or any attitudes He wants to change. Repent where needed and enjoy God's mercy. Then pray over these items and make a plan for change by the power of the Spirit.