

Joshua 13 - Thursday, May 31st, 2012

- Chapters 13-21 is seen as the second half of the book of Joshua, and reads like a real-estate document, as it lays out the boundaries of the land.
- By the way, you will be happy to know that there is a narrative that's inserted throughout the technical data that we're going to read and study.

Joshua 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.

- The Old King James renders this as Joshua was old and "stricken" in years, meaning that the years had beat him up pretty good and it shows.
- As if this weren't bad enough, we're told that the Lord even told him so; "You are old, stricken in years, and you really look like your old as well."
- I don't mean to harp on this but there's a reason we need to emphasize this, as we'll see here in a moment, with what the Lord then tells him next.

- Namely, that Joshua's work is not yet done, and even though he is old and stricken in years, there remains very much land yet to be possessed.
- While there's nothing wrong with this, there is a problem with this, in that his remaining years will be devoted to the possessing of this much land.
- Before we move on to verse two, I have a couple of thoughts that I would like to share with you in regards to what the Lord tells Joshua here.

- First, regardless of our age, especially for those getting up there in age as they are more stricken in years, it's never too late to get busy for God.
- In other words, it doesn't really matter how old you are, God may choose to use you for a great work such as the one that was set before Joshua.
- Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, hard work is biblical, and if the truth be known, we work in heaven, as work was blessed before the fall.

- There's one more thing that we should take a look at, and it has to do with a potential contradiction, or Biblical difficulty, as some prefer to call it.
- In Joshua 11:23 we're told that Joshua took the whole land, and that the land rested from war, whereas here we're told very much land remained.
- The question is, which one is it? The answer is; "yes." I'm not trying to be cute rather, there's an explanation for both thus there's no contradiction.

- Let me explain, Joshua had secured the general conquest of the whole land in chapter 11, however, the individual tribes will have to complete it.
- This because Joshua is old and stricken in years, and he must have them do, in lieu of him, the mop up operation as one commentator phrases it.
- There's actually a lesson in this in how it speaks to individual responsibility when it comes to possessing all the promises of God in His Holy Word.

(2) This is the land that yet remains: all the territory of the Philistines and all *that of* the Geshurites, (3) 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; (4) 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; (5) the land of the Gebalites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrise, from Baal Gad below Mount Hermon as far as the entrance to Hamath; (6) 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. (7) Now therefore, divide this land as an inheritance to the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh." (8) 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: (9) 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; (10) all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, as far as the border of the children of Ammon; (11) Gilead, and the border of the Geshurites and Maachathites, all Mount Hermon, and all Bashan as far as Salcah; (12) 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. (13) 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.

- Here we have the mention of the two and half tribes who stayed beyond the Jordan eastward, leaving the remaining nine and a half tribes.
- Though we did study this prior, I believe it warrants at least a cursory look at this juncture, by virtue of the ramifications of their decision to stay.
- In effect, these two and a half tribes opted for God's permissive will at the expense of God's perfect will, and in so doing suffered needlessly for it.

- Sadly, it would be these two and a half tribes that, in their vulnerability, would be the first ones taken captive when attacked by Israel's enemies.
- Perhaps you already know where I'm going with all of this, so suffice it to say, the take away is that God's permissive will isn't just second best.
- God's permissive will can be first worst. By that I mean forfeiting God's perfect will settling for God's permissive will can be the worst thing for us.

(14) 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.

- Again, in prior studies, we learned how that the tribe of Levi would become the priestly tribe because of what they did with Moses at Mt. Sinai.
- Originally, the priestly tribe was to consist of the first born from each of the twelve tribes, but Levi in meting out judgment is given the priesthood.
- This of course meant that they would be given no inheritance as it relates to land, but they were to inherit cities within the land of all twelve tribes.

- This is another place where we can seemingly have a contradiction as far as the total of twelve tribes, absent the tribe of Levi making it eleven.
- At the risk of an oversimplification, there are no "lost tribes," just saying, and true to form, God's Word is always accurate and it's always perfect.
- Here's how we get there, Jacob, aka, Israel has 12 sons/tribes, of which one is Joseph who adds two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim totaling 13.

- For those of you who enjoy math and think that there will be math in heaven here is a simple mathematic equation that is so easy even I can do it.
- Thirteen tribes with Manasseh and Ephraim minus one tribe of Levi, or $13-1=12$. This is like those story problems in school that had to be solved.
- You know the ones I'm talking about, John and Sue paddle at 5 miles per hour for 23 miles, what is the average temperature of the water in Brazil.

(15) And Moses had given to the tribe of the children of Reuben *an inheritance* according to their families.

- There's something here I don't want to rush past, and it has to do with each tribes inheritance being predicated on, and according to their families.
- Replete throughout the pages of Holy Writ we have example after example of how that God not only created the family God venerates the family.
- So much so, that the family institution is a microcosm of the Family of God in that He is our heavenly Father, and we are called children of God.

- The topic of the family is a study that I've always wanted to do an in-depth teaching on because of the importance of the family across the board.
- By that I mean, the absolute necessity of the ohana, not just in terms of our own ohana, but as it also affects us with our church ohana as well.

(16) 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; (17) Heshbon and all its cities that *are* in the plain: Dibon, Bamoth Baal, Beth Baal Meon, (18) Jahaza, Kedemoth, Mephaath, (19) Kirjathaim, Sibmah, Zereth Shahaar on the mountain of the valley, (20) Beth Peor, the slopes of Pishgah, and Beth Jeshimoth— (21) 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. (22) The children of Israel also killed with the sword Balaam the son of Beor, the soothsayer, among those who were killed by them. (23) 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. (24) Moses also had given *an inheritance* to the tribe of Gad, to the children of Gad according to their families. (25) 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, (26) and from Heshbon to Ramath Mizpah and Betonim, and from Mahanaim to the border of Debir, (27) 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. (28) This *is* the inheritance of the children of Gad according to their families, the cities and their villages. (29) 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: (30) 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; (31) 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. (32) 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. (33) 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.

- For those of you who are more visual in your learning styles, I've included this map to sort of help with the geography of the twelve tribes land.
- The first thing you'll notice is the sheer size of the Promised Land and it's borders. Needless to say, this does not reflect the pre 1967 borders.
- Actually God gave Israel 300,000 square miles of land, but the most Israel ever possessed was about 30,000 square miles during King Solomon.

- By the way, the size of Israel today is just a little shy of a measly 8,000 square miles. Now pray tell, who is occupying whose land? It's Israel's!
- I'm of the belief that we're more like Israel than we know in that we too fail in our taking possession of all 300,000 square miles of God's promises.
- Interestingly, it's estimated that there are some 3,000 promises in the Bible, which begs the question, are we too only possessing a tenth of them?

