

Joshua 13:1-19:51

How can we know that we will be safe and secure for all eternity?

How can we know that beyond death we will not wander helplessly forever?

God gives us the means by which He leads us into the assurance of everlasting life.

He did this for Israel when he gave his chosen people the land of promise as their inheritance. The physical land of Canaan pictured for Israel and for us the rich inheritance that every believer has in Jesus Christ.

Summary

In Joshua chapters 13-19, the Israelite tribes receive their promised inheritance in the land of Canaan, which pictured the Christian's ultimate inheritance in Christ; eternal life in the new heavens and the new earth.

1. Allotted Land Revisited

Joshua's advanced age would not prove to be a barrier to Israel's reaching the final goal. With God, the Israelites could continue to drive out the inhabitants of the land and occupy all that the Lord had promised.

Joshua's responsibility at this point in his life was to divide the land among the remaining nine and a half tribes who would settle west of the Jordan (13:7).

Before embarking on a description of the land that Joshua parceled out, the remainder of **Chapter 13** describes the land that Reuben, Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh received on the eastern bank of the Jordan. **Chapter 14** begins with an introduction to Israel inheritance west of the Jordan, and then focuses on Caleb and the land that he received. **Chapter 15** covers the land allotted to Judah. **Chapters 16 and 17**, describe the borders and towns belonging to the sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh. **Chapters 18-19** contains the remaining apportionment to the seven tribes, concluding with Joshua's inheritance.

2. Pointing Forward

There are certain themes that point forward beyond this piece of real estate in the Middle-East to something greater.

First, this land is Israel's inheritance (**Josh 14:1; 15:20; 17:4, 6; 18:4,2 8; 19:1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 16, 23, 31, 39, 48, 49, 51**). God owned the land of Canaan.

He fought for his people to drive out their enemies and to give the land as a grant.

Secondly, the allocation of the land was a religious act.

Who apportioned the land? **Joshua**; helped by the leaders and representatives from the other tribes. The other person named is Eleazar, the priest (**Josh 14:1; 17:4; 19:51**). Israel had an entire tribe, the Levites, devoted to the priesthood. They did not receive any land **Josh 18:7** "the priesthood of the LORD is their heritage."

This points to the kind of inheritance all of God's people should expect in the end, nothing or no one less than God Himself.

Thirdly, the place where this occurred is significant.

Gilgal had been Israel's base of operations since entering Canaan, and so it is likely that the early allotment took place there.

At the beginning of chapter 18, however, the location changed to Shiloh, mentioned for the first time in the Bible here. It became the rallying point for the nation.

With the land of promise subdued before Israel, the people of God were taking back the earth and bringing it back under the Lord's dominion.

That there is more to come is also seen in the already-but-not-yet tension.

Israel possessed the land (**Josh 11:16-17; 18:1b**) but Israel did not have all of the land (**Josh 13:1-7; 15:63; 16:10; 17:12-13**).

This parallels the believer's experience salvation. By faith in this finished work we have been saved but we look and long for the consummation of of salvation (**Titus 2:13**)

3. New Testament Perspective

The already-but-not-yet tension spills over into the New Testament.

What did Abraham expect when God promised to give him the land of Canaan?

He expected land but was that all that Abraham expected?

By its very nature, the old covenant was a religion of types and shadows.

Physical things and events pointed to much greater realities, and so it was with the land (**Heb. 11:8b-9**).

Why did Abraham step out in faith? Because 'he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God' (**Heb. 11:10**). The land was a picture prophecy of the final destination, the celestial city, our heavenly home.

The apostle Paul described the land covenant in the same way (**Rom. 4:13**).

Paul knew that, as wonderful as its milk and honey were, the Lord covenanted to give to Abraham much more than just land. He promised him the world, a promise that reaches its ultimate fulfillment in the new heavens and the earth (**Rev. 21:1-8**)

All believers will inherit that land but even now we have an inheritance. We do not have to wait for Christ to return to be assured of it. The land promise that points us to the renewed cosmos in the end also points us to Christ, the one in whom all of God's promises are confirmed (**2 Cor. 1:20**) and through whom they are realized.

In Christ we have obtained an inheritance' (**Eph. 1:11**). The Father has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light' (**Col. 1:12**).

Jesus came to be the mediator of the new covenant so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance' (**Heb. 9:15**) and God works his regenerating grace in our lives by the Holy Spirit so that we might 'be born again to a living hope, an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading,' an inheritance kept in heaven for us (**1 Pet. 1:3-4**)

We live in the already-but-not-yet tension. We have been saved. but we await our salvation. Do you have the assurance of a land awaiting you in the future?

Do you have the hope of heaven? Is Christ your inheritance?