

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Joshua: God's Faithful Giving Of The Promised Land To Israel

Part III: God's Dividing The Land For Israel's Inheritance, Joshua 13:1-21:45

A. The Transjordan Tribes' Allotment: A Lesson In Material Contentment

(Joshua 13:1-33)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Many people today are on a quest to earn more money, believing that doing so will better fulfill them:

(1) After the recent large tax hike by our Connecticut State Assembly as promoted by the government employee unions, the State of Indiana placed a full-page ad in The Wall Street Journal on June 10, 2015, p. A6B that read: "GE, Aetna, and Travelers: We offer our support in the wake of Connecticut's looming tax increase, because friends don't let friends pay higher taxes." The goal was to woo Connecticut big businesses to move to Indiana with the lure of paying less taxes there to do business so they might keep more of their earnings.

(2) Yet, not only are governments, unions and big businesses yearning for more money, many individuals aim for it, too: AnnaMaria Andriotis's story, "Equity Loans Dog Homeowners," *Ibid.*, July 9, 2015, p. A1 reported: "A decade after homeowners used a soaring real-estate market to go on a borrowing binge" with "home-equity lines of credit . . . when prices were near their peak," they are now "struggling to keep up as principal finally comes due . . ."

(2) The quest to acquire more money affects many Chinese investors, too: Yifan Xie and Shen Hong ("China Revises Rules On Margin Trading," *Ibid.*, p. B5) hold how the "increased use of borrowed money by individual investors" has "increased the risk of ruinous losses, which has raised concerns about the threat to social stability."

(3) However, many American investors aim to get and keep more money: Morgan Housel's article, "On the Brink of Big Change, Keep Calm and Invest On," *Ibid.*, June 6-7, 2015, p. B8 told how "(t)he U. S. economy shrank last quarter. The Federal Reserve widely expected to begin raising interest rates later this year. U. S. interest rates are expensive by many measures. Greece's national finances remain fragile . . . and election season already is under way in the U. S. Investors who are tempted to sell risky assets and flee to safety don't have to look far for justification."

(4) Locally, in recent days, I have heard of several believers' trials on their perceived need for more money.

Need: So, we ask, "*With many today seeking more money for how it might fulfill them, what would God suggest?*"

I. God always intended to provide all of the land that Israel needed to lead a fulfilling life, Joshua 13:1-7:

- A. Following Israel's conquest of the Promised Land when Joshua was very old, God told him that much of the land remained to be conquered (Jos. 13:1), that he should "now" (*'attah*, Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 342) divide the land for the tribes to inherit and thus *soon finish* defeating the pockets of Canaanites who lived there, Jos. 13:7.
- B. The land still to be won included Philistia along the southeast coast (Jos. 13:2a, 3), Geshur east of the Sea of Galilee (Jos. 13:2b) and Phoenicia, the "land of the Canaanites" (Jos. 13:5) together with Lebanon (Jos. 13:6), a thick swath of land to Israel's north that ran from the Mediterranean Sea in the west to the desert in the east, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 355; The MacMillan Bible Atlas, 1968, p. 51, map 69. The cited map shows Israel had 35% more land still to win in God's view, explaining His sense of urgency in using the word "now"!

II. Conversely, the land allotted to the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh included the vast lands EAST of the Jordan that God had NOT initially planned to give to them, Joshua 13:15-32:

- A. Reuben, Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh had *visually judged* (*ra'ah*, "saw," Kittel, p. 251; B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 906-909 with the demonstrative particle, *hinneh*, "Behold! Lo!" *Ibid.*, Kittel; *Ibid.*, B. D. B., p. 243-244) the vast lands east of the Jordan River that Israel took in battle to be good for cattle, and since they had much cattle, they had asked Moses for that land as their inheritance, Numbers 32:1-5.
- B. So, they obtained what they wanted as based in their own *visual judgment* (Numbers 32:33), and Joshua allotted the Transjordan lands to Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh, Joshua 13:15-32.

III. Of note is the GREAT CONTRAST between the INHERITANCE of these TRANSJORDAN tribes and the INHERITANCE the LEVITES, *Ibid.*, Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament, p. 356:

- A. In Joshua 13:14, in contrast to the Transjordan tribes' vast land inheritance, the Levites obtained "the sacrifices of the Lord" as "**they** (emphatic pronoun) were their inheritance," *Ibid.*, Kittel, p. 343; B. D. B., p. 214-216.
- B. In Joshua 13:33, in contrast to the Transjordan tribes' vast land inheritance, the Levites inherited "the Lord God of Israel" as "**He** (emphatic pronoun again) was their inheritance," *Ibid.*, Kittel, p. 344; *Ibid.*, B. D. B.
- C. In Joshua 14:3, versus the Transjordan tribes' vast land inheritance, the Levites were given no land.
- D. In Joshua 18:7, versus the Transjordan tribes' vast land gain, the Levites obtained "the priesthood of the Lord."

- E. Indeed, the Levites received just 48 cities scattered throughout the Promised Land, Num. 35:1-5; Jos. 21:41.
- F. Thus, the Levites were to minister to the Lord, teaching His Word to Israel in (Malachi 2:7), with ***God Himself EMPHATICALLY meeting their livelihood needs through the other tribe's offerings in a LIFE of FAITH.***
- IV. Remarkably, history shows the Levites fared BETTER than the Transjordan tribes with all their lands:**
 - A. The Transjordan tribes were parted from close contact with the rest of Israel by the natural boundary of the Jordan River, what led to their earlier apostasy from the Lord with the resulting divine judgment of invasion by foes and early deportation to Assyria, 1 Chron. 6:25-26; Deut. 28:15, 25; Ibid., Bib. Know. Com., O. T., p. 356.
 - B. Conversely, the Levites had a greater exposure to the Law and God's influence at the tabernacle and were better positioned to heed the Lord for His blessing, leading to a happier, more secure history for their tribe, Ibid.
- V. This contrast in welfare was NOT GOD'S ORIGINAL intent, for HE wanted to BLESS ALL the tribes:**
 - A. We know from His own track record that God would have provided for the needs of the many herds owned by Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh had they chosen to live west of the Jordan as God initially planned:
 1. Even when Israel had left Egypt in the Exodus, she had then already possessed much livestock, Ex. 12:38.
 2. Then, for the next 38 years in the wilderness with at best limited grazing lands for their herds, God had supplied not only Israel's people, but for her many animals to survive, leading Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh to end up with very much cattle when they arrived at the Promised Land, Num. 32:1-5.
 - B. In addition, God's urgent Joshua 13:1, 7 call for Joshua ("now," *'attah*, see "I,A" above) to get Israel to drive out the rest of the Canaanites west of the Jordan River, 35% more land for Israel to take, shows there would have been ample space for Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh to settle with their herds even there!
 - C. Thus, God could and would have provided for their animals had these tribes chosen to live west of the Jordan.
- VI. Nevertheless, the Transjordan tribes saw and desired land other than what God had originally planned for them, not being content with God's supply, and history shows they paid a painfully high price for it!**
- VII. Accordingly, Hebrews 13:5-6 calls us believers to be content with what God gives us as He will always meet our living needs, and 1 Timothy 6:17-19 warns us against aiming to be rich as it only brings sorrow.**

Lesson: *The clear CONTRAST between the history of the Levites who inherited the Lord and a life of faith in him to meet their livelihood needs versus the Transjordan tribes who inherited large land holdings of their own choice with a loss of spiritual fidelity and enhanced hardships teaches the importance and blessing of living contentedly with God's material provisions in a life of faith, cf. Hebrews 13:5-6; 1 Timothy 6:17-19.*

Application: *(1) May we believe in Christ for salvation from sin to gain eternal life, John 3:16. (2) As believers, may we be content with God's will in our callings and in His material provisions in them, not looking to become extremely wealthy, and find His great blessing in living, Hebrews 13:5-6; 1 Timothy 6:17-19.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

In the sermon introduction, we cited Morgan Housel's article (Ibid.) on how world circumstances tempt stock market investors now to "sell risky assets and flee to safety" into other financial instruments!

However, Mr. Housel recommended just the opposite, that one should diversify his assets and stay invested for the long-term, both practices taught in Ecclesiastes 11:1-6. He added that famous investor, Warren Buffet, who is worth \$73 billion today, earned \$70 billion of his assets "after his 60th birthday" because "(w)ealth grows exponentially -- a little at first, then slightly more, and then in a hurry for those who stick around the longest." (Ibid.)

Well, the way for a **believer to achieve** the *discipline* to stay invested for the long-term without letting the ungodly drives of greed or fear negatively impact his actions is to trust God to meet his livelihood needs! Then he can live above the lure to misbehave with his assets in investing without faithless and destructive greed and fear!

Morgan Housel added: "The biggest risk investors face isn't a recession, a bear market, the Federal Reserve or their least favorite political party. It is their own emotions and biases, and the destructive behaviors they cause . . . There aren't many iron rules of investing, but one of them is that no amount of brain power can compensate for behavioral errors." (Ibid.)

We need to live by faith in God as our Source of livelihood provision and security so that we can even invest sensibly over the long-term, not to mention function responsibly in all realms of material possessions.

May we trust in Christ for salvation. Then, may we be content with the things God provides, looking to Him for our security and happiness and thus handling those resources Biblically in God's will for His blessing!