

Lesson 11 - 8 January 2012.

Possessing the Promised Land

Lesson Scope: Joshua Chapters 10 to 21

Lesson Focus

The people of Israel spent about seven years subduing the land of Canaan under Joshua. Their military strategy focused on first conquering central Canaan (chapters 6-9). Chapter 10 records the defeat of the southern kings who attacked the Gibeonites. Chapter 11 recounts the conquest of northern Canaan. A list of the kingdoms conquered is given in chapter 12. The land was then divided by lot to the tribes with Joseph receiving a double portion through his sons (Genesis 48:22).

Although the power of the enemy had been broken, pockets of Canaanites remained. There was a practical reason for not driving out all the inhabitants at once. "And the LORD thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee" (Deuteronomy 7:22).

The tribe of Judah was the first to claim their inheritance. Ephraim and Manasseh followed. The remaining seven tribes settling west of the Jordan River needed Joshua to prod them to take their inheritance (Joshua 18:3-6). The Levites received no land—the priesthood of the Lord was their inheritance (Joshua 18:7).

Caleb is a good illustration of the need for committed and visionary lay members. The Lord had differing roles for Joshua and Caleb, but the two men were equally faithful and useful to God. Had the other spies possessed the resolve that Caleb expressed, the children of Israel could have possessed the Promised Land forty years earlier.

We can see here the ramifications of Israel's failure to entirely drive out the Canaanites. A list of the enemies that remained is given in Judges 1 and some of the results in Judges 2.

God sets before His people the land of privilege and opportunity. Entering into this fullness requires faith in the Lord and loyalty to Him.

Lesson Aim: To identify principles related to attaining stability and rest.

Theme Verses: [Psalm 25:13, 14](#). His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth. The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.

Lesson Text:

Subduing

Joshua 11:15 ¹⁵ As the LORD commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that the LORD commanded Moses.

Joshua 11:23 ²³ So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war.

Possessing

Joshua 13:1 ¹ Now Joshua was old *and* stricken in years; and the LORD said unto him, Thou art old *and* stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.

Joshua 13:6 ⁶ All the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon unto Misrephothmaim, *and* all the Sidonians, them will I drive out from before the children of Israel: only divide thou it by lot unto the Israelites for an inheritance, as I have commanded thee.

Joshua 14:6 ⁶ Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the LORD said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadeshbarnea.

Joshua 14:12-15 ¹² Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims *were* there, and *that* the cities *were* great *and* fenced: if so be the LORD *will be* with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said. ¹³ And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance. ¹⁴ Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel. ¹⁵ And the name of Hebron before *was* Kirjatharba; *which Arba was* a great man among the Anakims. And the land had rest from war.

Joshua 17:3-4 ³ But Zelophehad, the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but daughters: and these *are* the names of his daughters, Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and

Tirzah. ⁴ And they came near before Eleazar the priest, and before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the princes, saying, The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brethren. Therefore according to the commandment of the LORD he gave them an inheritance among the brethren of their father.

Joshua 17:13 ¹³ Yet it came to pass, when the children of Israel were waxen strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute; but did not utterly drive them out.

Joshua 17:17-18 ¹⁷ And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, *even* to Ephraim and to Manasseh, saying, Thou *art* a great people, and hast great power: thou shalt not have one lot *only*: ¹⁸ But the mountain shall be thine; for it *is* a wood, and thou shalt cut it down: and the outgoings of it shall be thine: for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, *and* though they *be* strong.

Resting

Joshua 20:2-3 ² Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Appoint out for you cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Moses: ³ That the slayer that killeth *any* person unawares *and* unwittingly may flee thither: and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood.

Joshua 21:43-45 ⁴³ And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. ⁴⁴ And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. ⁴⁵ There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.

Questions for Study

Subduing

1. Why is complete obedience a prerequisite for victory?
2. How did Joshua typify Christ in his conquest of Canaan?

Possessing

3. Why did Caleb request that particular mountain as an inheritance?
4. What may have been the reasons why Israel failed to utterly drive out the enemy?
5. What were the consequences of Canaanites living among the Israelites?
6. How can elderly leaders inspire the next generation to take up the work?

Resting

7. What divine principles did the establishment of the cities of refuge emphasize?
8. How does the Christian experience rest while yet in the midst of spiritual warfare?

Analyzing the Passage

The request of the daughters of Zelophehad brought an answer from the Lord that established the order of inheritance (Numbers 27:7-11). If a man had no sons, the inheritance passed to his daughters. Numbers 36:1-9 give an additional clarification to this issue.

The Levites were allotted several cities in each tribe of Israel. God made them responsible to preserve and promulgate the Law. By scattering them throughout the land, God ensured that all Israelites had access to spiritual leadership.

Six of the Levitical cities were designated as cities of refuge. They were strategically located throughout the land, three on the west side of Jordan and three on the east side. From any point in Israel, one of these cities could be reached in a day's journey.

Principles and Applications

Subduing

1. Complete obedience is required for stability and rest (Joshua 11:15). Joshua had faithfully performed his duty in the conquest of Canaan. There was work left for others to do, but he had done what was required of him. We too will find rest as we obey the known will of God. As long as we are in this life, God will have more for us to do, but we obtain rest as we continue in obedience to the commands of God.

2. Spiritual rest is attained through conflict (Joshua 11:23). God will do His part, and He expects man to do his. As in the land of Canaan, our spiritual enemies will not be conquered without conflict. The carnal nature within will assert itself if given opportunity. The desire for the world's approval and the tendency toward accommodation need to be destroyed by God's power.

Possessing

3. Personal rest is achieved by being diligent in our portion of the conflict (Joshua 14:6, 12). We benefit from the help of the entire group. There are,

however, personal battles for us to win. Without God's help we cannot win; without our participation, God will not work. The level of rest we enjoy will be determined by the level of personal victory we attain.

4. God rewards a faithful walk with victory and rest (Joshua 14:14-15). God had kept Caleb through the decades of wandering in the wilderness and the years of strenuous military campaigning in Canaan. In his old age, Caleb's strong faith was rewarded by victory over the Anakims—the giants who had intimidated the ten spies. The faithful are rewarded with victory and rest unknown to those who lack trust in God and fail to courageously engage the enemy.

5. No one is excluded from the possibility of obtaining spiritual inheritance (Joshua 17:3-4). There are no exclusive privileges to spiritual inheritance. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). Those who do not have a godly heritage may secure an inheritance with the saints. In contrast to an earthly inheritance, there is no one who can obtain a spiritual inheritance by virtue of ancestry.

Resting

6. We must beware that the enemy does not keep us from the reality of rest and stability (Joshua 17:13). The enemy is ever ready to strike a bargain to gain a foothold. Satisfaction with a partial victory will prevent us from enjoying rest. The children of Israel put the Canaanites to tribute instead of driving them out. This probably seemed like the easier route to take and was materially advantageous. Eventually, however, the Canaanites rose up and subjugated the Israelites. We too must beware lest we believe ourselves to be in control of the enemy only to awaken someday to the realization that the enemy controls us.

7. Courage is needed in our spiritual conflict (Joshua 17:17-18). The enemies of God's people are real, and commitment and courage are required for victory. As society continues on its downward path, the principles of God's Word increasingly come under attack. The proclamation that salvation through Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven will not be appreciated in a world of many religions. Am I willing to unapologetically affirm the Biblical standards of marriage to those who consider it bigotry? God is looking for those who will fearlessly hold forth the truth for all to see.

8. Discernment in judgment brings rest and stability to the brotherhood

(Joshua 20:2-3). God instituted the cities of refuge for the dual purpose of sheltering the innocent manslayer and bringing the guilty to justice. The Christian brotherhood will strike a balance between unhealthy suspicion on the one hand and sinful tolerance on the other. Rest is found in submission to the voice of the brotherhood. We need the security of knowing that our brethren will not permit us to continue unchecked in a course that will lead to spiritual ruin.

9. Occupying with the Lord gives us stability and rest (Joshua 21:43-45). We need to be ever mindful that our sufficiency is of God. It is through the blessing and protection of the Lord that we are able to rest even in the midst of enemies. Not one of our foes will be able to keep us from the promised rest. The rest that God gives to the faithful in this life is a precursor to the eternal rest prepared for the victorious saints.

Important Teachings

1. Complete obedience is required for stability and rest (Joshua 11:15).
2. Spiritual rest is attained through conflict (Joshua 11:23).
3. Personal rest is achieved by being diligent in our portion of the conflict (Joshua 14:6, 12).
4. God rewards a faithful walk with victory and rest (Joshua 14:14-15).
5. No one is excluded from the possibility of obtaining spiritual inheritance (Joshua 17:3-4).
6. We must beware that the enemy does not keep us from the reality of rest and stability (Joshua 17:13).
7. Courage is needed in our spiritual conflict (Joshua 17:17-18).
8. Discernment in judgment brings rest and stability to the brotherhood (Joshua 20:2-3).
9. Occupying with the Lord gives us stability and rest (Joshua 21:43-45).

Answers to Questions

1. Why is complete obedience a prerequisite for victory?

God is our source of power. His assistance is contingent on our obedience to His directives. Any disobedience gives Satan a foothold in our lives and renders victory impossible.

2. How did Joshua typify Christ in his conquest of Canaan?

Joshua was appointed of God to lead Israel just as Christ is God's anointed Shepherd. Joshua fully fulfilled God's commands, foreshadowing Christ's

perfect obedience to the will of God. Joshua broke the power of the enemy in Canaan. Christ has defeated Satan, thus breaking his power in the life of the Christian.

3. Why did Caleb request that particular mountain as an inheritance?

The mountain he requested was home to the Anakims, those giants who had intimidated the ten spies. At that time, Caleb had declared that by God's help they were well able to overcome the giants. Now by God's grace he would prove that the Lord was able.

4. What may have been the reasons why Israel failed to utterly drive out the enemy?

When Israel was stronger than the enemy, they seemed to be little threat to Israel. It was less strenuous to put the enemy to tribute than to drive them out. There were monetary advantages to this arrangement.

5. What were the consequences of Canaanites living among the Israelites?

As God had forewarned, the Canaanites became a snare to Israel. Repeatedly, Israel became involved in idol worship through the influence of ungodly neighbors. The Canaanites later became stronger and oppressed Israel.

6. How can elderly leaders inspire the next generation to take up the work?

Elderly leaders can inspire the next generation by steadfastness to the end. As Joshua did, they need to challenge the people to wholeheartedly serve the Lord. They need to involve younger leaders early enough that they can work alongside them.

7. What divine principles did the establishment of the cities of refuge emphasize?

God never condoned murder. Human life is sacred and superior to animal life. Even involuntary manslaughter was treated very seriously. If proved innocent, the person responsible for the death of another needed to stay in the city of refuge until the death of the high priest. The principle of requiring multiple witnesses to establish guilt had been established in the Mosaic Law. The cities of refuge ensured that a suspect would be tried by due process of law rather than summarily executed by a relative of the deceased. God makes allowance for unintentional acts of man and judges the intent of the heart.

8. How does the Christian experience rest while yet in the midst of spiritual warfare?

Rest is found in victorious Christian living. While yet facing the foe, we rejoice, for Christ has broken the power of Satan, and we fight a defeated enemy. We find our sufficiency in Christ and anticipate the eternal rest promised to those who overcome.

Summarizing the Lesson

In this life, God gives His people rest amid the conflict. Rest is never found by avoiding the battle with evil. The desire of the ten spies to avoid facing the foe led to forty restless years of wandering in the wilderness. Caleb, with his fearless desire to engage the enemy, found rest in the land of promise.

No attempt to coexist with the enemy will bring the rest we desire. Only complete obedience and reliance upon the power of God will sustain us. Ultimately, God's people will obtain rest in the absence of conflict.

Research Guide

1. Look at Numbers 35 and Deuteronomy 19 for a fuller discussion on the cities of refuge and the conditions for refuge.
2. See chapter 10 in Baker's Bible Atlas for the tribal allotments of land.
3. Study Hebrews 3 and 4 for a New Testament commentary on Israel and a discussion of the conditions of rest.