



For seven years the Israelites have been at war with the people living in the Promised Land. They've seen victory when they've trusted the Lord. They've seen defeat when they've trusted in their own plans. Some examples of their victories are:

- Crossing the raging Jordan River
- Defeating the walled fortress of Jericho
- Defeating the 5-Amorite King alliance
- Conquering the southern cities
- Conquering the northern cities

They've stumbled as well: They were defeated at Ai because of the sin of Achan, and they made an alliance with the Gibeonites without seeking the Lord's will.

It's fair to say, looking at their actions over this 7-year war, that they have been "strong and courageous" as they were instructed in chapter 1. The chapters we've read so far in this book—chapters 1-12—have described the conquest of the Promised Land. It's been full of battles and action. The end of this 7-year campaign is summarized with these words:

**So Joshua took the entire land, just as the Lord had directed Moses, and he gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions. Then the land had rest from war (Josh. 11:23).**

Today we come to a big shift in the book. Chapters 13-24 describe the division of the Promised Land between the 12 tribes. One commentator described it this way: "Chapters 1-12 is like watching a war movie, which is always more exciting than participating in land survey's which is Chapters 13-24."

Am I telling you that chapters 13-24 are boring? Yes and no. Yes because there is a ton of repetition. There are long lists of names of people we don't know being given land that we're not familiar with. So, yes, it can be boring. But I would also say no, it's not boring because God's Word is living and active. We read God's Word in faith, trusting that God uses all of his Word to speak his truth. *"All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness"* (2 Tim. 3:16).

Even the sections of scripture that are filled with names of people and places we don't know, God had a divine purpose for including it in his Word. So let's begin reading our scripture for

today with an attitude of faith and an expectation to hear the King of the universe speak.

**When Joshua had grown old, the Lord said to him, "You are now very old, and there are still very large areas of land to be taken over. "This is the land that remains ... all the regions of the Philistines and Geshurites, from the Shihor River on the east of Egypt to the territory of Ekron on the north, all of it counted as Canaanite though held by the five Philistine rulers in Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron; the territory of the Avvites on the south; all the land of the Canaanites, from Arah of the Sidonians as far as Aphek and the border of the Amorites; the area of Byblos; and all Lebanon to the east, from Baal Gad below Mount Hermon to Lebo Hamath (Josh. 13:1-2).**

Verses 2-5 are just a small sampling of the list of names and places we don't know. What's important to acknowledge is that there were specific places and people that the Israelites still needed to drive out of the Promised Land. The setting is this:

- Joshua is very old—90 years of age.
- The Israelites, as one large army, had defeated the places of power: the military fortresses and places of commerce and government, yet areas of land remain that are still to be taken over.
- Instead of moving and working as one large army, they are divided into tribes.

This would be like saying the Peninsula has been conquered. To do so, an army has taken control of the places of power and commerce. Downtown San Mateo—City Hall, the courthouse and Hillsdale Mall—have been taken over and the neighborhoods surrounding these locations have been taken over as well. But the neighborhoods up in the hills around CSM remain untouched. There were these little pockets of inhabitants who remained in the land. In verse 7 the description of the division of the land begins.

**...divide it as an inheritance among the nine tribes and half of the tribe of Manasseh.**

These are the nine-and-a-half tribes that are west of the Jordan River: Asher, Naphtali, Zebulun, Issachar, half of Manasseh, Ephraim, Dan, Benjamin, Judah, Simeon. God was saying, this spot is yours. Live there. Work there. Settle down. Build houses. Farm the land. Herd the sheep and goats. Fish the rivers. Hike

the mountains. Each tribe, with the help of the Lord, is expected to enjoy their inheritance and drive the people out of the land.

The land east of the Jordan River is also divided up among tribes.

**The other half of Manasseh, the Reubenites and the Gadites had received the inheritance that Moses had given them east of the Jordan, as he, the servant of the Lord, had assigned it to them (Josh. 13:8).**

The majority of the remaining verses in chapter 13 describe the details of the people and land these Eastern tribes are inheriting: plateaus, gorges, that particular hill, towns, villages, under that particular king, etc. Tons of detail and names.

- half of Manasseh (verses 30-31)
- Gad (verses 25-28)
- Reuben (verses 16-23)

The same deal as before—this spot is yours. Live in it. Settle. Drive out the inhabitants.

The last observation about the division of the land is a twist. The tribe of Levi is given no land.

**But to the tribe of Levi he gave no inheritance, since the food offerings presented to the Lord, the God of Israel, are their inheritance, as he promised them.**

**... But to the tribe of Levi, Moses had given no inheritance; the Lord, the God of Israel, is their inheritance, as he promised them (Josh. 13:14, 33).**

Instead of receiving a specific piece of land to settle into—build houses, grow crops and raise animals—the Levites are told “the Lord is your inheritance” and you can eat the food that is offered to the Lord in offerings. In other places in these chapters the Levites are given specific cities to occupy but they remain more physically dependent on the Lord’s provision than any other tribe.

In summary, chapter 13 gives a broad description of the inheritances that God gave to his people. Next week’s sermon will cover a more detailed description of the inheritances that God gave each tribe in chapters 15-19. For now, we’ll satisfy our understanding with this quick summary:

- 9 ½ tribes were given land west of the Jordan
- 2 ½ tribes were given land east of the Jordan
- Levi got no land because their inheritance was the Lord himself

## **The High of the Promised Land**

This seems great, doesn’t it! After waiting for generations to receive the promise the Lord made to Abraham in Genesis 12, the people of God are cashing in! This is their Hillsborough mansion! They are walking on their land and drinking water from their streams. They could pick up a rock ... that’s their rock! And the

trees ... those were their trees! They had plenty of stones and rocks to build houses. No more tents! God has been faithful to them. They **have** their inheritance.

After living as a people of slavery in Egypt for 400 years and desert wanders for 40 years and a war band for 7 years, this is everything they’ve been dreaming about. This is perfect! This is their Promised Land.

## **The Reality of the Promised Land**

But there are still some Canaanites living in the land. They’ve got to get rid of them. There are thorns growing everywhere. Thorns rip your robes and get caught in the fleece of the sheep. And that tribe over there, is that their river? Huh, that’s a better river than this one. Who decided who got which piece of land? And the farming soil has some rocks in it. Man, it’s a lot of work to get rid of those rocks.

Listen very carefully to what I’m trying to communicate here. On one hand, the Promised Land was an amazing fulfillment of a promise that God had made to Abraham many generations earlier. On the other hand, the Promised Land would never satisfy the deepest desires of their hearts. Dale Ralph Davis writes: “In this section the writer points the people of God to their true inheritance by making two comments about the Levites. They were exceptional in that they did not receive a land allotment like the other tribes. Rather, Levi’s inheritance consisted of the offerings and Yahweh himself. Any believing Israelite could come to adopt this Levite perspective, realizing that, above all else, Yahweh himself was as Psalm 142:5 says their ‘portion in the land of the living’ and their ‘portion forever’ as Psalm 73:26 says. Healthy, grateful faith sees beyond the inheritance to the one who granted it and is careful never to prize Yahweh’s gifts more than Yahweh himself.”

That’s why the prophet Jeremiah wrote the following words after the land was taken away from the Israelites hundreds of years later. *“I say to myself, ‘The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him’”* (Lam. 3:24).

Receiving something promised is great but receiving the promise-giver is the greatest. God never wants people to live in the deception that This Is Everything. And we never know this more powerfully than when we’ve given our heart to something or someone and then we lose it. That’s why Caleb models the godly balance for us of receiving something great but not giving his heart to it.

In Joshua 14:6-15 Caleb is going to ask for land. Receiving something promised is great, but Caleb has modeled that receiving the promise-giver has been his lifestyle for his lifetime and that is better than any piece of land.

**Now the people of Judah approached Joshua at Gilgal, and Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, (Josh. 14:6).**

Let's pause here for a moment. Caleb has walked up to Joshua and he's about to give a very important speech. Let me remind you who Caleb is. Caleb was one of the twelve spies whom Moses selected to spy out the land the first time, back in Numbers 13. Joshua was one of those original spies as well. Caleb was the one leader chosen to represent the entire tribe of Judah during that first spying trip. In this verse (6) we're told that his father was a Kenizzite. That's very interesting because the Kenizzites weren't Jews. They were one of the peoples who lived in the Promised Land. Caleb was a foreigner by birth, or at least his father was. We don't know how he came to be with the people of God in Egyptian slavery but he was with them. And he obviously joined the Israelites by placing his faith in Yahweh at some point. He received the Promise-giver. When the Israelites fled Egypt, Caleb was with them and he was fully accepted into the Jewish community.

You'll remember that back in Numbers 13 when the twelve spies came back and reported to Moses they said the land was incredible **but** the people who live there were powerful with fortified cities. They even saw giants there! *"Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, 'We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it'"* (Num. 13:30).

Caleb was one of the original spies who had faith in God to do the seemingly impossible. In Joshua 14, here in our passage today, Caleb walks up and is standing before his friend Joshua, the only other original spy who also told Moses, "we can take this land with God." They had faith like this because they followed God with their whole hearts. Let's continue reading in Joshua to see what Caleb is going to say to his old friend Joshua.

**"You know what the Lord said to Moses the man of God at Kadesh Barnea about you and me. I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh Barnea to explore the land. And I brought him back a report according to my convictions, but my fellow Israelites who went up with me made the hearts of the people melt in fear. I, however, followed the Lord my God wholeheartedly. So on that day Moses swore to me, 'The land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance and that of your children forever, because you have followed the Lord my God wholeheartedly.'**

**"Now then, just as the Lord promised, he has kept me alive for forty-five years since the time he said this to Moses, while Israel moved about in the wilderness. So here I am today, eighty-five years old! I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I'm just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then. Now give me this hill country that the Lord promised me that day. You yourself heard then that the Anakites were there and their cities were large and fortified, but, the Lord helping me, I will drive them out just as he said."**

**Then Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave him Hebron as his inheritance. So Hebron has belonged to Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite ever since, because he followed the Lord, the God of Israel, wholeheartedly. (Hebron used to be called Kiriath Arba after Arba, who was the greatest man among the Anakites.)**

**Then the land had rest from war (verses 6b-15).**

Three different times in these ten verses it says that Caleb followed the Lord wholeheartedly. Do you see the connection? In order for Caleb to **follow** with his whole heart, he had to **give** his whole heart to the Lord. He had an undivided heart. Caleb didn't hold anything back from the Lord. He didn't say, "Lord, you can have most of me but I want to keep a bit for myself."

Caleb didn't give into fear. James Boice said, "The 10 original spies looked at themselves and the giants and concluded that a conquest of those people was impossible. Compared to the giants, the Jews seemed like grasshoppers. Caleb and Joshua looked at God rather than circumstances, and when compared to God, the giants were grasshoppers." That's why Caleb said in Numbers 14, *"Don't be afraid of the people of the land ... the Lord is with us."*

This narrative story about Caleb is inserted in the middle of the details describing the distribution of the land. It stands in contrast to the rest of these chapters. God had a point to that. His point was to show his people, yes, the land is great but giving your whole heart to the Lord is greater!

From this point in time forward, the nation of Israel struggled with this. It says repeatedly through these chapters in Joshua that the Israelites failed to drive the inhabitants from the land. Over time they will begin to worship the false gods of the land. They get preoccupied with building their own houses, raising their own families and the normal business of life.

Although the land was theirs and God would have empowered them to drive the people out of the land, they failed to do so. And it's for a simple reason: they didn't serve the Lord wholeheartedly like Caleb did. Instead, most of them let their hearts wander and get attached to other things.

Doesn't that apply to us today? No doubt, God has given you something great. Maybe your job ... spouse ... child. Your dog ... your house ... a friendship ... your church. These are all great and God wants you to celebrate and enjoy the good gifts he gives you. But none of these should ever take a primary place in your heart. Jesus said, *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind"* (Matt. 22:37). Jesus also said, *"Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well"* (Matt. 6:33).

How can you know if you are giving your whole heart to anything other than the Lord? Listen to the Spirit of God. In a crowd this size, it would be normal for a bunch of you to already be

hearing him say, “you’re giving part of your heart to me and another part to ... your reputation (that’s why you get so bothered when you’re criticized ... your child (that’s why you’re so anxious). If you’re hearing that, God is giving you a choice to confess that to the Lord. Repent and give him your whole heart today.

Maybe you’re thinking, I don’t know if I’m giving my whole heart to Jesus or not. Personally, I’ve found that knowing my heart can be tricky. Here are some questions that help me evaluate my heart:

- Are you anxious?
- Are you overly sensitive to the opinions of others?
- Are you angry?
- Are you jealous?
- Are you preoccupied with success and achievement?

If you answer “yes” to any of these questions it reveals a type of division in your heart.

If you’re anxious it’s because you’ve given your heart to something and you’re afraid you’ll never get it or you’ll lose it. For

example, maybe you’ve given your heart to the future success of your child and you can’t sleep and you’re filled with anxious fear when they stumble.

If you’re angry it’s because you’ve given your heart to something and it’s being threatened. You can’t control the outcome. Maybe a person or a circumstance has control over you and you are an emotional wreck. You are so angry.

All of these reveal a divided heart. And Jesus is calling all of us to surrender wholeheartedly to him, to turn away from anything other than him to satisfy the deepest desires of our hearts.

Jesus Christ offers freedom from a divided heart because he lived perfectly with his whole heart given to God the Father. By faith we trust in his perfect obedience and we rest there and we don’t move beyond that spot. ***“Teach me your way, Lord, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name”*** (Psalm 86:11).

*This manuscript represents the bulk of what was preached at CPC. For further detail, please refer to the audio recording of this sermon.*