

# JOSHUA

## CHAPTER 13

### *Land Still to Be Conquered*

Now Joshua was old and advanced in years, and the LORD said to him, “You are old and advanced in years, and there remains yet very much land to possess. 2 This is the land that yet remains: all the regions of the Philistines, and all those of the Geshurites 3 (from the Shihor, which is east of Egypt, northward to the boundary of Ekron, it is counted as Canaanite; there are five rulers of the Philistines, those of Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron), and those of the Avvim, 4 in the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that belongs to the Sidonians, to Aphek, to the boundary of the Amorites, 5 and the land of the Gebalites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrise, from Baal-gad below Mount Hermon to Lebo-hamath, 6 all the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon to Misrephoth-maim, even all the Sidonians. I myself will drive them out from before the people of Israel. Only allot the land to Israel for an inheritance, as I have commanded you. 7 Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance to the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh.”

**13:1–32** The heavenly King, who has conquered the land, begins the administration of his realm by assigning specific territories to the several tribes. Much of chs. 13–21 reads like administrative documents. The account begins by noting the land still to be subdued (but to be allotted) and by recalling the assignments already made by Moses to the two and a half tribes east of the Jordan. (CSB)

**13:1** *Joshua was old.* Between 90 and 100 years of age; Caleb was 85 (14:10). (CSB)

Joshua was 40 or older at the time of the spying episode (Nu 13:2–16); he served 40 more years at Moses’ side; it is now c 7 years after crossing the Jordan. Thus, Joshua is 87 or older. (TLSB)

*very much land to possess.* Though allotted to tribes of Israel and promised by God, many parts of the land remained occupied or controlled by non-Israelites. Jgs 1–3 gives some explanation for why God allowed this (cf esp Jgs 3:1–4). (TLSB)

**13:2–3** *Philistines.* Mentioned only here in Jsh, they would grow to become Israel’s chief rivals in Jgs and 1Sm. (TLSB)

**13:3** *Shihor River.* Another name for the Wadi el-Arish below Gaza at the eastern entrance to the Sinai. *rulers.* The Hebrew for this word is probably derived from a Greek term for “tyrant,” indicating the Aegean background of the Philistines. (CSB)

**13:5** *Gebalites.* Inhabitants of the ancient city of Byblos (see NIV text note) just north of modern Beirut. The Phoenicians and the Philistines held most of the territory still to be occupied by Israel. (CSB)

**13:6** *I myself will drive them out.* God challenges their faith. He will complete all His promises in time. (TLSB)

*allot the land ... inheritance.* God gives a portion of the land to each tribe as an inheritance, not as something earned. Nu 27:1–11; 36:7–12; Ru 4:10; Pr 17:2; Ezk 45; 48:29. As part of God’s covenant, the possession of the inheritance is forfeited when the people’s transgression becomes excessive. (TLSB)

**13:7** *nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh.* Tribes of Gad and Reuben and half the tribe of Manasseh had petitioned Moses to receive the Transjordan lands as their inheritance, regarding them to be suitable. Cf Nu 32. (TLSB)

**13:1–7** Even with much already accomplished to bring the people of God into their promised possession, much remains to be done for the promises to be completely fulfilled. Though God has established a place for His people to dwell eternally, many things conspire to rob us of that promised inheritance and peace. Nevertheless, God continues to reinforce His promises and to strengthen us through His Sacraments so we do not give up. • Dear Jesus, lead us onward until our rest is complete in You. Remind us always that You have won the battles for us and will drive out our enemies before us. You are our inheritance and treasure. Amen. (TLSB)

*The Inheritance East of the Jordan*

**8** With the other half of the tribe of Manasseh[a] the Reubenites and the Gadites received their inheritance, which Moses gave them, beyond the Jordan eastward, as Moses the servant of the LORD gave them: **9** 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; **10** and all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, as far as the boundary of the Ammonites; **11** and Gilead, and the region of the Geshurites and Maacathites, and all Mount Hermon, and all Bashan to Salecah; **12** all the kingdom of Og in Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth and in Edrei (he alone was left of the remnant of the Rephaim); these Moses had struck and driven out. **13** Yet the people of Israel did not drive out the Geshurites or the Maacathites, but Geshur and Maacath dwell in the midst of Israel to this day. **14** To the tribe of Levi alone Moses gave no inheritance. The offerings by fire to the LORD God of Israel are their inheritance, as he said to him. **15** And Moses gave an inheritance to the tribe of the people of Reuben according to their clans. **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; **17** with Heshbon, and all its cities that are in the tableland; Dibon, and Bamoth-baal, and Beth-baal-meon, **18** and Jahaz, and Kedemoth, and Mephaath, **19** and Kiriathaim, and Sibmah, and Zereth-shahar on the hill of the valley, **20** and Beth-peor, and the slopes of Pisgah, and Beth-jeshimoth, **21** that is, all the cities of the tableland, and all the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, whom Moses defeated with the leaders of Midian, Evi and Rekem and Zur and Hur and Reba, the princes of Sihon, who lived in the land. **22** 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. **23** 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. **24** Moses gave an inheritance also to the tribe of Gad, to the people of Gad, according to their clans. **25** Their territory was Jazer, and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the Ammonites, to Aroer, which is east of Rabbah, **26** and from Heshbon to Ramath-mizpeh and Betonim, and from Mahanaim to the territory of Debir, [b] **27** and in the valley Beth-haram, Beth-nimrah, Succoth, and Zaphon, 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. **28** This is the inheritance of the people of Gad according to their clans, with their cities and villages. **29** 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. **30** Their region extended from Mahanaim, through all Bashan, the whole kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and all the towns of Jair, which are in Bashan, sixty cities, **31** and half Gilead, and Ashtaroth, and Edrei, the cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan. These were allotted to the people of Machir the son of Manasseh for the half of the people of Machir according to their clans. **32** These are the inheritances that Moses distributed in the plains of Moab, beyond the Jordan east of Jericho. **33** But to the tribe of Levi Moses gave no inheritance; the LORD God of Israel is their inheritance, just as he said to them.

**13:8–33** Eastern holdings are not to be considered as separate from the rest of Israel, even though they are outside of the official boundaries of the land. Thus, the eastern tribes and clans are as much a part of God’s people as the western ones. Cf 22:10–34. (TLSB)

**13:9** *Aroer*. This town on the Arnon River marked the southern boundary of Israel. From here the land extended through Ammon, Gilead and Bashan to the slopes of Mount Hermon in the north, the territory once dominated by the two kings of the Amorites, Sihon and Og. (CSB)

**13:12** *Og ... of the Rephaim*. Cf Gn 14:5; Dt 2:11, 20; 3:11. Size of bed mentioned in Dt 3:11 suggests the Rephaim were giants like Goliath of Gath. (TLSB)

**13:14** *the offerings ... are their inheritance*. See Dt 18:1–8 and note on Dt 18:1. (CSB)

Instead of permanent possession of a parcel of land, the Levites were to have a permanent position involved in the worship and sacrifices brought to the Lord.

*offerings by fire*. Most important offering the Levites are to receive. They are also to receive the tithes and firstfruits brought to the Lord (Nu 18:8–16). Cf Dt 18:1–5. (TLSB)

**13:15** *what Moses gave... Reuben*. The land east of the Jordan between the Arnon River (boundary of Moab) and Heshbon (the old royal city of Sihon). (CSB)

**13:22** *Balaam son of Beor*. The one who supposedly had influence with the gods (Nu 22–24) was slain when the Lord punished the Midianites for trying to seduce Israel into idolatry and sexual immorality (see Nu 25; 31:8). (CSB)

Balaam’s first encounter with Israel on behalf of the king of Moab (Nu 22–25) is not his last; he was later successful in bringing a curse on Israel, though he fell in battle (Nu 31:8, 15–16).

*practiced divination*. Cf Nu 22:4–6. One method was to examine the entrails of animals sacrificed to a god (Nu 23:1–6; 24:1–4). (TLSB)

**13:24** *what Moses gave... Gad*. The central area, beginning near Heshbon on the south and reaching, along the Jordan, to the southern end of the Sea of Galilee. It included most of Gilead, but the exact boundary between Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh remains somewhat uncertain since not all the places named can now be located. (CSB)

**13:29** *what Moses gave...to the half-tribe of Manasseh*. The lands east and north of the Sea of Galilee, but also including the upper part of Gilead. Makir led in the occupation of these lands (see Nu 32:32, 39–42). (CSB)

**13:8–33** The promise of the land to Abraham’s descendants finds earliest fulfillment in the tribes east of the Jordan. This fulfillment, centuries in the making, teaches us why we live by faith, trusting God’s timing and purpose as He holds out His promises to all. • Lord, though my name is not listed in these pages of Scripture, You have given me the most important promise of an eternal inheritance through Your Son, Jesus Christ. Help me to remember and hold fast to that until I enjoy my inheritance in its completeness. Amen. (TLSB)