

# SETTLEMENT EAST OF THE JORDAN

JOSHUA 12 AND 13



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*A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe*

**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

*Settlement East of the Jordan*  
*Joshua 12 and 13*

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## Joshua 12 and 13: Introduction

Chapters 12-21 of the book of Joshua record the division and settlement of the land of Canaan. As such, they can be tedious reading.

But if we read these chapters in the larger context of God's promises, we can understand the attention to detail – each tribe, each allotment, each city. God had promised to bless His people, and now He spells out in detail all that He had prepared for them.

The message is clear: God, Who bestowed so much blessing on His people, will not fail to deliver on everything He has promised.

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## 1 Defeat and Possess

*These are the kings of the land whom the children of Israel defeated, and whose land they possessed on the other side of the Jordan toward the rising of the sun, from the River Arnon to Mount Hermon, and all the eastern Jordan plain... Joshua 12.1*

*Reflect.*

1. The author now gives us a catalog of Israel's victories, before proceeding to report on the divisions of the land. Why was that necessary?
2. Israel had defeated the enemies of God, but had the people yet realized all His promises?

*Think about it.*

The next section of the book of Joshua (chapters 12-21) can be a little tedious, and we will take larger chunks of it in our study for most days.

Nevertheless, since all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable to equip us for every good work, we need to examine these reports carefully to discover how God wants to encourage us and give us hope (Rom. 15.4).

Note the emphasis on "defeated" and "possessed" in our verse for today. It was never God's intention that Israel should merely be a rod of punishment for the Canaanites, whose sin was now out of control and overflowing (cf. Gen. 15.16). He had given this land to Abraham as a possession and dwelling-place, and now it was the calling of His people to resume that covenant story which had begun so many years before. God had been good to the people of Canaan, giving them homes and harvests and much else beside. Yet instead of receiving those benefits with gratitude, as a witness to God's love, they multiplied false deities and the repugnant religions and morality that went with them (cf. Acts 14.17; Acts 17.26, 27; Rom. 1.18-32).

God was now determined to reclaim the good He had given these ungrateful nations, and to bestow it upon His people, according to His promise. Chapter 12 connects the conquest of Canaan with the promises of God and the deliverance accomplished by Moses, thus establishing continuity with past generations of God's people with those who would inhabit the land from this point forward. And chapter 13 begins the record of how the land of promise was divided among the people of Israel.

*Meditate and discuss.*

1. Meditate on Matthew 12.32-45. Can you see any similarities between Jesus' teaching here and the "defeat" and "possess" mandates given to Israel under Joshua?
2. We remember that, with the exception of the Gibeonites, none of the kings Israel defeated in battle sought to make peace with them. But why didn't Israel try to make peace with those kings? What's the lesson in this for us?
3. Joshua's defeat of the enemies of God and Israel is a type of Jesus' defeat of the enemy of our soul. Explain. In a sense, Joshua's victories made it possible for Israel to be at rest and to begin working out the salvation God had granted them. This reminds us that *being* saved is just the beginning; *working out our salvation* is the ongoing calling of every believer (Phil. 2.12). What does that entail?

*"It is clear that Moses saw in his mind the truth of the law and the allegorical meanings related to the anagogical sense of the stories he recorded, and that Joshua understood the true distribution of land which took place after the overthrow of the twenty-*

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*nine kings, since he could see better than us that the things accomplished through himself were shadows of certain realities.”  
Origen of Alexandria (185-254 AD)*

*Lord, I rest in Your salvation, but I do not rest from my salvation. Instead, I...*

*Pray Psalm 9.1-13.*

Give thanks to God and ask Him to give you opportunities to proclaim His salvation today. Trust in Him for boldness to witness and openness on the part of those who need to hear.

**Psalm 9.1-13** (*Diademata: Crown Him with Many Crowns*)

I will give thanks, O Lord, with all my heart to You!  
I'll tell the wonders of Your Word, so many and so true!  
With joy to You I cry; Your glory I will raise;  
Your matchless Name, O Lord on High, will I forever praise!

Backwards my foes shall fall before Your holy face.  
You rescue all who on You call by Your all-glorious grace.  
The nations lie in ruins; the wicked are no more;  
Our enemies have come to doom in wrath and judgment sore.

Lord, You forever reign in judgment on Your throne.  
The world in bitter wrath and pain Your righteousness will own.  
All those who know Your Name, though in this life oppressed,  
You shelter from the storms of shame and keep them ever blessed.

Praise then the Lord of Zion; declare His deeds abroad!  
Praise Judah's mighty saving Lion, the ever-blessèd God!  
Whose blood has washed us clean, Who hears our plaintive cries,  
Who good to us has ever been and lifts us to the skies!

## 2 Victories under Moses

One king was *Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon and ruled half of Gilead, from Arzer, which is on the bank of the River Arnon, from the middle of that river, even as far as the River Jabbok, which is the border of the Ammonites, and the eastern Jordan plain from the Sea of Chinneroth as far as the Sea of the Arabah (the Salt Sea), the road to Beth Jeshimoth, and southward below the slopes of Pisgab.* The other king was *Og king of Bashan and his territory, who was of the remnant of the giants, who dwelt at Ashtaroth and at Edrei, and reigned over Mount Hermon, over Salcab, over all Bashan, as far as the border of the Gesburites and the Maachathites, and over half of Gilead to the border of Sihon king of Heshbon. These Moses the servant of the LORD and the children of Israel had conquered; and Moses the servant of the LORD had given it as a possession to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh.* Joshua 12:2-6

*Reflect.*

1. Why do you think the writer gives us more details here about the extent of the conquests under Moses? Is he trying to maintain a connection between the past, present, and future?
2. How do you see that this catalog of Moses' victories is intended to exalt the Lord?

*Think about it.*

The writer now provides a more detailed catalog of the conquests east of the Jordan which the Lord accomplished for His people under Moses' leadership (you might like to review Numbers 32). From the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea, the lands east of the Jordan were given to the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. Many powerful peoples were defeated, and many great cities came into the possession of the people of Israel. More details on the subdividing of that territory will follow in chapter 13.

This is a significant portion of real estate, but it was not settled until after the rest of the land was subdued. We remember that these two-and-a-half tribes were required to lead the way in Israel's campaigns against the Canaanites. They did so faithfully, honorably, and effectively. Their word was their bond, and the vision of those beautiful lands east of the Jordan supplied their motivation.

The emphasis on Moses being "the servant of the LORD" reminds those tribes – and all Israel – that what they had managed to achieve was only because of the Lord's promise, presence, and power.

*Meditate and discuss.*

1. Comment on the role of vision in the conquest of Canaan. What vision motivated the people of Israel? How was that vision related to the promises of God?
2. Do you think churches today use vision as effectively as they could? Explain.
3. What makes someone a "servant of the LORD"? Should all Christians regard themselves as servants of the Lord? Explain.

*"This chapter does not need a lengthened exposition, as it only enumerates the kings of whose territories the Israelites gained possession. Two of them are beyond the Jordan, Og and Sihon, whose rule was extensive; in the land of Canaan there are thirty-one. But though each of those now summarily mentioned was previously given more in detail, there is very good reason for here placing before our eyes as it were a living picture of the goodness of God, proving that there had been a complete ratification and performance of the covenant made with Abraham as given in the words, 'Unto thy seed will I give this land.'" John Calvin, Commentary on Joshua (1509-1564 AD)*

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*I am Your servant, Lord, and today I will fulfill that calling by...*

*Pray Psalm 113.*

Servants of the Lord praise Him and serve Him by being agents of His grace and truth to the world. Let this psalm guide you in thinking about the day ahead, as you prepare to serve the Lord in your Personal Mission Field.

**Psalm 113** (*Armageddon: Who is on the Lord's Side?*)

Praise the Lord, O praise Him,  
All who know His Name!  
From this day forever, magnify His fame!  
From the time each morning  
When the sun is raised  
To its evening waning, let His Name be praised!  
*Refrain vs. 1, 2*  
Praise the Lord, O praise Him, all who know His Name!  
From this day forever, magnify His fame!

High above the nations,  
On Your glorious throne,  
Who is like You, Savior, ruling all You own?  
Sovereign and all-knowing,  
Over all above,  
Praise to You is owing for Your perfect love!  
*Refrain*

Though You rule from heaven,  
Looking down on earth,  
Praise and thanks be given to Your holy worth!  
Down You reach to touch us,  
Clad in ash and dust,  
Raising us with such as in Your favor trust.  
*Refrain*

Seated now with princes  
'Round Your glorious throne,  
We by grace are lifted to become Your own.  
Barren women, joyous,  
Glad their children bear;  
Joining in the chorus, they Your praise declare.  
*Refrain*

### 3 Conquests in the Land

*And these are the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel conquered on this side of the Jordan, on the west, from Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon as far as Mount Halak and the ascent to Seir, which Joshua gave to the tribes of Israel as a possession according to their divisions in the mountain country, in the lowlands, in the Jordan plain, in the slopes, in the wilderness, and in the South—the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: the king of Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which is beside Bethel, one; the king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one; the king of Jarmuth, one; the king of Lachish, one; 12 the king of Eglon, one; the king of Gezer, one; the king of Debir, one; the king of Geder, one; the king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one; the king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one; the king of Makkedah, one; the king of Bethel, one; the king of Tappuah, one; the king of Hepher, one; the king of Aphek, one; the king of Lasharon, one; the king of Madon, one; the king of Hazor, one; the king of Shimron Meron, one; the king of Achshaph, one; the king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one; the king of Kedesh, one; the king of Jokneam in Carmel, one; the king of Dor in the heights of Dor, one; the king of the people of Gilgal, one; the king of Tirzah, one—all the kings, thirty-one. Joshua 12.7-23*

*Reflect.*

1. Why all this tabulating of defeated kings? Is this just Israel gloating?
2. In spite of all these conquests, much remained to be done (cf. Josh. 13.2). The land was *conquered*, but it was still *being conquered*. Just like our salvation, right?

*Think about it.*

The writer lists six peoples as having been conquered by Joshua and the children of Israel. But those six peoples or nations were divided among thirty-one kings, and all those kings maintained standing armies. All this within a piece of real estate not much larger than the state of New Jersey!

No wonder war, pillage, plunder, and conquest were such a constant part of Canaanite life. Imagine taking a long trip with all seven of your preadolescent kids in the back seat. That's what Canaan was like. The fact that some of these kings could agree on *anything* was a mere expedient, a vain effort to preserve whatever autonomy and power they had known.

Yet so entrenched in self-interest, so determined to guard their turf, so confident of the rightness of their own cause were these kings, that, with the exception of the Gibeonites, they would not seek peace and submit to Israel. They *would not* believe in Israel's God, the evidence of His irresistible power notwithstanding.

People haven't changed much, eh?

*Meditate and discuss.*

1. Why do you think it was important to catalog these victories? Should we be keeping record of the victories God brings into our lives? Why or why not?
2. What does the writer mean when he says these peoples were "conquered" (vv. 6, 7)? Does that mean all the fighting was over (cf. 13.2)? Was the writer wrong?
3. In Jesus Christ, we possess all the precious and very great promises of God (2 Cor. 1.20; 2 Pet. 1.4). But do we *actually* possess all God's promises? We have been *saved* by our Joshua, but we are still *being saved* by Him. Explain.

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*“Joshua was eighty years of age when he entered the land. In this aged man how could there be so much vigor as to fit him for carrying on so many wars and enduring the fatigues of warfare, had not celestial virtue furnished him with more than mortal strength? And were not his uninterrupted career of victory, his success under all circumstances, the ease, free from doubt and uncertainty, with which he stormed cities, the rapidity of his movements, and his inflexible firmness — were not all these clear evidences of the hand of God, just as if it had appeared from heaven?” John Calvin, Commentary on Joshua (1509-1564 AD)*

*Many battles lie ahead of me today, Lord. Give me strength like Joshua, and faith in Jesus, as I...*

*Pray Psalm 9.1-13.*

Use this psalm to lay out your battle plan for today’s going forth with Jesus, conquering and to conquer (Rev. 6.2).

**Psalm 9.1-13** (*Diademata: Crown Him with Many Crowns*)

I will give thanks, O Lord, with all my heart to You!  
I’ll tell the wonders of Your Word, so many and so true!  
With joy to You I cry; Your glory I will raise;  
Your matchless Name, O Lord on High, will I forever praise!

Backwards my foes shall fall before Your holy face.  
You rescue all who on You call by Your all-glorious grace.  
The nations lie in ruins; the wicked are no more;  
Our enemies have come to doom in wrath and judgment sore.

Lord, You forever reign in judgment on Your throne.  
The world in bitter wrath and pain Your righteousness will own.  
All those who know Your Name, though in this life oppressed,  
You shelter from the storms of shame and keep them ever blessed.

Praise then the Lord of Zion; declare His deeds abroad!  
Praise Judah’s mighty saving Lion, the ever-blessèd God!  
Whose blood has washed us clean, Who hears our plaintive cries,  
Who good to us has ever been and lifts us to the skies!

## 4 Land Remaining to Conquer

*Now Joshua was old, advanced in years. And the LORD said to him: "You are old, advanced in years, and there remains very much land yet to be possessed. This is the land that yet remains: all the territory of the Philistines and all that of the Geshurites, from Sihor, which is east of Egypt, as far as the border of Ekron northward (which is counted as Canaanite); the five lords of the Philistines—the Gazites, the Ashdodites, the Ashkelonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites; also the Avites; from the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that belongs to the Sidonians as far as Aphek, to the border of the Amorites; the land of the Gebalites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrise, from Baal Gad below Mount Hermon as far as the entrance to Hamath; all the inhabitants of the mountains from Lebanon as far as the Brook Misrephoth, and all the Sidonians—them I will drive out from before the children of Israel; only divide it by lot to Israel as an inheritance, as I have commanded you. Now therefore, divide this land as an inheritance to the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh." Joshua 13.1-7*

*Reflect.*

1. Why is the Lord pushing Joshua so hard? Hasn't he already accomplished enough?
2. Joshua was "old, advanced in years..." Shouldn't he have just retired?

*Think about it.*

There was always more of the promised land to be gained than Israel ever managed to subdue. Even during the reign of King David, we find Israel still having to contend with Canaanites on all sides. My sense is that God always intended it to be this way, especially when we think of the conquest of Canaan as a symbol or type of our own sanctification.

Or even as a type of the Church's mission in the world (Matt. 28.18-20). The land of Canaan was a token of the whole earth (going back to the mandate to Adam and forward to the commission of Christ). As in Joshua's day, so in every age, God urges His people on to greater realization of His promises, raising up leaders to mark out carefully the parameters of what is yet to be gained, and to lead the people untiringly in laying hold on God's promises.

Here is counsel for church leaders today. We interpret the ancient promises of God (Gen. 12.1-3) into our mission of seeking the Kingdom and righteousness of God (Mat. 6.33). Leaders must point the people of God forward to the great and precious promises of the Lord, and lead them step by step, little by little, in dispossessing the kingdom of darkness and bringing the Kingdom of light more fully into every area of life.

Church leaders must nurture vision, develop strategies, and equip and lead their flocks for fuller realization of the promises of God, both in their personal lives and in their life together as communities of faith. Joshua was not allowed to "retire" from the work of the Kingdom. We may retire from our job, but the work we've been given to do is greater than the job at which we work. There will always be more work to do in seeing the Kingdom of God come on earth as it is in heaven, and we may never retire from that high and holy calling.

*Meditate and discuss.*

1. How do vision, strategy, and equipping factor into your church's mission in its community?
2. What do we mean by saying that "the work we've been given to do is greater than the job at which we work"? Do you agree?
3. In his book, *Finishing Our Course with Joy*, J. I. Packer says that even as we grow old we can continue learning about Jesus and leading others to Him. Do you agree? How should church leaders help us in this?

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*“...although there are those in the Scriptures who are called presbyters or elders or high priests, nevertheless, among the presbyters or elders the Lord Jesus must be reckoned chief of presbyters, and among bishops, chief of bishops, just as among high priests he is ‘chief of high priests,’ and as among shepherds he is ‘chief of shepherds.’ The Savior must be held first and chief in this and in every honorable title, because he is the ‘head’ of all.” Augustine (354-430 AD)*

*Lord, You are sending me forth today to make a little progress in realizing Your promises and advancing Your Kingdom. Let me not grow weary of the struggle, Lord, but help me to...*

*Pray Psalm 126.*

Instead of “captivity,” pray the word “restoration.” It’s closer to the Hebrew, and it points us to how the Lord is working in our lives to restore us to the image of King Jesus, and in our world to restore it to Himself in righteousness, peace, and joy. Seek the Lord’s strength for today’s “sowing.”

**Psalm 126** (*Truro: Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns*)

When God restored our fortunes all,  
We were like those who sweetly dream.  
Our mouths with joy and laughter filled,  
Made Him our constant song and theme.

Then the astonished nations said,  
“The Lord has done great things for them!”  
Indeed, great things our God has done,  
Whose Name we praise, Amen, Amen!

Restore our fortunes, Lord our King!  
Let grace like flowing streams prevail.  
All they with tears of joy shall sing  
Who sow while yet they weep and wail.

They who in tears of sorrow sow  
And cast their seed on every hand,  
With joy shall reach their heav’nly home,  
And bring the harvest of their land.

## 5 Divisions East of the Jordan

*With the other half-tribe the Reubenites and the Gadites received their inheritance, which Moses had given them, beyond the Jordan eastward, as Moses the servant of the LORD had given them: from Aroer which is on the bank of the River Arnon, and the town that is in the midst of the ravine, and all the plain of Medeba as far as Dibon; all the cities of Sibon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, as far as the border of the children of Ammon; Gilead, and the border of the Geshurites and Maachathites, all Mount Hermon, and all Bashan as far as Salcab; all the kingdom of Og in Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth and Edrei, who remained of the remnant of the giants; for Moses had defeated and cast out these. Nevertheless the children of Israel did not drive out the Geshurites or the Maachathites, but the Geshurites and the Maachathites dwell among the Israelites until this day. Only to the tribe of Levi he had given no inheritance; the sacrifices of the LORD God of Israel made by fire are their inheritance, as He said to them. Joshua 13:8-14*

*Reflect.*

1. Why do you suppose the two-and-a-half tribes did not drive out the peoples mentioned in verse 13?
2. The Levites are mentioned here because they would be scattered throughout the various tribes, including those settling east of the Jordan. Why was that?

*Think about it.*

The writer mentions the many victories Moses led these two-and-a-half tribes to achieve on the east side of the Jordan. We might think that, having accomplished so much already, they would go on and finish the job. But, as verse 13 explains, they did not, and had not finished it until the day of this writing (v. 13, which was probably after the death of Joshua).

Were they weary of fighting? Had they become content to realize only part of what God had promised them, rather than all? Or did they consider that allowing these two groups of Canaanites to continue in their midst would not be that big a deal? Whatever their reasoning for not driving out the Geshurites and Maachathites, it would come back to bite them.

The Levites are mentioned because, unlike the other eleven tribes, they had no permanent settlement as a tribe. Instead, they were allotted cities throughout the lands given to the various tribes, together with the pasture lands and farm plots attached to those cities. Since the Levites provided the religious services of Israel, they needed to be situated among all the various tribes. They had no inheritance of land from which to provide for their needs, although farms and pastures were provided for them. Rather, their inheritance – their daily provision – came through the sacrifices which people brought. A portion of those sacrifices was allotted to the priests and Levites who served the people (cf. Num. 8:8-11). Here is established the principle that Paul claimed in 1 Corinthians 9:8-14 and Galatians 6:6).

*Meditate and discuss.*

1. Why do Christians become complacent about growing in the Lord or seeking more of His Kingdom presence, promise, and power? How can we recognize when we are succumbing to this temptation?
2. Why was it not a good idea to allow Canaanite peoples to remain among the tribes of Israel? How does this speak to us about our sanctification in the Lord?
3. How would you articulate the principle established in verse 14?

*“This exception was also necessary, lest the Levites might allege that they were unjustly disinherited, and thus excite great commotions in regard to their right. He therefore reminds them that Moses was the author of this distinction, and, at the same*

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*time, shows that they have no reason to complain of having been in any way defrauded, because an excellent compensation was given them. For although the sacrifices were not equally divided among the Levites, their subsistence was sufficiently provided for by all the first-fruits and the tithes.” John Calvin, Commentary on Joshua (1509-1564 AD)*

*Lord, You are my inheritance, and I rejoice at the prospect of...*

*Pray Psalm 16.*

As you pray, meditate on what it means to have the Lord Himself for your inheritance, and praise and thank Him accordingly.

**Psalm 16** (*All to Christ: Jesus Paid It All*)

Preserve me, O my God; I refuge seek in You.

You alone are all my good, my Lord and Savior true!

*Refrain v. 11*

Make me know life's way! Pleasures fill Your hand;

Fill my life with joy each day! Before Your face I stand.

The saints within the earth, majestic in their day,

Delight me with the worth of all they do and say.

*Refrain*

They endless tears shall weep who worship idols vain;

Their ways I will not keep, nor speak their empty names.

*Refrain*

My portion and my cup are You, my Savior dear;

You help and hold me up and ever keep me near.

*Refrain*

I bless Your Name, O Lord; my mind instructs each night;

You teach me by Your Word and guide me in the right.

*Refrain*

You are ever with me, Lord; in You I shall not fall.

But rejoicing in Your Word, I abide within Your call.

*Refrain*

Soon Your glory I shall see, for as Jesus rose again,

You will come to gather me to my home with You in heav'n.

*Refrain*

## 6 Allotments to the Two-and-a-Half Tribes

*Read Joshua 13.15-33*

*Reflect.*

1. The first division of the land of Canaan is on the east side of the Jordan, for the two-and-a-half tribes. Why did it make sense to begin with them?
2. What did it mean that the Levites, scattered throughout these three territories, had the Lord God as their inheritance? Do you think their presence throughout Israel was intended also as a witness for all the people of God (cf. Ps. 16.5, 6)?

*Think about it.*

On the east side of the Jordan river, the families, flocks, and herds of the people of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh have been patiently waiting while the land of Canaan was subdued. Now the lands conquered by Moses are divided among them.

The first parcel, farthest to the south, goes to the tribe of Reuben. He was the first born of Jacob, and so it is fitting that his allotment should be the first given.

Gad's allotment, north of that of Reuben is next. Gad was next in the birth order following Simeon, but Simeon would have his allotment on the other side of the Jordan, so for now, he is skipped.

The half-tribe of Manasseh receives the allotment farthest to the north, still on the east side of the Jordan.

Levites are distributed among these tribes, with the reminder that their only permanent inheritance is the Lord God Himself. Their work would have reminded the people of Israel that He was their true inheritance as well.

In the giving of these allotments, there seems to be a sense of connection to the ancient roots of the nation, as we see the careful attention to birth order. For whatever reason, that practice will not hold once the allotting begins on the west side of the Jordan. Did matters of political expediency or convenience trump the honoring of the order of inheritance of Jacob's sons? And is this a portent of things to come?

*Meditate and discuss.*

1. Inheriting these lands meant occupying existing cities, complete with homes, farms, and all manner of cultural artifacts (tools, household implements, furnishings, etc.). Imagine that you were assigned a home in a neighborhood of one of those cities. How would you begin to put it in order?
2. You and your neighbors in this city need to organize the city itself. What will you do? What are your objectives? Would you expect the city to change in any ways? What would you do to maintain order and to begin implementing the Law of God?
3. The work of a church and its families is in many ways similar to what the tribes of Israel faced in settling the land of Canaan. Explain.

*“What he seemed to have said with sufficient clearness he now follows more fully in detail, not only that the reading might incite the people to gratitude, seeing the divine goodness recorded in public documents, and, as it were, constantly before their eyes, but*

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*also that each might enjoy his inheritance without molestation and quarrel.” John Calvin (1509-1564 AD)*

*Lord, I have work to do every day getting my “allotment” in order before you. Teach me to plan well and to...*

*Pray Psalm 90.12-17.*

Learn to use these verses to guide you in “settling” your “allotment” from the Lord each day.

**Psalm 90.12-17** (*Landas: My Faith Has Found a Resting Place*)

Lord, teach us all our days to note that wisdom may be ours.

Return, O Lord, have pity on those servants who are Yours.

Each morning let Your love appear that we for joy may sing.

And make us glad for every day You us affliction bring.

Now let Your work to us appear; our children show Your might.

And let Your favor rest on us; show mercy in Your sight.

The work that You have given us, confirm, and to us show,

That we Your chosen path may walk and in Your precepts go.

## 7 Beginning of the Settlement

*Read Joshua 12 and 13.*

*Reflect.*

1. What's the biggest challenge to you in reading chapters like this? Do you find it difficult to discover anything meaningful, or anything that you can apply in your own walk with the Lord?
2. How can these chapters, and others like them, help us in appreciating the greatness of God and the magnitude of His promises?

*Think about it.*

The first two sections of Joshua – Preparation and Conquest – were full of divine encounter, scene changes, dramatic action, memorials, mistakes, and course corrections. In section three, Settlement, there won't be quite as much of this sort of narrative, and our tendency might be to think that this part of the book is not all that important.

But as I hope we have seen in these first two chapters, that's not the case. Chapters 12-21 afford an opportunity for connecting God's work in the present (of Joshua's day) with His work and promises in the past. Using the geography of the land of promise, these chapters will sketch out the scope and reliability of His promises to Israel. We need to read between the lines on much of this, to be sure; but we will not be going beyond Scripture or reading into it as we do.

It's as if, in section 3 of the book of Joshua – as elsewhere in Scripture – God wants to play catch-up with us through these litanies of cities, places, and tribes, to help us understand the here-and-now nature of His promises. What God has promised, God fulfills, in great detail. For in appreciating the temporal details of His eternal promises, we are encouraged to believe that everything God tells us can be taken as truth.

So, as we work through chapters 12-21, let's not get bogged down in the tedium of this account. Instead, like a child rehearsing his Christmas presents over and over in great detail, let's rejoice in the God Who blessed His people so faithfully, and remember that those precious and very great promises remain for us as well (Rom. 4.13-16), and even more so because our Joshua has succeeded far beyond everything His predecessor ever achieved.

*Meditate and discuss.*

1. We keep mentioning the promises of God (Gen. 12.1-3; Rom. 4.13-16). How would you summarize those promises? How has our Joshua made those precious and very great promises even more sure?
2. Since the promises God fulfilled for Israel in Joshua's day were so temporal in nature – cities, homes, farms, cultural artifacts, and the like – what does this suggest about how we should regard the temporal benefits with which we are surrounded? How can seeing our temporal benefits in this way encourage us in our walk with and work for the Lord?
3. The temporal outworking of God's promises should remind us of the spiritual and eternal nature of the precious and very great promises of God. How would you explain that aspect of God's promises?

*"This chapter does not need a lengthened exposition, as it only enumerates the kings of whose territories the Israelites gained possession. Two of them are beyond the Jordan, Og and Sibon, whose rule was extensive; in the land of Canaan there are thirty-one. But though each of those now summarily mentioned was previously given more in detail, there is very good reason for here*

*Settlement East of the Jordan  
Joshua 12 and 13*

*placing before our eyes as it were a living picture of the goodness of God, proving that there had been a complete ratification and performance of the covenant made with Abraham as given in the words, 'Unto thy seed will I give this land.'"* John Calvin, *Commentary on Joshua (1509-1564 AD)*

*Lord, the blessings with which You surround me each day remind me above all else that...*

*Pray Psalm 103.1-14.*

Count your blessings – temporal and spiritual – and give thanks to the Lord for His great faithfulness and love.

**Psalm 103.1-14** (*Old 100<sup>th</sup>: All Creatures That on Earth Do Dwell*)

O my soul, bless the Lord's great Name! His many benefits proclaim:  
He pardons sins and heals disease, and from the pit grants us release.

With mercy rich and steadfast love He satisfies us from above,  
Revives our youth, works righteousness, and justice serves for the oppressed.

His ways to Moses He made known; to Israel His great works were shown.  
The Lord is full of mercy sweet, and with His favor does us meet.

To anger He but slowly goes; abounding love to us He shows.  
He will not always scold nor chide; His anger will not e'er abide.

Our sins He casts from us away; He shows compassion every day.  
He knows our frame, that we are dust, so on His goodness let us trust.

*Settlement East of the Jordan*  
*Joshua 12 and 13*

*Questions for reflection or discussion*

1. What do we learn from these chapters about God's faithfulness? How should we apply that lesson to our lives today?
2. These chapters – and those that follow – encourage us to count our blessings before the Lord. Why?
3. God's promises involve the temporal resources and tools by which we make our way in the world. Does God expect us to use the various aspects of our culture to serve Him? Explain.
4. How do chapters 12 and 13 help us in thinking about our sanctification in the Lord?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from Joshua 12 and 13? How are you putting that lesson to work in your walk with and work for the Lord?

*For prayer:*

## The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Thank you.