

# Sermon Outline

## “AND THE LORD GAVE THEM REST”: A CHRISTIAN READING OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

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### INHERITANCE: EAST OF THE JORDAN (JOSHUA 13:8-32)

#### I. Inheritance Is the Heart

#### II. The Two-And-a Half Tribes Receive Their Land (Joshua 13:8)

- A. We have seen a reference to Moses’ giving of the land previously in 12:1-6.
- B. In verses 8-33, we have a more detailed explanation of the land that was given through Moses to a few of the tribes of Israel: Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh.
- C. The account of how these tribes acquired their land may be found in Numbers 32.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) What was the account of how these tribes acquired the land that they did? (2) What was Moses’ initial concern about these tribes wanting to settle east of the Jordan in Num 32?

#### III. Overview of the Transjordanian Inheritance (Joshua 13:9-13)

- A. Beginning in verse 9, we see the land that was allotted to the two-and-a half tribes.
- B. In general, the land for these tribes runs from north to south along the eastern bank of the Jordan River—the *Transjordan*.
- C. In verses 9-13, we find an overview of the inheritances in this portion of land.
- D. The Scripture reads: “from Aroer, which is on the edge of the Valley of the Arnon, and the city that is in the middle of the valley, and all the tableland of Medeba as far as Dibon; and all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, as far as the boundary of the Ammonites;”
  - 1. Here is a perspective ranging from south to north.
  - 2. The southern boundary is formed by two cities.
    - a. *Aroer*—on the north bank of the River Arnon, east of the Dead Sea.
    - b. An *unnamed city*—“in the middle of the valley.”
  - 3. The northern boundary and region
    - a. Runs from...
      - i. the *Medeba* plateau...
      - ii. past/through the city of *Dibon*

- iii. past the cities once ruled by *King Sihon*...
- b. ...to the *boundary of the Ammonites*, near the Jabbok River.
- c. Also incorporates the regions named in verse 11: “and *Gilead*, and the region of the *Geshurites* and *Maacathites*, and all *Mount Hermon*, and all *Bashan* to *Salecah* [.]”
- 4. Verse 12 tells us that the lands of Bashan and Salecah were once part of the realm of King Og “who reigned in *Ashtaroth* and in *Edrei*...”
- 5. Moses and Israel were able to defeat these groups—with the exception of the Geshurites and the Maacathites (vv 12, 13).

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) What is the general name of the region inherited by the two-and-a-half tribes? (2) Where are the southern and northern boundaries located? (3) Who were the remaining groups that Moses and Israel did not drive out (v 13)? How is the larger “already-not yet” theme present in this passage?

#### IV. The Interesting Case of the Levites (Joshua 13:14)

- A. Verse 14 tells us that the Levites were not given any land as inheritance.
- B. Instead, “The offerings by fire to the LORD God of Israel are their inheritance, as he said to him.”
- C. The Levites were a constant reminder to the rest of the nation that they must not get overly attached to the land God had given to them.  
—Like the Levites, Israel as a whole must recognize that God alone is Israel’s ultimate inheritance.
- D. More about the Levites in our next lesson (13:33)!!

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) Why were the Levites not given land? (2) What, according to verse 14, was the inheritance of the Levites?

#### V. The Inheritance of Reuben (Joshua 13:15-23)

- A. Verses 15-23 point out the lands that were given to the tribe of *Reuben*.
- B. Reuben’s inheritance lies mainly in the southern portion of the Transjordanian region.  
—According to Robert L. Hubbard Jr., Reuben’s inheritance runs along the east bank of the Jordan from the Arnon River gorge past the city of Medeba to Heshbon (Hubbard, Jr., *Joshua*, 400).
- C. Verse 16: “So their territory was from *Aroer*, which is on the edge of the Valley of the Arnon, and *the city* that is in the middle of the valley, and all the tableland by *Medeba*; with *Heshbon*, and all its cities that are in the tableland...”
- D. The twelve cities of *Heshbon* include:
  - 1. *Dibon*
  - 2. *Bamoth-baal*
  - 3. *Beth-baal-meon*

4. *Jabaz*
5. *Kedemoth*
6. *Mephaath*
7. *Kiriathaim*
8. *Sibmah*
9. *Zereth-shabar*
10. *Beth-peor*
11. The slopes of *Pisgah*
12. *Beth-jeshimoth*

E. Jumping to verse 23, we have the conclusion of this first section: “And the border of the people of Reuben was the Jordan as a boundary. This was the inheritance of the people of Reuben, according to their clans with their cities and villages.”

**\*Questions for reflection:** What is the general vicinity of Reuben’s inheritance?  
 (2) What are the names of the twelve cities Reuben came to possess? (3)  
 According to verse 23, what was boundary on Reuben’s west edge?

#### VI. Excursus: Balaam and Israel’s Apostasy (Joshua 13:22)

- A. In verse 22, we find a curious reference to an old enemy of Israel: “Balaam also, the son of Beor, the one who practiced divination, was killed with the sword by the people of Israel among the rest of their slain.”
- B. Balaam the sorcerer was hired by Prince Balak of Moab to curse the Israelites (Num 22).
- C. Balaam was unable to curse Israel because God had blessed Israel (Num 23:8, 9).
- D. While camping at Shittim, the people of Israel were seduced into idolatry by “the daughters of Moab” (Num 25).
- E. At that point, “the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel” (Num 25:3). The Lord orders that the perpetrators of this crime be executed.
- F. What does Balaam have to do with the incident in Numbers 25?
  1. According to Numbers 31:16, Balaam was the one who instigated the Moabite women to seduce the Israelite men in the first place!
  2. Since Balaam couldn’t curse Israel, he had to find a way to get God to be angry at his people!  
 —He found a way by instigating the Moabite women to seduce the Israelite men into sexual sin and idolatry
- G. The Balaam reference is a not-sp-subtle reminder to future generations of Israelites to guard against sorcery, idolatry, and intermarriage.  
 —The Lord is warning his people never ever to cross that line again!
- H. The same warning is still for the Church today.
  1. Christians must not dabble in sorcery or any other magical practices.
  2. Christians must not marry unbelievers.
    - a. It’s one thing to come to Christ as a married person—that’s *not* the issue here.

- b. The issue is if a believer in Jesus knowingly marries a non-believer.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) Why was Balaam mentioned here? (2) What happened while Israel was in Shittim (Num 25)? (3) What does Balaam have to do with the apostasy of Israel in Num 25?

## VII. The Inheritance of Gad (13:24-28)

- A. The next tribe presented is *Gad*: “Moses gave an inheritance also to the tribe of Gad, to the people of Gad, according to their clans” (v 24).  
—Gad occupies the central portion of the land, between Dan to the north and Reuben to the south.
- B. As to their specific territories, verses 25-27 tells us that Gad possesses...
  - 1. *Jazer*, a town about sixteen kilometers north of Heshbon.
  - 2. “*all the cities of Gilead*,” south of the Jabbok River.
  - 3. In the east: “half the land of the *Ammonites*,” up “to *Aroer*, which is east of *Rabbah*.”
    - a. Rabbah was the capital city of the Ammonite kingdom.
    - b. Today, Rabbah is part of Amman in the kingdom of Jordan.
  - 4. To the south: land between *Heshbon* and two towns, *Ramath-mizpeh* and *Betonim*. Those are Gad’s southern holdings.
  - 5. To the north: land “*from Mahanaim*”—the north bank of the Jabbok River, the second largest tributary feeding the River Jordan—to “the territory of *Debir*,” which is somewhere in eastern Gilead.
- C. In verse 27, four cities in the Jordan Valley are mentioned.
  - 1. *Beth-haram*
  - 2. *Beth-nimrah*
  - 3. *Succoth*
  - 4. *Zaphon*
- D. The list of Gad’s inheritance concludes with the statement: “the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon, having the *Jordan* as a boundary, to the lower end of the *Sea of Chinnereth*, eastward beyond the Jordan.”
  - 1. Like Reuben, the western boundary of Gad is the Jordan River.
  - 2. The northern boundary is the Sea of Chinnereth (the Sea of Galilee).
  - 3. Today, all these lands today are part of the kingdom of Jordan.
  - 4. Back then, “This is the inheritance of the people of Gad according to their clans, with their cities and villages” (v 28).

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) Where was Gad located in relation to the other two tribes? What was Gad’s western border? What was Gad’s northern border? (2) What were Gad’s territories?

## VIII. The Inheritance of Manasseh (Joshua 13:39-32)

- A. Finally, we come to the last Transjordanian tribe: *East Manasseh*: “And Moses gave an inheritance to the half-tribe of Manasseh. It was allotted to the half-tribe of the people of Manasseh according to their clans.”
- B. Manasseh’s southern boundary is *Mahanaim* “through all Bashan, the whole kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and all the towns of *Jair*, which are in *Bashan*, sixty cities [.]” (v 30).
- C. Concerning *Bashan*
  - 1. David Howard: “Bashan was a fertile region on a rugged, high plateau north of Gilead, east and northeast of the Sea of Kinnereth (Galilee)” (*Joshua*, 314).
  - 2. Bashan was a well-forested area, surrounded by mountains.
  - 3. The plateau was ideal for pasture and producing “fatted cattle.” —This may explain why the Lord associates Bashan with Israel’s future restoration (Jer 50:19; Mic 7:14).
  - 4. In time, it seems that Bashan and Gilead become symbols of plenty. —Like Jerusalem, they are associated with the ultimate rest and nourishment that the Lord would give to his people.
- D. Verse 31 adds that East Manasseh also has...
  - 1. Half of *Gilead*
  - 2. Og’s royal cities
    - a. *Ashtaroth*
    - b. *Edrei*
- E. All of these regions and cities were also given specifically to one prominent family of the tribe of Manasseh—“the people of Machir the son of Manasseh for the half of the people of Machir according to their clans.”

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) Where was Manasseh’s southern boundary? (2) What was the significance of Bashan? (3) What were the two royal cities of Og that Manasseh captured? (4) Which family in Manasseh received the inheritance?

## IX. Conclusion to the Eastern Inheritances (13:32)

- A. Verse 32 wraps up this entire section for us: “These are the inheritances that Moses distributed in the plains of Moab, beyond the Jordan east of Jericho.”
- B. We are reminded that it was God, through Moses, who gave these lands to the two-and-a-half tribes.
- C. These lands were once part of the realm of Moab.
- D. Just as we talked about the *Not-Yet* part of God’s will for Israel last week, what we are now seeing is the *Already* aspect. —By his prophet, God has led his Church to these lands.
- E. Where the kingdom of Satan once was, the civilization of the Lord God can now flourish.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) Who distributed the inheritances to the Transjordanian tribes? (2) What was the general name of the region that the two-and-a-half tribes inherited?

## X. The God Who Provides—Now to Eternity

**God continues to care for his children today. God cares for his people's earthly needs through various human authorities whom he raises up. God cares for his people's eternal needs through the prophet leader whom he has chosen—Jesus Christ.**

## XI. God Meets His People's Earthly Needs

- A. *God continues to provide for our earthly needs.*
- B. All throughout this passage, we have seen that our heavenly Father is not just a God of spiritual realities—he is also the God of earthly realities.
- C. According to Joshua 13, God is sovereign over all realms, exercises his authority for the good of his people, and provides for them in concrete, practical, and earthly ways.
- D. Christians should therefore not despise the ordinary, the earthly.
  - 1. We are to see God at work in the ordinary things of life.
  - 2. God is at work in all these things to do you good, to provide for your needs and the needs of your family. God himself is behind all these things.
- E. One possible reason Christians surrender to secularism is partly because we no longer see God behind our ordinary, mundane realities.
- F. Psalm 136 connects God's special redemptive acts (like providing land for his people, v 21) with ordinary provisions (like feeding living beings, v 25).—The same loving impulse by which God provides land to his people also gives food to all life as well.
- G. While redemption is the greater work, ordinary provision is as much the work of our loving heavenly Father.
- H. God uses earthly authorities in the world to do good to his children (Rom 13:1).
- I. Thus, we can give thanks to God for the blessings he continues to create in the world—and receive all these blessings as from the hand of God, as evidence that our heavenly Father loves us and cares for us.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) How does God provide for our earthly needs today? (2) Will you strive to see that God is working for your good? Will you give thanks to God for all the good that you enjoy?

## XII. God Meets His People's Eternal Need

- A. But we must come to the lesson that is at the heart of this passage.

- B. There are small hints in the Scripture that the Promised Land of Canaan isn't everything.
- C. The Promised Land of Canaan and its outlying regions is a symbol of something greater to come—the Kingdom of God on earth.
- D. Just as the Father provided land for Israel, and continues to provide for his Church today, the Father will give the ultimate provision for his people in the new heavens and the new earth.
- E. Just as he gave the Promised Land to Israel through his prophet leaders Moses and Joshua, he will give this to new creation to us through his supreme prophet leader, Jesus Christ our Lord.
- F. One of the key passages to consider is in John 6.
  1. The Lord Jesus had just multiplied loaves of bread to feed 5, 000 people.
  2. The people go to Jesus for more bread.
  3. But Jesus calls them to seek much more than bread (or earthly sustenance).

<sup>25</sup> When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” <sup>26</sup> Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. <sup>27</sup> Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.” <sup>28</sup> Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” <sup>29</sup> Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.”

4. The Lord Jesus says, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst” (Jn 6:35).
5. Not only is Jesus the prophet who will give us the land of eternal bread. He himself is the eternal Bread, the eternal Food of Life.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) The Lord Jesus calls on people to seek the eternal Bread of Life, not merely the bread of this earth. Where in your life do you need to heed this counsel today?