

Joshua 14:6 – 19:51

Distribution of the Land

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Remembering the structure of the Book of Joshua CROSS TAKE DIVIDE SERVE

Reading the list of names The portion of the Book of Joshua we are looking at today contains long lists of names (names of the lands and names of the cities). How do we approach this portion of the Scripture?

- First, we do not skip it. *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work* – 1 Timothy 3:16-17.
- Second, this part of the Book of Joshua may not be as "exciting" as Genesis 1-3, for example, but it is still God's Word, revealed to us so that we may know Him better and become more like His beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ
- Most of our lives are marked by quotidian tedium: wake up; bathroom, meal, breakfast, work, house chores, dinner, sleep.
- Yet, by God's grace we can see our Father's providential care in every day "boring events": our daily bread (Matt. 6:11); the reality that we have a roof over our head (Matt. 8:20)
- We should approach the chapters in the Book of Joshua describing the distribution of the land the same way as we approach, for example, reading the long lists of genealogies that we find in the Old and the New Testaments – we look for repetitions, the literary structure, significance of mentioning or omitting something or someone (Genesis 5)

Caleb's inheritance Caleb's faith and faithfulness is rewarded:

1. Read Joshua 14:6-15
 - Caleb together with the tribe of Judah comes before Joshua and publically asks for his promised inheritance (from the Judah's portion)
 - Caleb is not an Israelite; he is the Kenizzite who is promised God's blessing following the public demonstration of his faith (similar to Rahab)
 - Caleb reminds Joshua that his claim to the portion of the land is based on God's promise spoken through Moses (verse 9)
 - the phrase *I wholly followed the LORD my God* occurs 3 times in this fragment
 - Caleb reminds Joshua that only he and Joshua delivered a minority report regarding the Promised Land; the other spies made the hearts of the people melt – a beautiful contrast between trust in the LORD God and the unfaithfulness of all the Israel
 - God's preservation of Caleb's life is yet another testimony God's care and faithfulness (long time to see the fulfillment of the promise)
 - Caleb displays his unwavering trust in God by asking for piece of the hill country occupied by anakim (verse 12)
 - Joshua blesses Caleb and grants him the request
2. Caleb's (and Joshua's) example of faith amidst opposition and alienation – we are called to follow the LORD God regardless of how it will affect our friends and neighbours
3. The story of Caleb is finalized in chapter 15:13-19. He did drive out the Anak, and used the incentive (his daughter) to motivate one of his fellow man to capture Kiriath-sepher

The "real" real estate as inheritance The chapters 15-19 provide a detailed description of the allotted portions of the land to the tribes of Israel:

1. As we read through the descriptions of each allotment we notice the constant repetition of the word "boundaries"
2. Together with the list of the cities the descriptions of the allotments are soundly geographical; they testify to a solid, tactile character of

God's inheritance for the people of Israel – the inheritance is real, not spiritual, not ephemeral, *not an idea but boundaries, not thoughts but towns; in a word, REAL estate* (Dale Ralph Davies)

3. It foreshadows the inheritance that is ours in Christ Jesus ... *according to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you* (1 Peter 1:3-4).
4. There is another phrase that occurs repeatedly in this fragment: ... *yet they did not drive out the Caananites ...* (15:63; 16:10; 17:12-13) – this points to an upcoming trouble
5. We remember that Israel's inability to drive out the Caananites (or conquer the portion of the land) is due to lack of faith and obedience to God's commandment
6. The complaint of the people of Joseph:
 - They voiced dissatisfaction with God's inheritance allotment (17:14)
 - It is not enough for us, we are a numerous people
 - Joshua challenges them to subdue and conquer the apportioned land
 - Negative contrast against the example of Caleb
7. The example of the bold faith of the Zelophehad's daughters (17:3-4) – like Caleb, they asked for an inheritance based on the promise of God that was commanded to Moses – we should not be timid, but grounded in the Word of God ask boldly for the gifts from our Heavenly Father
8. Chapter 18 opens up with the gathering of the whole congregation of the people of Israel before the LORD God (verse 1)
9. The remaining seven allotments are allocated by the lots (the sovereign, providential guiding by God) – three times the phrase ... *casting lots before the LORD our God* is found in this fragment (18:6, 8, 10)
10. Each of the tribes is treated equally – preservation of the unity of the people of God
11. We read about the hesitance, the laxity of the people of Israel: *The land lay subdued before them. ... How long will you put off going in to*

take possession of the land which the LORD, the God of your fathers has given to you?

12. God has given them the land, now they have to possess it (indicative – imperative) – the LORD God has provided for the people of Israel to follow His command to possess the land (*Give what you command, and command what you will* – Augustine *Confessions*)
13. The record of the distribution of the land ends with Joshua's inheritance – again, the city given to Joshua was given to him following the commandment of the LORD God (19: 49-51)