

The Completion of the Conquest Under Joshua

Introduction

a. objectives

1. subject – Joshua outlines the success of the initial Conquest and the remaining land to be taken
2. aim – To cause us to give praise to God in the midst of our conquest over sin that remains in us
3. passage – Joshua 12:1-13:7

b. outline

1. The Successes Under Moses (Joshua 12:1-6)
2. The Successes Under Joshua (Joshua 12:7-24)
3. The Remainder of the Land (Joshua 13:1-7)

c. opening

1. the **difficulty** of **chapter 12**
 - a. a problem with preaching systematically through narratives: you will *eventually* come to an **inclusion** that is difficult to exegete and apply to a modern audience
 1. **note:** *not* that it is *unimportant* (**i.e.** *all Scripture* is breathed out by God and profitable), but its *direct application* is difficult because **its original intention was specific and local**
 2. **IOW:** a passage that has a *macro-level* application (**i.e.** an *overarching point* that can be applied [carefully] to a modern audience), but is difficult to preach on a *micro-level* (**i.e.** the individual verses are virtually irrelevant, other than to the *macro-level cause*)
 3. **e.g.** the *genealogies* – with a few exceptions (**i.e.** the women of Jesus' genealogies), the *actual details* of most genealogies are not that important – what matters is the *overarching point* that the writer made in including the list in the narrative
 - a. **e.g. Genesis 5** = the individual names and lengths-of-life in the list are interesting, but the *overarching point* is that sin's effect has now come upon the human race *in death*
 - b. **e.g. Matthew 1** = the individual names trace a lineage from Abraham (or Adam), but the *overarching point* is that Jesus is descended from Abraham/David (as the Jewish Messiah) and from Adam (as the incarnate One), thus is both the Son of God and the Son of Man
 4. **IOW:** we can't *skip over* such passages, but we don't have to be too detailed with them ...
 - b. **here:** Joshua *summarizes* the successes of the Conquest of Canaan under both Moses and himself by *listing* the various cities and their kings that were conquered by the Israelites
 1. but ... many of the places are *virtually unknown* to us – being 3,400 years *in the past* they cannot be *precisely* located nor is there any *extant* record (beyond Scripture) of their existence
 2. thus ... a detailed examination (exegesis) of *every* location mentioned would be difficult, time-consuming, and (**IMO**) unnecessary – it will probably do nothing more than **put you to sleep!**
 3. **however (as above):** the *better* approach (then) is to focus on the *overarching point* of the passage – to point out a few of the more *interesting* places in the list and then to step back and ask: what was Joshua's intention in including this summary in his narrative **and what can we learn from it that applies to our reality today?**
2. the **structure** of **chaps. 12-13**
 - a. the successes of Conquest *under Moses* (**12:1-6**): the taking of the Transjordan territory for the tribes that would live there *prior* to the crossing of the Jordan and the entry into Canaan (**in Torah**)
 - b. the successes of Conquest *under Joshua* (**12:7-24**): the taking of the areas of Canaan ordained for Joshua to conquer during the course of his life after the people cross the Jordan (**in Joshua**)
 - c. the remaining areas left *unconquered* (**13:1-7**): the areas not yet addressed by the people, but not necessarily *hindering* their ability to "move in" and live comfortably in the land (**in Judges-David**)
 - d. followed by the *distribution* of the land to the individual Israelite tribes (**in chaps. 13-21**)

I. The Successes Under Moses (Joshua 12:1-6)

Content

a. the **territory** taken under Moses (vv. 1, 6)

1. described as: "*beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise*" = the area E of the Jordan, the **Transjordan**
 - a. the Israelites arrive here *after* their 40 years of wandering in the Sinai wilderness

- b. they come up from the S, through Edom (Num. 21) and Moab (Num. 22-24), and camp in Gilead
 1. i.e. the story (read by Roger) is the people moving into the territory of Moab on the way to the Transjordan area N – the king of Moab (Balak) summons Balaam to help him (Jude 11)
 2. the territory is outlined as “from the Valley of the Arnon to Mount Hermon” (v. 1)
 - a. the Arnon river flows W into the middle Dead Sea, Mount Hermon is far N of the Sea of Galilee
 - b. i.e. the entire territory N-S described by the boundary markers in vv. 2-4 (Edom and Moab)
 3. the territory is granted to the tribes of Reuben and Gad by Moses (v. 6 cf. Num. 32 cf. 1:12ff)
 - a. Moses agrees to give this territory to them (and ½ of Manasseh, reason unknown) *if* they will go with the rest of Israel across the Jordan and help in the initial Conquest of Canaan
 - b. the 2½ tribes agree, and they lead the way across the Jordan with Joshua (4:12)
 - c. **note:** Joshua will grant this area to these tribes *at the very beginning* of his allotments (v. 8)
- b. the kings dislodged under Moses (vv. 2-5)**
1. described as: “Sihon king of the Amorites” (v. 2) and “Og king of Bashan” (v. 4)
 - a. Sihon (in the S) refuses to let Israel pass through its land going N, and attempts to attack Israel on the way, so Israel defeats the Amorites and takes over its cities (Num. 21:21-30)
 - b. Og (in the N) is *purposely* spied out by the Israelites (as a means of protecting its N front), and God gives these inhabitants of Bashan to the Israelites, which they defeat (Num. 21:31-36)
 2. the Israelites destroy these two kings of the Transjordan for three (3) reasons:
 - a. to give the people a place to “rest” in anticipation of crossing into Canaan over the Jordan
 - b. to give this land *specifically* to the 2½ tribes of Israel mentioned **above**
 - c. to send a message: that the Israelites moving into Canaan are under the sovereign leadership of Yahweh, and that *he* intends to crush the Canaanites under his judgment using the Israelites as the means of that destruction (**remember Rahab re: Sihon & Og in 2:10**)
 3. **Joshua recounts the successes of Israel under Moses to remind the people of these things – that they might remember as they take possession of Canaan that God has led them here**

II. The Successes Under Joshua (Joshua 12:7-24)

Content

a. the territory taken under Joshua (vv. 7-8)

1. described as: “from Baal-gad in the Valley of Lebanon to Mount Halak” (v. 7)
 - a. Lebanon in the N, Mount Halak in the far S – city-states scattered throughout the entire Canaanite territories W of the Jordan from N-S (i.e. the territory originally promised to Abraham)
2. described as: “the hill country”, “lowland”, “Arabah”, “the slopes”, “the wilderness”, “the Negeb” (v. 8)
 - a. i.e. all of the *interior* areas of Canaan, particularly in the hill country and down into the desert
 - b. **note:** unlike the Transjordan, Joshua did not succeed in taking *all* of the land and establishing *absolute* control over it – the Israelites were able to take the *immediate* land around various city-states throughout the Canaan, but did *not* take general control over the entire territory (**see below**)

b. the kings dislodged under Joshua (vv. 9-24)

1. described as: a list of the kings and their cities conquered by the people W of the Jordan
 - a. the list is *chronological*: starting with Jericho and Ai (v. 9)
 - b. the list *mirrors* the conquests outlined in **chaps. 10-11** (S then N)
 - c. the list includes the *name* of each city-state conquered, but not the name of the king
 - d. the list contains 31 *city-state names*, each including the descriptor “one” (i.e. one king)
 - e. **note:** it is *possible* that other cities were also taken along the way, and that the list is not *entirely* complete (i.e. other cities that were *vassals* of these city-states, or did not have a king *per se*)
2. the Conquest under Joshua included *at least* 31 places that Yahweh empowered them to take
 - a. the list is a **remarkable account** of a military campaign by an invading power – the idea of *any other people* having this kind of success is extremely rare (e.g. **Alexander the Great**)
 - b. **meaning:** that a people of nomadic descent (i.e. tent-dwelling Semites), having spent the previous 400 years as *slaves with little military training*, were able to conquer *so many* locations of military strength *throughout* a wide swath of territory **can only be accounted for by a truly divine power**
 - c. the list sends a message (to the Israelites): God *himself* empowered you to drive out his enemies, that you might now live here – therefore, **worship him by living in the land he has given you**
3. **Joshua recounts the successes of Israel under him to remind the people of these things – that they might remember as they take possession of Canaan that God has given them this land**

III. The Remainder of the Land (Joshua 13:1-7)

Content

a. the notice of the Lord to Joshua (vv. 1-6a)

1. **IMO: Joshua 13:1-7** is a part of the pericope encompassing **chap. 12**: it is the **epilogue** of the listing above, where God puts a “period” on the end of Joshua’s work (just as Joshua put a “period” on the end of Moses’ work before him)
2. the Lord tells Joshua that he is “*old and advanced in years*” (which Joshua already knew; **v. 1a**)
3. the Lord tells Joshua that “*there remains yet very much land to possess*” (**v. 1b**)
 - a. **(as above)** Joshua was able to conquer a significant number of city-states, but he was not able to establish Israel to *control* all of it nor set up any “central” government (**see below**)
4. the Lord tells Joshua what land still remains to be taken (**vv. 2-6a**)
 - a. the 5 city-states of the Philistines along the coast, from Egypt in the S northward (vv. 2-3)
 - b. the areas of the Sidonians in the S (**v. 4**) and the Gebalites in the N (**v. 5**)
 - c. and other general areas within the hill country (**v. 6a**)
 - d. **IOW**: Israel would occupy *scattered* locations throughout the land, even though (**starting in v. 8**) the *entire land* would be allocated to the tribes (**i.e.** each tribe would need to go and “clean out” the remaining Canaanite peoples from their territories in order to “take it all”; **note Judges 1:1-3**)
 1. and, this would take 400 years, until David establishes Jerusalem as a *national capital*
 2. until then – Israel would live as a *loose confederacy* under a **theocracy** – individual tribal leaders answering for their people directly to God through the priests at the tabernacle

b. the command of the Lord to Joshua (vv. 6b-7)

1. Joshua has completed the *military portion* of God’s directive over him – now, he is to *allocate the land* to the people, to fulfill the promise made to Abraham
 - a. **i.e.** it is *not enough* for the various Canaanite peoples to be dislodged militarily – the Israelites must now *actively move into the territory* and “finish the job” of occupying it
 - b. **i.e.** the allocation of the land is the “crowning touch” of the life of Joshua (near his end) – conquering it militarily is certainly necessary, but the **really important task** is to make sure that the substance of the original promise *now comes to fruition*
2. **analogy: the Spirit has conquered the “enemy” of our sinful, rebellious hearts – now, we must “take the land” that has been given to us by putting out the remaining “enemies” of the flesh and “occupy” all of what the Father has promised to us in Christ**
 - a. **i.e.** Joshua is a *foreshadowing* of the Christ – he has conquered our enemies; we must *go and live the new life in him* through the on-going “occupation” of the flesh in sanctification
 - b. **i.e.** it is *not enough* for us to just “get saved” – the gospel demands that we also *take dominion* over all remaining vestiges of sin in our lives in a perpetual pursuit of holiness
 - c. **i.e.** Christ has established us in a **Christocracy** – we answer *only to him* as he leads us, by his Spirit through the Word, to be conformed to him image *in every way*