



Kingdom of Priests

Date: July 21, 2024

Text: Joshua 13:1-7

BIG IDEA

In the Garden of Eden, God lived and walked among humanity. Though this close relationship was fractured by sin, the Father still desires an intimate relationship with his children. Thus, the arc of the entire Bible reveals how God leads His people back into His presence. The conquest of the Promised Land was one major step in that direction and a precursor to the full restoration that would take place in the future. Through the Promised Land, God was giving His people a place to abide in His presence and walk in His ways.

When God tells Joshua to divide the land in Joshua 13, it is land that the people of Israel haven't yet won; they haven't yet fought the battles and defeated their enemies. But in commanding Joshua to divide the land among the tribes, it's as if God is saying, "Your name is already on the deed to this land." Nonetheless, God's people must still rise up, be strong and courageous, and take the land.

Conversation Starter

- How might He be calling you to conquer territory the enemy has claimed in your life so you can walk more fully in His presence and claim His promises?
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COMMENTARY #1

(13:1–7) Chapter 13 begins the second major segment of Joshua. Whereas the first 12 chapters dealt with Israel’s journey to the Promised Land and the battles they faced, the second half of the book is dominated by the distribution of the Promised Land among the tribes. In short, chapters 1–12 describe the initial taking of the land, and chapters 13–21 describe the division of it. At this point, Israel does not yet fully possess the land. God reminds Joshua that much land remains to be conquered. Yet, He still commands Joshua to allocate the land. Joshua can confidently grant each tribe of Israel their inheritance because God Himself will drive the occupants out.

Discussion Questions

1. Are there any plans, prayers, or promises of God upon which you are waiting?
 2. How can we tell the difference between a promise of God and our own personal desires?
 3. How is it possible to faithfully move toward the fulfillment of God’s promise(s) even when we can’t see any resolution in the near future?
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COMMENTARY #2

(13:1) Joshua has grown old and will soon pass on his leadership. In order to take possession of the land, all the people must rise up. Just as God had exhorted Joshua (1:7–8), the people must now be strong and courageous. Rather than depending upon a powerful leader, such as Moses or Joshua, each tribe and each individual would need to trust God in order to step into their inheritance.

Discussion Questions

1. Trust isn't simply an internal disposition, but a form of belief that results in action. How can we, in practical ways, trust God in the face of uncertainty?
 2. The inhabitants of Canaan were daunting and powerful enemies, much like the obstacles we face in our own lives. What is courage and how can we cultivate more of it in order to overcome our obstacles?
 3. How is trust in God related to courage?
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COMMENTARY #3

(13:2–3) For the first time in Joshua, the Philistines are mentioned. This mixed group of Canaanite settlers had been in the land since the time of Abraham (Gen 21:32; 26:1) and would remain in the land long after the time of Joshua. The Philistines plagued God's people throughout the period of the conquest, during the lives of the judges, and into the reign of David. Only

during the reigns of David and Solomon were the Philistines subdued, yet still not fully conquered.

Discussion Questions

1. If God had said that he would drive the enemies of Israel out of the land, why were the Philistines able to remain?
 2. How does our own sin prevent us from walking fully in the promises of God? (You can respond in a general sense or with specific examples from your own life.)
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GOING DEEPER

The people of Israel were not only called to be strong and courageous. They were called to be a kingdom of priests and a people holy to God (Exod 19:5–6; Lev 19:2). As they walked in obedience to the Lord, they would receive the gift of the Promised Land and enter the rest of God (Josh 21:43–45). From their place of security, they would become a light to the nations, drawing all peoples to the Lord (Deut 4:6; Isa 49:6). Yet, the Israelites were unable to fulfill their divine commission and fully enter the rest of God due to sin and disobedience.

The commission to enter God's rest and be a light to the nations is renewed in each of us (Heb 4). Through Christ, we are empowered to walk in courage and obedience. We can succeed where Israel failed because of Christ's work at Calvary and because of God's Spirit dwelling within us. As we boldly conquer sin in our own lives and take courageous steps of

faith, we take ground from the enemy and spread God's kingdom throughout the earth.

What is one practical step you can take this week to conquer territory the enemy has claimed in your life, or one action you can take to be a light to the world? Remember that small, realistic steps are more effective than grand gestures!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The most effective way to take territory from the enemy is to transform our own heart and deepen our walk with Christ. "Practicing the Way" is a ministry that offers a multitude of free resources for spiritual formation and growth. Explore literature, videos, and courses at <https://www.practicingtheway.org/>.

Group Activity

Read Hebrews 4:8–13 then watch this 2-minute video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VcHZDW5qEug>

Discuss:

- What is Biblical rest?
- How is Biblical rest different from worldly rest?
- How does the concept of Biblical rest complement the idea of taking ground from the enemy?
- How can you incorporate a greater degree of God's rest into your life?