

Joshua Chapter 13- 22 – Important lessons from the division of the land as the Israelites claim their inheritance.

Introduction

We are now back in the book of Joshua almost where we left off on the 22nd of November.

We actually finished in chapter 10: v. 29 after Joshua's longest Day. You may remember that a united army of 3 Kings and all their soldiers tried to defeat Joshua in one battle. However Joshua with God's help defeated all these 3 armies in one day.

God was using His people to judge the sin of these nations and He did everything that was needed to help Joshua and his army. In this case He extended the day in answer to Joshua's prayer in order to complete the destruction of these armies. (Joshua 10: v. 12-13)

It was an amazing miracle, yet nevertheless it was true because God's word says so.

(2 Tim. 3: v. 16)

I would like to summarize from v. 28 of chapter 10 until the end of chapter 12, then we will start to deal with the important spiritual lessons from chapters 13-22. This will be in two parts to this message, one today and the next one on January 10th.

(I will preach a one-off New Year Message on Sun 3rd January)

Chapter 10: v. 29 through until the end of chapter 24 deal with Israel's conquest of the southern and northern cities in the land. It closes with a list of names whom Israel had defeated. Two things stand out in these chapters.

It was God who gave the victory – look at chapter 10:30, 32, 42, and chapter 11: v. 6, 8.

The second thing was that Joshua obeyed the Lord, by destroying the enemy, just as Moses had commanded him. – look at 11:9 12, 15, and 20. The only exception was Gibeon.

We now come to the dividing up of the land to the tribes.

When we read through these chapters they are not very interesting unless you are the person waiting to get their inheritance.

If you or your family were waiting to receive a large amount of land in Japan, then you would be very interested in waiting patiently for your lawyer or solicitor to read out the conditions of your inheritance.

I am afraid that I don't own any land in Japan, so therefore I can't give you any land in Japan when I die as your inheritance. However what I can do over the next two messages in Joshua is to remind you of your inheritance in Jesus Christ. This is very important.

As we look at the dividing up of the land we will discover that there are transferable spiritual truths in these chapters that we can apply to our lives here today in Japan.

The first tribes to receive their inheritance is described in Chapter 13: v. 1-33.

The strange thing about these tribes is that they chose to have their inheritance, not in the land promised by God as their inheritance, but in a land that they chose for themselves.

To understand the history behind their choice we must go back to Numbers chapter 32.

Let us read Numbers 32:v. 1-23.

Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of livestock; and when they saw the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead, that indeed the region *was* a place for livestock, ² the children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spoke to Moses, to Eleazar the priest, and to the leaders of the congregation, saying, ³ “Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Shebam, Nebo, and Beon, ⁴ the country which the LORD defeated before the congregation of Israel, *is* a land for livestock, and your servants have livestock.” ⁵ Therefore they said, “If we have found favor in your sight, let this land be given to your servants as a possession. Do not take us over the Jordan.” ⁶ And Moses said to the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben: “Shall your brethren go to war while you sit here? ⁷ Now why will you discourage the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD has given them? ⁸ Thus your fathers did when I sent them away from Kadesh Barnea to see the land. ⁹ For when they went up to the Valley of Eshcol and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, so that they did not go into the land which the LORD had given them. ¹⁰ So the LORD’s anger was aroused on that day, and He swore an oath, saying, ¹¹ ‘Surely none of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and above, shall see the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because they have not wholly followed Me, ¹² except Caleb the son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite, and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have wholly followed the LORD.’ ¹³ So the LORD’s anger was aroused against Israel, and He made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the LORD was gone. ¹⁴ And look! You have risen in your fathers’ place, a brood of sinful men, to increase still more the fierce anger of the LORD against Israel. ¹⁵ For if you turn away from following Him, He will once again leave them in the wilderness, and you will destroy all these people.” ¹⁶ Then they came near to him and said: “We will build sheepfolds here for our livestock, and cities for our little ones, ¹⁷ but we ourselves will be armed, ready *to go* before the children of Israel until we have brought them to their place; and our little ones will dwell in the fortified cities because of the inhabitants of the land. ¹⁸ We will not return to our homes until every one of the children of Israel has received his inheritance. ¹⁹ For we will not inherit with them on the other side of the Jordan and beyond, because our inheritance has fallen to us on this eastern side of the Jordan.” ²⁰ Then Moses said to them: “If you do this thing, if you arm yourselves before the LORD for the war, ²¹ and all your armed men cross over the Jordan before the LORD until He has driven out His enemies from before Him, ²² and the land is subdued before the LORD, then afterward you may return and be blameless before the LORD and before Israel; and this land shall be your possession before the LORD. ²³ But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out.

So Moses promised these tribes that if they came over the Jordan River and fought with all the other tribes of Israel then they could return and have their choice of this land which was on the other side of the Jordan.

In Joshua Chapter 4; v. 12 we are told that these tribes did cross over the Jordan and fought with the rest of Israel to possess the land of Canaan.

Although most of the land was conquered, there was still more land yet to be possessed.

(Read Chapter 13: v. 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.

By this time Joshua was an old man, he was between 90-100 years old. Perhaps he wanted to make sure that the promise made to Moses was honored and therefore allowed these tribes to go back over the Jordan and take their inheritance.

Although the land over the Jordan was good for grazing cattle, it did create serious problems for their future security. They became very vulnerable because they were in between the heathen nations like Moab and Ammon and then before the land of Canaan where all the other tribes were living was a big river, the river Jordan.

If they were ever attacked, they would be on their own. Also there would be the temptation for their children to mix with the foreign nations and forget about the God who provided them this land. The other temptation was to believe in the foreign gods and the idols of the other nations that were close by them.

This is exactly what happened to these people.

Let us look up and read 1 Chronicles chapter 5: v. 23-26.

²³ So the children of the half-tribe of Manasseh dwelt in the land. Their *numbers* increased from Bashan to Baal Hermon, that is, to Senir, or Mount Hermon. ²⁴ These *were* the heads of their fathers' houses: Ephraim, Ishi, Eliel, Azriel, Jeremiah, Hodaviah, and Jahdiel. They were mighty men of valor, famous men, *and* heads of their fathers' houses. ²⁵ And they were unfaithful to the God of their fathers, and played the harlot after the gods of the peoples of the land, whom God had destroyed before them. ²⁶ So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, that is, Tiglath-Pileser^[a] king of Assyria. He carried the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh into captivity. He took them to Halah, Habor, Hara, and the river of Gozan to this day.

The first transferable principle from chapter 13 is a warning.

1. Your inheritance in Jesus Christ as a believer is priceless, never choose to compromise your faith either to gain acceptance with unbelievers or to provide material gain for yourself and your family.

The tribes in chapter 13 got the best land for cattle and grazing, but it was the worst choice for their spiritual life.

There are two very challenging verses in the New Testament that we would do well to meditate upon concerning this subject.

The first is James Chapter 4 : v. 4

⁴ Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

This verse makes it clear that as Christians we must not flirt with the world or get involved in any practices that compromise our faith in Jesus Christ.

This would involve going to the shrine or Temple on New Year's Day to pray.

You are welcome to go in a group and give out Christian tracts or Gospels of John, but not to get involved in their practices.

In a land like Japan, we must examine fully the things that we do to make sure that we stand out as different, even though it may cost promotion in our job, or be out of favor with our work colleagues.

The next verse is in 1 John chapter 2: v. 15-17.

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

God wants us to love Him with all of our heart. If we love other things, no matter how important they are to us, then the devil will use these things to draw us away from our love of God.

The devil will do it little by little so that we don't even notice that it is happening.

It is a good thing at the start of a New Year to have a "Spiritual Check Up" in your life.

Be determined to put God first in your life and He will take care of all the things that you need.

That is the meaning of Matthew Chapter 6: v. 33

³³ **But** seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

We move on to the next inherited land. Turn to Chapter 14 and let us read Chapter 14: v. 1-15.

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. 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. 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. 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." 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.

Caleb was 85 years old when he inherited the land which was promised to him by Moses. We would consider him to be an old man by any standards. However what I want us to notice here is verses 11-13. (read these verses again)

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." ¹³ And Joshua blessed him, and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as an inheritance.

Although Caleb was an old man, he didn't consider it to be an obstacle in serving God and taking possession of the land allocated to him. He may not have fought physically in the battle, but he would manage the battle and encourage the troops to fight well and depend upon God and not their own strength.

We now come to the second transferrable principle here.

2. We are never too old to make new conquests of faith in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Caleb was 85 years old and he was about to defeat the Anakim tribe. These were the people that they called the giants.

There are many Christians who when they get to the age of 60 think that they no longer useful in ministry for God. They get tired and worn out and feel that it is time to take it easy and let other people do all the work in the Church and all the missionary work in the world.

It is not a Biblical principle ever to give up serving God in some capacity. You may be involved in a different type of ministry. However you can still make new conquests of faith in the power of the Holy Spirit.

There are many examples both in the Bible and in the history of the Church of God using older people to accomplish his purposes.

Moses was 80 years old when God called him to rescue nearly 3 million Jews from slavery in Egypt.

In Acts 7: v. 23 – 30 we are told that Moses spent 40 years in Egypt under the household of the King, then 40 years as a Shepherd until God called him into active service for the biggest ministry of his life.

God called Abraham when he was about 70 years old to go out in “Faith” to a land that God would show him later. Abraham responded in “Faith” at the age of 70 years old.

Abraham lived until he was 175.(Genesis 25: v. 7) I am not expecting you to have a 100 year ministry if God calls you to serve Him at the age of 70, but you could have a 10 year ministry? That would be perfectly conceivable.

I got quite a shock when God called me to return to Japan at the age of 60 years old.

I am delighted that I obeyed His call and came, maybe I could even be here for 10 years, God only knows.

Having said all these positive things about God using people in their old age to serve His purposes, I would like to point out some important things about old age ministry.

1. Older people need to pace themselves. Their minds might be active but their bodies are older and they need to pace themselves. Don't try and do too much.
2. Older people sometimes are resistant to change and try new things. They need to be open to doing things in a different way without compromising God's word.
3. Older people need to encourage young people and set an example. Old people need to spend time with young people and understand their concerns and problems.

Older people have lived longer and might well have experienced things in the past that will encourage young people to trust God for greater things.

4. Older people usually have more time to pray. Don't let the devil distract you on to lesser things. Prayer is still the greatest work for God. It is jolly hard work but very worthwhile. It may seem the least rewarded now, but when you get to heaven you may be surprised at the answers to your prayers.

May I encourage all the people at OIC over the age of 50 years to trust God for a new ministry in 2016? It may be to revive your old ministry and do it in a different way, or it may be to seek God for a new ministry. Whatever it may be, don't let the devil/ satan tell you are too old to serve God.

The way to get into ministry in old age is to completely surrender your life to God and ask Him what He would like you to do. This is very important. Don't get involved in a ministry that does not have God's approval and a ministry that you are not equipped and gifted for.

We now move on to the third transferrable principle from the inheritance of the land of Canaan.

God's chosen people received the land of Canaan as an inheritance. One of the purposes was that as a nation that they would be witnesses to the surrounding nations.

As believers in Jesus Christ we have already received our inheritance.

It is not a land, but it is a "Spiritual Life"

Let us turn to 1 Peter Chapter 1: v. 3-7.

³ 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, ⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

An inheritance is something that you receive when somebody dies. It can be a house or money or valuable possessions. Eventually we spend all the money and the house gets old and wears out. However our spiritual inheritance is different.

Yes somebody had to die in order that we might receive our inheritance.

Jesus didn't actually make a written will, but He did share His last will and desire in John 17: v. 20-24 (Read it)

²⁰ "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; ²¹ that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. ²² And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: ²³ I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. ²⁴ "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

In Romans 8: v. 17 we are told that we are joint heirs with Jesus Christ. We share His inheritance.

In the passage from 1 Peter we are told several things about the inheritance that we have received from Jesus Christ.

1. It is an inheritance that is incorruptible – 1 Peter 1: v. 4.

This means that nothing can destroy it. It is reserved in heaven for us.

You can lose everything in this world, but you can't lose your inheritance from Jesus Christ.

2. It is undefiled – v. 4.

This means that it cannot be stained or cheapened in any way. It is perfect in every way. It will be the very best present that you could ever receive.

3. It does not fade away – v. 4

This means it will never grow old, because it is eternal, it can't wear out and it will never disappoint us. We will never understand eternity because everything in this world depends upon time. The nearest that you will get to eternity is African time.

I first discovered "African Time" when I was a Pastor in London. We had lots of African people who attended our Church.

If you told them that the service started at 11 a.m., they would arrive about 11:30 or later. They were used to turning up when it suited them. While I was preaching I would look up and discover more and more people.

I could have repeated the sermon at the end and nobody would have minded because they missed most of it.

Eternity will be like that, we won't be rushing here and there we will chill out most of the time, enjoying our inheritance with Jesus.

If you are a Christian today, be encouraged that God has reserved an inheritance in heaven for you.

However if you are not a Christian yet, please consider the fact that God still loves you. He desires to take your burden upon Himself.

Your burden is going your own way in way and all the things that this has brought to you so far.

The Bible says that we are separated from our creator /owner Holy God because our first parents Adam and Eve disobeyed Him and brought sin into the human race.

Jesus came into this world for the one purpose of proving a way back to God and to live a life of eternity in heaven with Him.

Please consider getting to know Jesus in 2016 if you don't already know Him.

If you know Jesus, get to know Him more by spending time in His word and involving Him more in your life.

Let us pray.