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(Joshua 13-21)

**Intro.** Have you ever known someone with lots of untapped potential or an amazing amount of unused resources? I’ve known of people who lived as though they could barely make ends meet only to pass away and have over \$1 million in the bank. Maybe you’ve seen a bench player on a team who finally got in a game to show how good he was—a secret weapon, if you will. In the movie “Frozen,” Elsa knew of her gift but couldn’t control it, even turning her little sister Anna into an ice statue & we pick it up here (show 2:00 clip). Just as Elsa learned how to control her gift & began using it for good, so God wants His people to be “Moving Forward” & one way to do that is to “Use God’s Gift.” We’ll look at select passages from Joshua 13-21 today.

Theme: Ownership/Inheritance

Background: Yahweh worked multiple miracles in fighting for Israel to give them the Promised Land.

Now, they get to inherit the land & rest from their trials.

### Overview of the Narrative:

- “inheritance” is a key concept in these chapters, for it occurs over 50x—their fighting was over & now they get to receive & use the gift of the Promised Land—they were finally home!
- Chapters 13-17 cover the assignments made at Gilgal—they cast lots to see how God determined where each tribe should go
- The major cities had been taken but smaller places were left to conquer & God commanded them to drive out the rest—obedience must accompany miracle—Israel’s full possession of the land didn’t occur until David’s victories in 2 Samuel 8:1-14
- We read of the 2 ½ tribes east of the Jordan, for they requested it of Moses & he granted it, but told them they must first fight with their people to obtain the Promised Land—that they were east of the Jordan left them in the buffer zone against Moab & Ammon & they eventually served false gods & were the first to fall to the Assyrians (1 Chronicles 5:25-26)
- ✓ An important life lesson from this is **Don’t Settle for 2<sup>nd</sup> Best**—the 2 ½ tribes would have been better off had they waited for God’s best than request the next best thing—when I was in college, Annthea was dating another guy & she was the best thing in the world. Thinking I would never get her, I went on 3 dates with another girl, but the Lord taught me that we didn’t have a future & to break it off. A few months later, Annthea was hypnotized by my charm. I would have been in a messed up life had I settled for 2<sup>nd</sup> best
- During the allotment of land on the west side of the Jordan for 2 ½ tribes, Caleb (the other faithful spy with Joshua) requested the hill country with strong enemies so he could drive them out—“he wholly followed the LORD, the God of Israel (14:8-9, 14; cf. Numbers 14:24; 32:12; Deuteronomy 1:36)
- Chapters 18-19 cover the assignments at Shiloh when the other 7 tribes were waiting to possess the land
- Chapters 20-21 include the 6 cities of refuge (for those who unintentionally kill someone to have a fair trial). It also notes how the Levites (including the priests) would not be given land, except for small plots in 48 cities spread throughout Israel, so they could deliver God’s Word to Israel. It closes with a note on God’s faithfulness in fulfilling His promises & giving Israel victory over her enemies.
- Because the writer of Hebrews in the NT connects the Promised Land with an eternal Sabbath rest—salvation, eternal life (Hebrews 3-4)—some of the important elements I’m bringing out from this text relates to Israel’s relationship to God & the land as well as what God wants of us in light of the gift of salvation & eternal life.

### I. Receive God’s gift (ch.13-21)

- Clearly, Israel had to receive what Yahweh was giving to her—they had been in bondage in Egypt for most of 430 years, wandered the wilderness for 40 years & fought the Canaanites for 7 years—

thus, they had been away from their homeland for nearly 500 years! (more than twice the number of years America has been a country)

- Just as Israel was receiving a gift from God for an inheritance & for rest, so the Lord offers you a gift of spiritual rest (giving up trying to live according to the Law & attain salvation that way)—this gift comes in the Person & work of Jesus Christ—the only way to receive this gift is by faith, trusting in His finished work on your behalf, for your sin

Illus: There are gifts parents & grandparents have for children, but their children aren't ready to receive it yet—I remember taking a family vacation right before my senior year of high school & we attended a church where they were hosting a “Walk Thru the Bible” seminar in worship & later throughout the day. I asked if we could come back & our whole family wanted to do so. That afternoon I asked my parents for a study Bible so I could learn more about God's Word & they didn't hesitate in buying it for me (they weren't going to buy me souvenirs, but my request was a gift they were ready to give. I just had to ask for it & receive it).

## **II. Use God's gift (18:1-3)**

- Having a portion in God's land required reverence for its purpose & value—God owns the land & divides it out (cf. Leviticus 25:23)—Israel couldn't do whatever they wanted with the land, but they had to use it in a way which honored God, but they had to use it
- These other 7 tribes were standing around watching their extended family members receive & use the gift God had given them—all of Israel owned the land, because God had given it to them, but they hadn't all enjoyed the land, because they didn't all use it

Illus: Have you ever received a gift but failed to use it? Maybe it was a gift card that eventually expired or that book you never got around to reading or a particular sweater your grandmother knit for you from the 1970s shag carpet. We've probably all failed to use a gift we've been given

- “How long will you put off going in to take possession of the land, which the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you?” (18:3)—God miraculously provided FBS with this land in the mid-90s & gave a pastor & the people a vision of seeing a worship center, children's building & education building completed, as well as a gymnasium, but the latter never materialized. The land has been given, all we lack are the funds to build the building. But the Lord owns it all & can work through you to see the rest of the vision become reality, because as it is, He has given us land we own but we haven't enjoyed it because it is wooded, unused land (see Wiersbe, 15, 19)

## **III. Trust the Lord to fulfill all His promises (21:43-45)**

- At the end of this lengthy section on Israel inheriting the land & how it was allotted, we see 3 powerful verses about God's goodness & faithfulness
- Just as the Lord was good & faithful to Israel 3500 years ago, He is good & faithful in our lives today—He cares for us, provides for us & sustains us as we trust & obey Him

Illus: If you are struggling with finances, keep obeying & trusting the Lord through tithing & ask for help. While our ANGELS fund is currently at the lowest it's been in years, the Lord provides through the body of Christ to help those in need—God is ready to show Himself faithful to you (cf. Malachi 3:8-10)

**Conc.** Some of you have seen the movie “Frozen” or heard the songs one too many times & you complain every time it gets mentioned again—just “Let It Go” already. In that movie, Elsa had been given a gift, but it didn't help her until she learned how to use it. If you are a child of God, He has given you the gift of His Spirit so you can trust in Him & live for Him. Part of living for Him includes serving Him & the body of Christ. The gift also includes eternal life. But if you haven't surrendered to Jesus as Lord, God offers you the gift of salvation by receiving Christ. Will you “Use God's Gift” so you can “Move Forward” in life?