

Joshua Chapter 13 Commentary

1 ¶ Now Joshua was old and stricken in years; and the LORD said unto him, Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed. 2 This is the land that yet remaineth: all the borders of the Philistines, and all Geshuri, 3 From Sihor, which is before Egypt, even unto the borders of Ekron northward, which is counted to the Canaanite: five lords of the Philistines; the Gazathites, and the Ashdothites, the Eshkalonites, the Gittites, and the Eronites; also the Avites: 4 From the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that is beside the Sidonians, unto Aphek, to the borders of the Amorites: 5 And the land of the Giblites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrising, from Baalgad under mount Hermon unto the entering into Hamath. 6 All the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon unto Misrephothmaim, and all the Sidonians, them will I drive out from before the children of Israel: only divide thou it by lot unto the Israelites for an inheritance, as I have commanded thee.

*Matthew Henry points out in his commentary that sometimes people need to be reminded of their age, and he cites a scripture reference as a reason: **Ho 7:9 "Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not."** Sometimes, we forget that we are not as young as we used to be, and cannot do the things we once did.*

We remember, in our earlier studies of scripture; God appointed people of certain ages to do certain things, for instance: **Nu 4:3 "From thirty years old and upward even until fifty years old, all that enter into the host, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation."** These were the Kohathites who were to carry the tabernacle. There were also ages given for the priest to serve and other distinct functions to be performed by certain people. Also, younger people were to be taken into apprenticeship to learn how to perform the necessary duties of a particular office.

This is a reminder to us; we should be observant of those who serve in offices in the church, we should train younger ones for their duties, and we should not overuse the older ones to the point the duties of their office weary them.

God gives us the description of the land left to be conquered. However, in keeping with what God had instructed Moses and Joshua, God tells Joshua, you are old now, and it is your responsibility to divide the land of promise, to the nine and one-half tribes that are left to receive their inheritance. You are to do this in accordance with what I directed Moses to tell you, seen in: **Nu 34:16-18; 16 "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 17 ¶ These are the names of the men which shall divide the land unto you: Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun. 18 And ye shall take one prince of every tribe, to divide the land by inheritance."** If you continue to read this reference, you will find the list; of names of the princes, who are to be involved in the distribution of the property.

7 ¶ Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance unto the nine tribes, and the half tribe of Manasseh, 8 With whom the Reubenites and the Gadites have received their inheritance, which Moses gave them, beyond Jordan eastward, even as Moses the servant of the LORD gave them; 9 From Aroer, that is upon the bank of the river Arnon, and the city that is in the midst of the river, and all the plain of Medeba unto Dibon; 10 And all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, which reigned in Heshbon, unto the border of the children of Ammon; 11 And Gilead, and the border of the Geshurites and Maachathites, and all mount Hermon, and all Bashan unto Salcah; 12 All the kingdom

of Og in Bashan, which reigned in Ashtaroth and in Edrei, who remained of the remnant of the giants: for these did Moses smite, and cast them out.

God reminds Joshua of the inheritance given to the two and one-half tribes on the east side of Jordan. He reminds Joshua that Moses and Israel, under the direction of God took this land, and that Moses gave it to the ones describe at their request. He reminds Joshua, that by the command of God, Joshua is to preside over the distribution of the property each tribe is to inherit in the land of promise. It does not matter that it is not all conquered yet, Israel still has the promise of the possession.

Joshua is a prophetic picture of Jesus and his work. This is a reminder to us; we have an inheritance given us by Jesus Christ, which is the church, but we still have many foes to conquer. There are yet many battles to be fought, but remember always, we have the promise of God that the eternal inheritance shall be ours.

13 Nevertheless the children of Israel expelled not the Geshurites, nor the Maachathites: but the Geshurites and the Maachathites dwell among the Israelites until this day.

We remember what God told Israel in: *Nu 33:55 "But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell."* Surely, the word of God will come to pass, and these people, who are left alive, will become thorns in the side of Israel.

There is a very good life lesson for us in this. When we are born again; our dead souls are regenerated and inhabited by the Holy Spirit. However, our old inherit flesh nature remains with us until death. This old flesh nature is a thorn in our sides until we die. Christ has overcome all our enemies, but since we are indwelt in nature with the sin nature, we must be confronted daily with our selves being tempted by this old nature. Doesn't this make you long for the time when we shall have a new, glorified, body with no sin nature in it?

14 Only unto the tribe of Levi he gave none inheritance; the sacrifices of the LORD God of Israel made by fire are their inheritance, as he said unto them.

God reminds Joshua; Levi shall not have a certain boundaried portion of the land as the other tribes of Israel. They shall be dispersed throughout the properties according to my word, and the prophesy of the blessing of Jacob, seen in: *Ge 49:5-7; 5 ¶ "Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. 6 O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. 7 Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel."* We shall see this manifested as we go forward and see the cities and properties given to both Levi and Simeon.

15 And Moses gave unto the tribe of the children of Reuben inheritance according to their families.

16 And their coast was from Aroer, that is on the bank of the river Arnon, and the city that is in the midst of the river, and all the plain by Medeba; 17 Heshbon, and all her cities that are in the plain; Dibon, and Bamothbaal, and Bethbaalmeon, 18 And Jahazah, and Kedemoth, and Mephaath, 19 And

Kirjathaim, and Sibmah, and Zarethshahar in the mount of the valley, 20 And Bethpeor, and Ashdothpisgah, and Bethjeshimoth, 21 And all the cities of the plain, and all the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, which reigned in Heshbon, whom Moses smote with the princes of Midian, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, which were dukes of Sihon, dwelling in the country. 22 Balaam also the son of Beor, the soothsayer, did the children of Israel slay with the sword among them that were slain by them. 23 And the border of the children of Reuben was Jordan, and the border thereof. This was the inheritance of the children of Reuben after their families, the cities and the villages thereof.

We have the description, of the property boundaries of the tribe of Reuben on the east side of Jordan, described again.

24 And Moses gave inheritance unto the tribe of Gad, even unto the children of Gad according to their families. 25 And their coast was Jazer, and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the children of Ammon, unto Aroer that is before Rabbah; 26 And from Heshbon unto Ramathmizpeh, and Betonim; and from Mahanaim unto the border of Debir; 27 And in the valley, Betharam, and Bethnimrah, and Succoth, and Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon, Jordan and his border, even unto the edge of the sea of Chinnereth on the other side Jordan eastward. 28 This is the inheritance of the children of Gad after their families, the cities, and their villages.

We have the description, of the property boundaries of the tribe of Gad on the east side of Jordan, described again.

29 And Moses gave inheritance unto the half tribe of Manasseh: and this was the possession of the half tribe of the children of Manasseh by their families. 30 And their coast was from Mahanaim, all Bashan, all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and all the towns of Jair, which are in Bashan, threescore cities: 31 And half Gilead, and Ashtaroth, and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan, were pertaining unto the children of Machir the son of Manasseh, even to the one half of the children of Machir by their families. 32 These are the countries which Moses did distribute for inheritance in the plains of Moab, on the other side Jordan, by Jericho, eastward.

We have the description, of the property boundaries of the half-tribe of Manasseh on the east side of Jordan, described again.

33 But unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not any inheritance: the LORD God of Israel was their inheritance, as he said unto them.

Why would God give us the details of the boundaries of the properties of each tribe again? First, they are dividing the property and each tribe will know exactly where their borders are.

Life Lessons:

It is a reminder to us today; Christ has set boundaries for us to observe. When we take possession of our inheritance in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ; we can no longer live by the whims of the flesh. Now, we must abide by "**thus saith the Lord**" or we will run into some thorns in our sides. Therefore, we need to study the bible. The bible teaches us what, and where, the boundaries are, and how to stay within them.

This is a good reminder; we, God's chosen people and priesthood on earth, like the Levitical priesthood, do not have an eternal inheritance here in the world. This world is not our eternal home. Our eternal possession is our eternal abode with Christ, in the place he has gone to prepare for us.

It is also a reminder; we do have an inheritance on earth, which is the church. God, and Christ, set the boundaries of the church and separated it from the world. The church is to live by "***thus saith the Lord.***" Under no circumstances is the church to try to be like the world and partake in sinfulness or idolatry. Church is not a business. The church is to exercise in worship and praise to God, in demonstrating love and fellowship among God's people. After all, love of God is the moving cause.

The church consists of all of those, for whom Christ died upon the cross to save from their sins. The church, like the tribe of Levi, is scattered throughout the world. The church exists in the places which God has chosen to establish for his people to inhabit. Praise the Lord for these Bethel spots on earth, and the promise of an eternal home with Christ our Saviour and Lord!