

# CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE- PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian  
Church, 10 Downing St. Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

## DHW BIBLE CLASS

### LESSON 12

#### JOSHUA

#### CHAPTER 13-14

**Joshua 14:11** – “As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in.”

### INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapters have recorded the successful conquest of Canaan, the land promised by God to the children of Israel (11:23) — So *Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war.* The conquest of the Promised Land was conditional on Israel’s obedience. God had earlier declared to them through Moses (Deuteronomy 11:22-25): *For if ye shall **diligently keep all these commandments** which I command*

*you, to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him; **Then will the LORD drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves.** Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be. There shall no man be able to stand before you: for the LORD your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as he hath said unto you.*

Hence, Joshua, who led the twelve tribes, had acted on the revelation, which God had given to them through Moses. Within this chapter, a major division in the book of Joshua is marked. A significant number of Canaanite nations had been conquered except for some minor ones. This would be carried out when the land would be divided by lots to the various tribes and families. In claiming their land, they would have to obey the same injunction of God to destroy all the inhabitants of Canaan.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Numbers 33:52-53 Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places: And ye shall dispossess *the inhabitants* of the land, and dwell therein: for I have given you the land to possess it.

The Israelites could declare that the land belonged to them because God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, had appeared to Abraham, the forefather of their nation, to give him and his descendants the land.<sup>2</sup> And so the book of Joshua continues from the Pentateuch (the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy written by Moses).

Chapter 13 can be divided into two sections: Joshua 13:1-7 introduces the rest of the book to chapter 21; and Joshua 13:8-33 details the territories that were given to the two-and-a-half tribes on the eastern part of Jordan River (known as the Transjordan tribes). Moses had already allotted them the land. Chapter 14 portrays Caleb as an example of how the tribes of Israel ought to extend and claim their individual family land. The major campaigns were over, but mopping up operations of the land needed to be completed before the Land of Canaan was rid of ALL the Canaanites. It may seem uninteresting and dull regarding

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Joshua 9:24 And they answered Joshua, and said, Because it was certainly told thy servants, how that the LORD thy God commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you, therefore we were sore afraid of our lives because of you, and have done this thing.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 12:7 And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.

the allotment of the land in all its details. But in biblical text, everything is written for our learning, and it should be studied to know about God and ourselves, and to identify the underlying truths and principles involved.

## COMMENTARY

### Dividing the Land – 13:1-7

The chapter begins with the inevitable fact about the life of every individual human being—“Now Joshua was old and stricken in years” (13:1a). He did not have many more years to live. The task in taking possession of the land was yet to be completed. At the outset of the campaign, it was Joshua’s responsibility to divide the land once it had been conquered—“*be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land which I swore unto their fathers to give them*” (1:6). The LORD, therefore, reminded Joshua that he had become old and there remained “yet very much land to be possessed” (13:1b). The LORD was set to fulfil His promise to the children of Israel. Joshua was old and he could not lead the children of Israel to take possession of the rest of the land. The LORD even identified the parts of the land which were yet to be taken—“them will I drive out from before the children of Israel: only

divide the land by lot unto the Israelites for an inheritance, as I have commanded” (13:6). Joshua could not lead the children of Israel because of his old age. However, he could organize the division of the land by lot to every family of the remaining nine-and-a-half tribes. The LORD gave His word that He would drive out the inhabitants of the land before them. Insofar as God was concerned, the land was theirs to possess.

Joshua might be old in age, but this did not incapacitate the LORD from fulfilling His promise. What was required of the Israelites was that when they had been allotted their land, they ought to do what the LORD had commanded them to do; obey His word and possess the land. We learn one precious truth: we, who are the chosen children of God and who are born, grow old, and get stricken and die, but God remains unchanged. He is the same yesterday, and today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). What God promised and did for Israel, He would do the same for us today!

### **The Allotment of the Land (Trans-Jordan) – 13:8-33**

It was appropriate for the writer to mention about the land inheritance of the two-and-a-half tribes, namely, Reuben, Gad and Manasseh, on the east of Jordan River at this juncture. The conquest of the Promised Land had been completed, and this mention

of the tribes on the other side of Jordan was to show that they all belonged to ONE nation, the nation of Israel. But an unexpected note appeared here that even the Transjordanian children of Israel did not completely expel the Geshurites and Maachathites (13:11). These inhabitants of the land co-existed with the Israelites. This failure on their part would in later years bring much trouble to them. They conquered the country but they failed to persevere over time to fully possess and occupy the whole territory allotted to them. They failed to expel the remaining inhabitants of the land because they wanted peace at any cost. Seven years of fighting and defeating the enemies had tired them and caused them to desire peace at any cost. That was their grave mistake for not implicitly obeying God. Moreover they wanted not only wealth but also ease of life by making the Canaanites slaves. They became practical materialists. In this way, they had violated their part of God’s covenant with them, and the blessing stopped.

The tribe of Levi was not given land inheritance. The LORD God was their inheritance, and all offerings and tithes given to the LORD were their inheritance. The Levites would say: “YAHWEH (the LORD) is our inheritance, our portion (v.33). However, the various tribes would be required to lease a portion of their land

to build cities for the Levites to dwell in (14:4). These cities would be known as Levitical cities. Out of these Levitical cities six of them will be used as Cities of Refuge to house those who have committed accidental killing. Again the mentioning of the Levites at this juncture also indicated the solidarity of the nation as one, although the twelve tribes were divided by the Jordan River.

Balaam, the son of Boer, was a soothsayer, who was hired by Balak the king of Moab to curse Israel. But God turned the curse into a blessing (Numbers 22-24). Balaam was eventually slain by the Israelites when they took vengeance on the Midianites.<sup>3</sup> The mention of this soothsayer at this point was to encourage the Israelites that the LORD their God would protect and bless them but they must keep trusting and obeying Him. The Balaam incident was the incident that occurred to Israel as a whole nation BEFORE the separation of the two and one half tribes.

Yet another significant feature is the repetitive allusions to Israel's victories — "And all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites...for these did

Moses smite, and cast out" (v.10-12); "and the cities of the plain ... whom Moses smote with the princes of Midian" (v.21); "and Balaam ... did the children of Israel slay" (v.22); and the references to all the cities conquered (vv.27-32). This was intended to strengthen their faith in the face of any future enemies by remembering how the LORD had kept His covenant with them, loved and protected them. This is the way God prescribes for the strengthening of our faith. The steadfastness and expectancy of our faith comes by rehearsing and revealing the LORD'S past acts of faith.

Joshua deliberately rehearsed the Land that was given to the two and one half tribes FIRST and they were given according to their requests and it was affirmed by Moses. Perhaps this was to avoid any unhappy feelings of changing of minds on the part of the two and one half tribes now that they have seen the rest of the Promised Land, which they did help to conquer. The high mountains and lush valleys and beautiful sea view with the many port cities could be tempting to anyone. The establishing of the Land occupied by the two and one half tribes was a stark and vivid reminder of their own Land given to them by the LORD through Moses and the land of our neighbour is not greener on the other side! Israel is ONE spiritually but

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<sup>3</sup> Numbers 31:8 And they slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain; *namely*, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian: Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword.

separated physically by the River Jordan and must not be divided in their common spiritual goal of bearing a good witness for the LORD and fulfilling the high purpose of her existence i.e. the nation through which the Messiah will ultimately come.

### **The Allotment of the Land (Cis-Jordan) – 14:1-5**

The distribution of the land on the western side of the Jordan River was undertaken by a tripartite—Joshua, the son of Nun; Eleazar, the priest; and the heads of the tribes of Israel (14:1). It was by the LORD'S appointment to Moses (Numbers 34:17, 18).<sup>4</sup> The method of distribution was determined by casting lot. Casting of lot was a legitimate way and in this case, it was commanded by the LORD (13:6, 14:2; Proverbs 16:33.). In addition the specific names of the heads representing each tribe were also given through Moses by the LORD (Numbers 34:19-28). As was the case in Trans-Jordan, the Levites were not allotted land, and the tribe of Joseph, being the first-born of Rachel, was given a double portion — Manasseh and Ephraim (as the LORD had promised through the blessing and prophecy of Jacob on Joseph in

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<sup>4</sup> Numbers 34:17 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.

Genesis 48).<sup>5</sup> So the two tribes of Joseph made up the twelve tribes of Israel. Hence the casting of lots and the finality of the decision left no room for argument or negotiation if another piece of land was preferred by any other tribe or family.

The reason why the Levites were not given land inheritance as the LORD Himself was their inheritance was probably because of the event at the base of Mount Sinai, when Moses returned with the two tablets of the Ten Commandments. Moses found the children of Israel worshipping a golden calf. This incurred the wrath of God. Moses stood in the gate of the camp and asked: "Who is on the LORD'S side?" and the sons of Levi gathered themselves together with him (Exodus 32:26).

The Levites were then given the special role and responsibility of the priesthood by taking care of the Tabernacle and of all the sacrifices offered to the LORD by the people. They received no tribal territory of their own, but they were given cities along with pastures for their cattle in

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<sup>5</sup> Genesis 48:4-6 And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession. And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. And thy issue, which thou begetteth after them, shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance.

locations throughout the Promised Land. The curse upon Levi in Genesis 49:5-7 has been turned to a blessing which demonstrates the dynamic will of God. The will of God is not static for that would be like fatalism where man is not responsible for his own actions. The Levites were still distributed but now given a very high office of being mediators of God as well as guardians and teachers of God's perfect Word.

### **The Example of Caleb – 14:6-15**

Caleb, a prince of the tribe of Judah, came to Joshua. He reminded Joshua of the promise Moses had sworn to him to give the portion of Land which he wanted because he had been faithful and loyal to the LORD. Joshua acted accordingly and gave Caleb the land inheritance he wanted (14:23).

Whereas the inheritance of the Land of the others was decided by lot, Caleb's inheritance was given upon his request. It was not a matter of favoritism but honouring the LORD's promise. Caleb recalled his faithfulness and loyalty to the LORD when he was forty years old serving under Moses, the servant of the LORD. He was one of the twelve spies together with Joshua who encouraged his fellow country-men to enter into the Promised Land in accordance with the will of God. While all the people were afraid because of the majority's negative

report which "made the heart of the people melt", he "wholly followed the LORD my God." We see that Caleb based his request on the promise of the LORD. He even declared that the LORD had kept him alive and strong. What did not happen then at Kadesh-barnea forty-five years ago (he must be about 85 years), he was out to prove what he had said before.<sup>6</sup> From the ages of Caleb, we can determine the length of time taken by Joshua to conquer the Promised Land. It took Joshua about 5 to 6 years to conquer the Land.

Caleb was given Hebron which was what he asked for. The Anakims who were the giants of this place were the very reason why the other ten spies feared to enter the land. Caleb wanted to prove that his faith in the LORD was not in vain, that the LORD would be with him and he would have the victory. And he was right; he

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<sup>6</sup> Numbers 13:30 And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.

Numbers 14:6 And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, *which were* of them that searched the land, rent their clothes: 7 And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, *is* an exceeding good land. 8 If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. 9 Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they *are* bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD *is* with us: fear them not.

conquered the inhabitants of the land as the LORD had commanded the Israelites to expel them. Caleb's self-confidence was his own but was rooted in the LORD who enabled him to conquer the Anakims. His faith had not diminished since Kadesh-barnea. Caleb is a model of faith in action. The old name of Hebron was Kirjath-arba. "Kirjath" means "city" and "arba" means "four". Probably it means "City of Four Giants".

### **PRACTICAL VALUE**

The eternal plan and purpose of God must be carried on until it is completely fulfilled in accordance with His revealed will. No man can thwart it, neither is it limited to a single individual. We see this at the outset of this book, how the LORD reiterated the fact of Moses' death, and the Promised Land had not yet been possessed, and the LORD instructed Joshua to lead the people of Israel to complete the work (1:1, 2). Joshua was now stricken with old age, and there was still much land to be possessed. The LORD instructed him together with Eleazar the priest and the leaders of the people to complete the task. What a wonderful revelation for they had conquered the land and yet there remained much to be possessed. How true, as this is also reflected in our Christian life. We have our battles to fight just as our

forefathers had theirs and our children will have theirs in the future. There is never a time in human history that LIGHT will have to contend with DARKNESS!

The distribution of the land by lot in accordance with the instruction of the LORD has a practical lesson for us. It was God who chose the Land for the people, and there was no room for discontentment or envy among the people. Every family was allotted according to the Word of God as God would determine. Similarly, every Christian is endowed with different spiritual blessings as the Holy Spirit gives to every believer as He wills (1 Corinthians 12:11). In response, we should use our gifts and talents for the building up and edification of the Body of Christ, which is the Church and not to compete with one another for self glory. Encourage one another, support one another, and help one another so that the work of Christ is advanced and the name of our Lord Jesus Christ magnified and glorified. Although we may be tempted to consider another Christian's "lot" as more desirable than our own, our roles are of God's choosing (1 Corinthians 12:18), and we should accept them for His use. That kind of desire is sinful and will bring forth fruits of darkness and sin.

The inheritance of the Levites was the LORD God Himself. The Lord too is our inheritance in the broad and

general sense. But by way of application, this has to refer to the fulltime workers, who must not be encumbered by materialism. Pastors and fulltime workers are forbidden to have another business outside of their ministry. They should not participate in the stock market or be partners in business. They must focus on the LORD's work and in the study of God's Word all the time. This is the greatest gift that God can give to any believer i.e. to be called into fulltime ministry. AMEN

**Discussion Questions**

1. Are you afraid of growing old? What is the biblical perspective of aging, if any?

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**DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**Daily Readings**

**MONDAY:** Joshua 13:1-7; Isaiah 55:10-11.

**TUESDAY:** Joshua 13:8-14; Romans 15:4.

**WEDNESDAY:** Joshua 13:15-33; Luke 10:42.

**THURSDAY:** Joshua 14:1-5; Ephesians 1:3-14.

**FRIDAY:** Joshua 14:6-15; Numbers 13:26-33; Matthew 16:24-28.

2. Joshua did all he was called to do according to his strength. Israel had to do the rest after Joshua's death. What does this teach us about every generation's responsibility?

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3. Do you think that a fulltime pastor should do business outside of his ministry? Would you want a pastor



like that or do you mind if your pastor gets engaged in stocks and shares or be a silent partner in a company business making money?

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4. What personality traits do you see in Caleb both in Numbers 13 & 14 and in Joshua 14?

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6. In what ways has God chosen the boundaries of our lives? How should this affect our attitude toward the difficulties that we are helpless to do anything about?

5. In practical terms what do you think it really means for us to follow the LORD “fully” and “wholeheartedly” as Caleb did?