

## Joshua 12-14 – “This Land is God’s Land”

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There are passages in God’s Word that can cause a Pastor like myself, who loves to teach through the Bible chapter by chapter and verse by verse, to sort of wonder if that’s always necessary. Joshua 12 is one of those chapters.

It makes you almost question **2 Timothy 3:16**, *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,"*

But all Scripture is there for a purpose, and it truly is profitable. And Joshua 12 serves as a reminder for us of God’s faithfulness. It’s a role call of sorts that what God said, He will do. The kings that stood in Israel’s way, one’s that might have sent many in retreat, are now shown as conquered. The land has been given to Israel. It’s a chapter that can be glanced over, yet it’s one that gives pause for praise and thanks of God’s faithfulness and goodness.

### 1. Land Conquered East of the Jordan – 12:1-6

**12:1-6 - *These are the kings of the land whom the children of Israel defeated, and whose land they possessed on the other side of the Jordan toward the rising of the sun, from the River Arnon to Mount Hermon, and all the eastern Jordan plain: <sup>2</sup> One king was Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon and ruled half of Gilead, from Aroer, which is on the bank of the River Arnon, from the middle of that river, even as far as the River Jabbok, which is the border of the Ammonites, <sup>3</sup> and the eastern Jordan plain from the Sea of Chinneroth as far as the Sea of the Arabah (the Salt Sea), the road to Beth Jeshimoth, and southward below the slopes of Pisgah. <sup>4</sup> The other king was Og king of Bashan and his territory, who was of the remnant of the giants, who dwelt at Ashtaroth and at Edrei, <sup>5</sup> and reigned over Mount Hermon, over Salcah, over all Bashan, as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maachathites, and over half of Gilead to the border of Sihon king of Heshbon. <sup>6</sup> These Moses the servant of the Lord and the children of Israel had conquered; and Moses the servant of the Lord had given it as a possession to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh.***

This was all territory conquered and taken under the leadership of Moses. He was told he would be unable to enter into the Promised land because of his error at Kadesh when he misrepresented Yahweh by striking the rock (Numbers 20).

That would have been a hard pill to swallow, yet Moses continued in faithfulness and set things up for Israel to have success.

- That should always be our heart as well. We may not be the ones to see a specific work come to fruition, but we should serve faithfully and do what we can to help others be successful in the work of God.
- There's no room for competition in the body of Christ. There's one goal – Jesus Christ being magnified and glorified and see people saved through Him. If we can be faithful in those things and contribute to that work, then we have been successful.
- Moses did his part. He raised up the next generation to continue on in the things of the Lord.

Moving from the area Moses had success in, we look now at the area on the other side of the Jordan, where under Joshua's leadership Israel had success.

## 2. Land Conquered West of the Jordan – 12:7-24

**12:7-8 - *And these are the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel conquered on this side of the Jordan, on the west, from Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon as far as Mount Halak and the ascent to Seir, which Joshua gave to the tribes of Israel as a possession according to their divisions, <sup>8</sup> in the mountain country, in the lowlands, in the Jordan plain, in the slopes, in the wilderness, and in the South—the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites:***

Verses 7-8 are summary verses of the scope of the land Joshua conquered. In the remainder of the chapter we'll see a list of 31 kings conquered and the order in which Joshua conquered them.

All together in this chapter 33 conquered kings are listed. It's a testament that only one King stands above them all – Yahweh, the King of kings.

Psalm 2 speaks well of this.

**12:9-24 - *the king of Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which is beside Bethel, one; <sup>10</sup> the king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one; <sup>11</sup> the king of Jarmuth, one; the king of Lachish, one; <sup>12</sup> the king of Eglon, one; the king of Gezer, one; <sup>13</sup> the king of Debir, one; the king of Geder, one; <sup>14</sup> the king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one; <sup>15</sup> the king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one; <sup>16</sup> the king of Makkedah, one; the king of Bethel, one; <sup>17</sup> the king of Tappuah, one; the king of Hopher, one; <sup>18</sup> the king of Aphek,***

***one; the king of Lasharon, one; <sup>19</sup> the king of Madon, one; the king of Hazor, one; <sup>20</sup> the king of Shimron Meron, one; the king of Achshaph, one; <sup>21</sup> the king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one; <sup>22</sup> the king of Kedesh, one; the king of Jokneam in Carmel, one; <sup>23</sup> the king of Dor in the heights of Dor, one; the king of the people of Gilgal, one; <sup>24</sup> the king of Tirzah, one—all the kings, thirty-one.***

Vs. 9 – Central kings – Joshua 6-8

Vs. 10-16 – Southern kings – Joshua 10

Vs. 17-24 – Northern kings – Joshua 11

Interestingly, none of these kings who were the power of their day are named. We're not reminded of their names though they were the rich and famous at the time.

Celebrities today can charge thousands of dollars to perform at your party. A number of years ago I read that the Rolling Stones will come and perform at your private party for 5 million. Celine Dion will do it for 4.2 million. You can't blame them for cashing in on their name and fame while they have it. But years from now people will be asking, *Celine who?*

You see, the only thing of importance is where your name ends up, precisely, will it be in the Lambs Book of Life? That's what really matters.

**Luke 10:20**, *"Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."*

Now that the chief obstacles are conquered, Joshua is ready to move onto dividing the land among Israel. That's what the remainder of the book will primarily focus on.

### 3. Remaining Land to be Conquered – 13:1-7

**13:1** - ***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.***

How nice of God to remind Joshua, twice, that he is old. And it's true, he was. Joshua is about 95-100 years at this time (he died at 110 years – Joshua 24:29). Yet God wasn't done with him. God didn't need to tell Joshua to hang it up and step aside for some young blood to finish the work. God would still use Joshua to finish what He said he would do:

**Joshua 1:6**, *"Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them."*

- Christians may retire from a job, but we don't retire from ministry. God promised the church at Smyrna, *"...be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life"* (Revelation 2:10).

**...there remains very much land yet to be possessed.**

How is this being said here when we read in Joshua 11:23 that *"Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord had said to Moses..."* Did they take it or not? How is there much land yet to be possessed?

Joshua was faithful to defeat the kings, the stronghold of these cities. Victory was secure but there was still land to take and inhabitants to drive out. If these inhabitants remained, they would pose potential problems down the road.

- Case in point: Joshua 11:21-22 says, *"And at that time Joshua came and cut off the Anakim from the mountains: from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel; Joshua utterly destroyed them with their cities. <sup>22</sup> None of the Anakim were left in the land of the children of Israel; they remained only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod."*
- The Anakim were a tribe of giants and they put major fear into the spies in Numbers 13:22, 33. Joshua knew that God would deliver them, yet for some reason Joshua let some of them remain and it did present problems for Israel down the road, for Goliath was a descendent of Anak from Gath.

Such is the case for us. Jesus has secured a great victory for us, but we need to be sure that areas of resistance are rooted out of our lives. If we let things remain in us that are footholds of the enemy, they can begin to win back small battles and take ground that should be rightfully Christ's. He wants all of us! Don't settle for giving Him a part, or even a majority, give Him all of you. May you possess all of Jesus and may Jesus possess every area of your life. Let your life be fully His and you will walk in continued strength and victory.

**13:2-7 - This is the land that yet remains: all the territory of the Philistines and all that of the Geshurites, <sup>3</sup> 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; <sup>4</sup> 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; <sup>5</sup> the land of the Gebalites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrise, from Baal Gad below Mount Hermon as far as the entrance to Hamath; <sup>6</sup> all the inhabitants of the mountains from Lebanon as far as the Brook Misrephoth, and all the Sidonians—they 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. <sup>7</sup> Now therefore, divide this land as an inheritance to the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh.”***

These were the areas that still needed to be swept and cleared. Kings were defeated and victory was theirs in principle, but a fuller work of possession needed to take place.

***divide it by lot to Israel as an inheritance***... What's an inheritance? Something you receive from another. You don't have to buy it, earn it, or battle for it. It's given to you, and you just simply need to receive it.

This word was used once in Chapter 1 and 11, but now it's going to be used 56 times in the remainder of the book of Joshua (12 remaining chapters). This is an important theme as we see God giving this land to the nation of Israel. They had to go in and take it, but it was being given to them by the Lord. I love the verse in **Joshua 10:42**, *"All these kings and their land Joshua took at one time, because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel."* The Lord was on their side. And we see it's His land and He is now giving it to Israel as an inheritance.

- We as children of God are blessed to have a glorious inheritance awaiting us. **1 Peter 1:3–5**, *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."*

#### 4. Land Divided East of the Jordan – 13:8-14

***13:8-14 - 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: <sup>9</sup> 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; <sup>10</sup> all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, as far as the border of the children of Ammon; <sup>11</sup> Gilead, and the border of the Geshurites and***

***Maachathites, all Mount Hermon, and all Bashan as far as Salcah; <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> 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.***

The Geshurites and Maachathites were not dealt with as they should have been. King David ended up marrying a princess from Geshur and together they had Absalom (2 Samuel 3:3). Absalom in his rebellion returned to Geshur to plot against David from there (2 Samuel 13:37-38).

- It's another reminder how the enemy loves to use those places we leave unconquered. Don't give him any room to work with.

The tribe of Levi was given no formal plot of land as an inheritance. The Lord was to be their portion.

- **Numbers 18:20**, *"Then the Lord said to Aaron: "You shall have no inheritance in their land, nor shall you have any portion among them; I am your portion and your inheritance among the children of Israel."*
- The Lord would have the Levites spread out among the other 12 tribes. The Levites were the priestly tribe and so they were to have that godly influence among the tribes. They were to be a light and witness among the land.
- That's our calling as a royal priesthood in Christ (1 Peter 2:9).
- And the Lord made provision for them as they served Him in the tabernacle and temple. Portions of the sacrifices would be for them to enjoy.

## 5. Land Allotted to the Tribe of Reuben – 13:15-23

***13:15-23 - And Moses had given to the tribe of the children of Reuben an inheritance according to their families. <sup>16</sup> Their territory was from Aroer, which is on the bank of the River Arnon, and the city that is in the midst of the ravine, and all the plain by Medeba; <sup>17</sup> Heshbon and all its cities that are in the plain: Dibon, Bamoth Baal, Beth Baal Meon, <sup>18</sup> Jahaza, Kedemoth, Mephaath, <sup>19</sup> Kirjathaim, Sibmah, Zereth Shahar on the mountain of the valley, <sup>20</sup> Beth Peor, the slopes of Pisgah, and Beth Jeshimoth—<sup>21</sup> all the cities of the plain and all the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, whom Moses had struck with the princes of Midian:***

*Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, who were princes of Sihon dwelling in the country. <sup>22</sup> The children of Israel also killed with the sword Balaam the son of Beor, the soothsayer, among those who were killed by them. <sup>23</sup> And the border of the children of Reuben was the bank of the Jordan. This was the inheritance of the children of Reuben according to their families, the cities and their villages.*

## 6. Land Allotted to the Tribe of Gad – 13:24-28

**13:24-28** - *Moses also had given an inheritance to the tribe of Gad, to the children of Gad according to their families. <sup>25</sup> Their territory was Jazer, and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the Ammonites as far as Aroer, which is before Rabbah, <sup>26</sup> and from Heshbon to Ramath Mizpah and Betonim, and from Mahanaim to the border of Debir, <sup>27</sup> and in the valley Beth Haram, Beth Nimrah, Succoth, and Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon, with the Jordan as its border, as far as the edge of the Sea of Chinnereth, on the other side of the Jordan eastward. <sup>28</sup> This is the inheritance of the children of Gad according to their families, the cities and their villages.*

## 7. Land Allotted to the Half Tribe of Manasseh (East) – 13:29-33

**13:29-33** - *Moses also had given an inheritance to half the tribe of Manasseh; it was for half the tribe of the children of Manasseh according to their families: <sup>30</sup> Their territory was from Mahanaim, all Bashan, all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and all the towns of Jair which are in Bashan, sixty cities; <sup>31</sup> half of Gilead, and Ashtaroth and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan, were for the children of Machir the son of Manasseh, for half of the children of Machir according to their families. <sup>32</sup> These are the areas which Moses had distributed as an inheritance in the plains of Moab on the other side of the Jordan, by Jericho eastward. <sup>33</sup> But to the tribe of Levi Moses had given no inheritance; the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance, as He had said to them.*

Once again, the tribe of Levi is shown that they have no inheritance because the Lord Himself would be their inheritance. I'm sure it could have been easy for some of the Levites to wish they could have had their own designated land to live on and enjoy the fruit of their labours.

It's easy for us to look around and wish our allotment in life was different than it is. When we focus on the things of this life it's easy to get disgruntled or discontent. But when we see Jesus as our rich inheritance, and that what we gain in Him is far better than anything we can receive in this life, we should be filled with peace and contentment. He is the better inheritance.

## 8. Land Divided West of the Jordan – 14:1-5

**14:1-5 - *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. <sup>2</sup> Their inheritance was by lot, as the Lord had commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes and the half-tribe. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> As the Lord had commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did; and they divided the land.***

The land was divided up by casting lots. This was sort of like rolling the dice. Ultimately God is sovereign over all this as we read in **Proverbs 16:33**, "*The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the Lord.*"

The last place we see this practise being mentioned is in Acts 1 in determining who should replace Judas as an apostle. Some wonder if that was the wise thing to do. However you look at it, we know that we don't need to rely on gimmicks or chance in determining what we should do. We have the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us into all truth. We see that being played out in Acts 13:2 when the church separates Paul and Barnabas to the ministry as the Holy Spirit directed them.

## 9. Caleb Takes Hebron – 14:6-15

**14:6-9 - *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. <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made***



***the heart of the people melt, but I wholly followed the Lord my God. <sup>9</sup> 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.’***

Before the lots were cast and the land divided, Caleb approaches Joshua with a request of land. And it’s a request not made out of presumption but out of a promise. Caleb recalls the scene 40 years ago when Moses had 12 spies enter the land of Canaan to spy it out. Caleb and Joshua came back with a positive report while the other 10 caused fear and panic in the hearts of the people. The Lord said of Caleb: **Numbers 14:24**, *"But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it."*

- What was that different spirit? It was a spirit of faith. He trusted in what God could do. The 10 spies saw the giants in the land through their own strength, while Caleb (and Joshua) saw the giants through God’s strength. And we’ll see Caleb in this chapter as a man of great faith.

And what Caleb does here is simply lay claim to the promise already given him. Moses had said in **Deuteronomy 1:36**, *"except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him and his children I am giving the land on which he walked, because he wholly followed the LORD."*

- Caleb isn’t asking anything unreasonable, he’s not boasting in his goodness, he’s just quoting what Moses said and laying hold of the promise God made to him.
- That’s not a wrong thing to do. I think many of us would be better off if we simply believed and claimed the promises that God has already given us.

Caleb wholly followed the Lord and God will reward him.

***14:10-13 - 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. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> 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.” <sup>13</sup>***

***And Joshua blessed him, and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as an inheritance.***

Caleb is now 85 years old, 45 years have passed since they spied out the land. And this guy is acting every bit the same as when he first went into the land. He hasn't slowed down a bit. He's feeling even more invigorated. That's what faith does. It doesn't rely on our abilities or strength; it relies on the Lord's strength. And that's precisely what Caleb is doing. Though he is significantly older, He's still serving the same God and he knows he's able to do great things through Him.

- May we be people who grow stronger in the Lord the older we get.

And notice Caleb doesn't settle for the retirement package. He's not looking for beach front property where he can sip pina coladas from his beach chair while watching the sunset. He chose the mountains where the giants are!!

- Not only would it be a challenge just to get up the mountain at his age, but there would be significant challenges waiting for him on that mountain. But he's ready to face the giants, he's ready to face whatever challenges are in front him. How? Because He's letting the Lord do the work through Him: ***it may be that the Lord will be with me...***
- **2 Chronicles 16:9a**, *"For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him."*
- Caleb has been loyal. He's wholly followed the Lord and he's ready to let the Lord show His strength through him.

Caleb recognizes that these challenges are opportunities to bring change. Opportunities to bring greater blessing.

In fact it was Caleb that said in **Numbers 14:9**, *"Only do not rebel against the Lord, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Do not fear them."*

- Joshua and Caleb saw these challenges as their bread. These challenges would nourish and strengthen them.
- Do we ever look at challenges like that? Like these are the things that God is going to use to make us stronger and healthier.
- Let us not retreat back to comfortability, but rather press on and face the challenges as opportunities to see what God will do and allow ourselves to be invigorated and strengthened in the process.

**14:14-15 - 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. <sup>15</sup> And the name of Hebron formerly was Kirjath Arba (Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim). Then the land had rest from war.**

Kirjath Arba means a walled city. Arba was the founding ancestor of the Anakim. A place that was meant to instill fear is now called Hebron, which means association or fellowship. Because Caleb wholly followed the Lord, he enjoyed sweet fellowship with the Lord. And the people had rest from war.

There was a peace among them. This is what happens when we walk in obedience. There may be challenges ahead, but as we wholly follow the Lord we can enjoy His peace in the midst of it all.

- The writer of Hebrews said that Jesus is our ultimate rest. **Hebrews 4:1**, *“Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.”*
- May we not come up short of what God has for us. May we follow obediently and with faith filled lives. The 2 ½ tribes are given a lot of focus in this passage we looked at tonight. And there’s a lesson for us in that. God’s not going to force you to go where you don’t want to go. But the reality is, He has the best in mind for us, why would we settle for anything less? And thought the land to the east of the Jordan looked good to these tribes, it left them vulnerable to military attacks and ungodly influences. This led to their downfall (1 Chronicles 5:25-26). This too can happen to us if we choose to stop short of God’s best for us. Let us move forward like Caleb and whole heartedly carry out by faith what God has for us.