

Grace Evangelical Church
Sunday, January 6, 2008
Communion Sunday
"Go For It!"
Joshua 13-14

"Today's Cacher" had a story about an elusive inheritance. Instead of providing an easy way for his children to receive his inheritance after his death, the father left these words in his will for his children.

Celebrate
 Grin Peter and Sad
 If you solve
 Star 36
 Plus a tiny 36&59
 Then LA 116 plus
 Another tiny 49&63
 Alt. -57
 Love
 and goodbye,
 Dad

That's quite a way to leave a will. I understand from the article that the children finally figured out what their father meant and were able to receive the inheritance. The children commented that their dad was very eccentric.

Then, there is real estate tycoon Leona Helmsley who recently left \$12 million to her tiny Maltese, Trouble. As soon as the dog dies, whatever is left of Trouble's inheritance, goes back to the charitable trust. Although tagged with the nickname, "Queen of Mean", I understand that Helmsley gave a \$10 million donation in 1999 to the main building at the Greenwich Hospital It was the largest donation in hospital history. She also gave \$25 million to New York Presbyterian hospital this year. The list of Helmsley's charitable donations goes on: moved by Sept. 11th, she gave \$5 million to victims' families and four years later, gave another \$5 million to the Red Cross for Hurricane Katrina relief. Inspired by the strong-willed Helen Keller, she gave \$1.5 million to the Helen Keller National Center to expand a Braille Library for deaf-blind children, and build a conference center. As someone has said, Helmsley should be called the "Queen of Kindness."

Then there are those who are in the business of writing scam emails about the inheritance you have waiting for you.

Dear Friend,

I crave your indulgence as I contact you in such a surprising manner and I want you to bear in mind that this is not a hoax mail. But I respectfully insist you read this mail carefully as I am optimistic it will open door for unimaginable financial reward for both of us. I got your contact through Burkinafaso information network online services,

I am the manager of bill and exchange at the foreign remittance department BANK OF AFRICAN (BOA).I am writing to seek your interest over a transaction. In my department we discovered an abandoned sum of \$15m US dollars (FIFTEEN MILLION US DOLLARS) in an account that belongs to one of our foreign customers, known as Dr George Brumley Jr, 68, and his wife, Jean, 67.Who died along with his entire family in Monday, July 21, 2003,in plane crash with Atlanta airline.visit the website:-
<http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/africa/07/21/kenya.crash/index>.

It's amazing what's happening in our world in regard to inheritances. But I trust that you are thankful God has some very specific information to give us in His Word regarding the subject of inheritance.

In our text today in Joshua 13-14ff, God had a specific inheritance for the nation of Israel.

I. God's inheritance for the nation Israel.

1. It was an inheritance promised by God through Israel's father, Abraham around 2000 B.C.

(1) In Genesis 12 God appeared to Abram (his name at that time, around 2000 B.C.), while he was still in Mesopotamia or modern day Iraq.

God told Abraham that he would receive a land, have a seed that would become a great nation, and he would be blessed and be a blessing to all the families of the world. Those who would curse his seed would also be cursed.

God then promised Abram who became Abraham, a land, a seed, and a blessing.

(2) In Genesis 15:18-20 God told Abraham that He would give him and his descendants the land from the river Egypt (probably from the Nile River, and some understand it to be the Wadi elArish (East of the Nile), all the way to the Euphrates River.

This land would be the inheritance that God would give Abraham's seed. Of course at that time, Abraham had no possession of the land that God promised him. In fact, when his wife, Sarah died, Abraham had to buy a piece of property from Ephron, the Hittite for a burial place for Sarah. And when Abraham died, the land promised was still not in his possession.

2. Now around 1400 B.C. some 600 years later, under Joshua's leadership, the nation Israel, of about 2 _ million people, is receiving that inheritance of the land promised to Abraham (Joshua 1-12).

This is what has been happening in our study of Joshua over the past few months in chapters 1-12 of Joshua.

Joshua 11:23 summarizes what took place over the 10-15 year period as the nation of Israel came into the land.

"So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had spoken to Moses, and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. Thus the land had rest from war."

This was certainly a momentous day in the life of Joshua and the nation of Israel. The land promised to Abraham was now realized. The nation was actually now living in the land, the inheritance promised to their father, Abraham. The promise of the inheritance had not been fulfilled.

But Israel receiving the promised land as its inheritance was one thing. Now territories needed to be designed for each of the tribes of Israel to stake out for their own place to live.

3. The inheritance of the land for Israel was then divided up according to the various tribes of Israel (Joshua 13-19).

With the significant military threats removed, it would now be the responsibility of each of the tribes to conquer and colonize their designated territories.

This division was done as indicated in the Scripture.

(1) The individuals involved in the distribution (Joshua 14:1).

****Eleazar - the priest.**

****Joshua – the national leader.**

****The heads of the households, the fathers of the different tribes were involved.**

(2) The method used for dividing the land was by casting lots (Joshua 13:6;14:2, 18:6).

(3) Principle division was between Judah and Joseph, the larger tribes.

(4) A special group was set up to establish borders (Joshua 18:4-9). Seas, rivers, mountains, and deserts were used (Joshua 15:1-4).

(5) The size of the tribe was also a factor in the assignment as to how much property each tribe would receive. The power point picture shows how the land, the inheritance, was divided in Joshua's day

It's quite clear here that God had a definite plan for each tribe of Israel. He is the God of order.

It is also well to note here that the tabernacle was moved from Gilgal where it had been for 10- 15 years, to Shiloh, which was about 10 miles north of Bethel (Joshua 18:1). There it would remain through the time of the Judges, the center of Israel's religious and political life. This suggested that Israel was now ready to settle into the land and take the inheritance given to them.

But there was more for the tribes to do than just receive the inheritance promised by the LORD.

4. The nation of Israel had to possess the inheritance that was given to them by the Lord (Joshua 13:6).

The Lord had given the entire nation the inheritance of the land of Canaan, now it was the responsibility of each tribe to take the inheritance which was theirs.

In that process God promised to help the tribes take the property allotted to them (Joshua 13:6), where God promised to help drive out the enemy.

It didn't matter which tribe it was, each tribe, except the Levitical tribe, was responsible for taking the inheritance God had given them.

In the midst of each tribe taking the inheritance promised to them, God was there helping each tribe drive out the enemy with his power and presence (I will drive them out!).

Did all go smoothly in this process??

(1) The negative.

Look with me at Joshua 16:10-

"They (that is the Ephraimites) did not drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer, so the Canaanites live in the midst of Ephraim to this day, and they became forced laborers.

Then, Joshua 17:13 – The sons of Manasseh did not drive out the Canaanites completely, but put them to forced labor.

Also, Joshua 18:3, where Joshua spoke to the leaders of the nation of Israel, "How long will you put off entering to take possession of the land which the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you?"

It appears that some of the tribes of Israel had developed an apathetic attitude after being given their inheritance. Perhaps they became weary of battle, of fighting the enemy. They liked the receiving of the inheritance, but they lost the drive to keep going and take their piece of property given to them by the LORD.

Question. Why didn't Israel possess her possessions?

Francis Schaeffer has suggested in "Joshua and the Flow of History," that

(1) Israel wanted their peace.

Israel wanted to be at peace at any cost, rather than face the enemy and defeat the enemy. They made peace in spite of God's command to defeat the people and destroy them. They let the cares of life and the strength of the enemy not let them have complete victory. We can do the same today.

(2) Israel was a practical materialist.

Rather than defeat the enemy, Israel put the enemy to forced labor, that is under tribute. These tribes would rather have affluence than possess their possessions. Their affluence caused them to

forget that they were in a spiritual battle and that the LORD had commanded them to take the enemy and destroy the enemy lest they become like the enemy in thought, word, and deed.

But there is the positive as Israel was given the direction to possess their possessions.

(3) The Positive.

Look at Joshua 18:3 again. Although, Joshua was reprimanding the leaders of Israel for not taking their piece of real estate, he was also encouraging them to take the promise, the power, and the presence of the LORD, and go for it – to possess their possessions.

A man, like Caleb, who we will consider next week, went for it. Joshua in 19:549-51, went for it. These men, along with others, took the inheritance given to them, and possessed it. They went for it, as God directed using His promise, power, and the presence of the LORD.

What an exciting time for them as they saw the Lord work in and through them.

How does the nation of Israel receiving an inheritance some 3400 years ago apply to us today?

II. God's inheritance for us today.

As we have just come through the Christmas season we find that Mary now pregnant with Jesus in her Magnificat had some understanding of what God was doing through the Savior who would be born.

Her words are most insightful in Luke 1:54-55 –

“He has given help to Israel His servant, in remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his descendants forever.”

Mary recognized that the Savior she would give birth to would bring to fruition with her people Israel the covenant made with Abraham some 2000 years ago from her day, but Jesus would also be a blessing to his descendants forever.

Who are those descendants of Abraham? Not just physical Israel who believes in the Lord as their Messiah and Savior, but also all those who accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. For the book of Galatians tells us in chapter 3 that those who believe in Jesus Christ are descendants of Abraham spiritually, heirs of the promise.

So we today who accept Jesus Christ as our personal Savior, are spiritual descendants of Abraham, not members of the physical nation of Israel, which still has a future, but we are the members of Christ's church, which includes both Jew and Gentile who accept Jesus Christ as personal Savior.

That being true, what is our inheritance?

Obviously, not a physical piece of property, which Israel as a nation will receive in spite of what is happening in the Middle East, and in spite of a peace plan that may be secured at this time. In the future, however, there will be a false peace secured by the future antichrist which will last about 3 ½ years of the seven year tribulation yet to come on planet earth.

What, then, is the believer's inheritance today since Christ has come died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sin, was buried, rose again the third day, and now is seated at the right hand of the Father on high to be our Savior and eventually coming Savior and King?

1. What are the Scriptures?

Ephesians 1:10-11 – “In Him (Christ) also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will.”

Colossians 1:12 – “Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.”

I Peter 1:4 – “To obtain an inheritance, which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away reserve in heaven for you.”

Obviously, the writers are referring to the spiritual inheritance that Christ has for us which is present and future. We have obtained an inheritance now and will obtain an inheritance yet future in heaven when we are with the Lord.

2. What, then, is the spiritual inheritance Christ has for us.

The Psalmist says, “The LORD is my chosen portion” (Psalm 16:5).

Lamentations (Jeremiah speaking) says, “The LORD is my portion, therefore I will hope in Him” (Lam. 3:24).

The Apostle Paul penned, “For me to live is Christ” (Philippians 1:21), “to die is gain.”

Then in Philippians 3:10 Paul adds, “That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection . . .”

Then Paul pens in Colossian 1:27, “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

What’s the inheritance for us today who know Jesus Christ as personal Savior???

The inheritance for us today can only be CHRIST.

We are chosen in Christ by our Heavenly Father, blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ, redeemed by the blood of Christ, adopted in God’s forever family, sealed by the Spirit of God. We have all of Christ we will ever receive in this life. He is our WAY, OUR TRUTH, OUR LIFE. We need no other. His grace is sufficient and efficient for all of our needs.

All of us here who know Christ as our personal Savior have Christ as our inheritance right here and now.

2. What are we do with our spiritual inheritance who is Christ?

(1) Right Now – Today.

What were the Israelites to do with the physical inheritance that they received as individual tribes. They were to possess it, not some time in the future, but right now, in their day. Not tomorrow, but today!!

It is the same for us today who have the spiritual inheritance, Christ. We are to possess Him, and get to know Him personally, and grow in Him, and serve Him, be a witness for Him right now, today, not start tomorrow, but do it today!! And every DAY!!

As God gave His promise, His power, and presence to Israel of old to possess their possessions, God today in Christ is with us to the end of the age,

He empowers us by His Holy Spirit as we obey Him. In that process, he gives each of us spiritual gifts, God-given abilities for service, that we might teach, serve, organize, exhort, evangelize, and encourage each other in the body of Christ and reach out to the community with His love and grace.

He also gives us different responsibilities to carry out as we get to know Christ and serve Him. In the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14ff), Jesus taught that one was given 5 talents, one was given 2 talents, one was given 1 talent.

God was not showing partiality in the different talents as He was not showing partiality by giving different portions of land to the tribes of Israel in Joshua’s day.

God gives each of us different responsibilities to fulfill and it is required of us to be faithful, to get to know Christ and serve Him with what the LORD gives us, and not hide our talent as the one having the one talent did.

Question: Are we possessing the inheritance we have in Christ? Is it apparent in my life as a follower of Christ, that I am becoming like Him in thought, attitude, word and deed.

It's easy to become negative like Israel of old, like some of the tribes did wanting peace, not wanting to keep on fighting the good fight of faith.

Or to let the materialism of the day affect our attitudes so that we lose our fervency for Christ. We chase that which is here today and gone tomorrow. We invest in that which wears out and must be replaced. We put our energy into that which builds our personal esteem and portfolio, and forget that relationships in our families are what really last forever. We let our schedules cause us to not have time for personal prayer and Bible reading, and our family schedules become so hectic that we are like ships passing in the night. Our excuses are many for not serving on various opportunities at the church, but we become involved in community projects.

But God is encouraging us today, to be positive like Joshua and Caleb of old and "Go For It!" Go for the possession God had given us in Christ.

That is present right now – Getting to know Christ and to make Him known. Of course there is the future inheritance as well.

(2) The future – Tomorrow
Philippians 3:20 –

"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself."

I John 3:2 –

"Beloved now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."

What a future inheritance awaits the believer in Jesus Christ!!

When Christ returns to be like Him, to have a body that is free of the old sin nature, and a new body like our Lord's glorious body, and to have a spirit that desires always to worship the Lord and serve Him forever. That will be the ultimate of our inheritance in Christ – To be like Him and enjoy His presence forever!! Remember, Christ could come for us anytime, yes, today.

Christ is the believer's present and future spiritual inheritance. That's why Paul said that for Him to live was Christ but to die is gain.

But I want you to notice, that knowing someday we will possess our future inheritance in Christ, this living hope should have a direct affect on what we are doing presently with Jesus Christ in our lives. The two are directly connected.

One who isn't living for the Lord here has forgotten that Christ is his or her future inheritance.

The one who is all involved in Christ as the future inheritance, but isn't living for the Lord now, has forgotten that Christ's any moment return should be affecting what he or she is doing with Christ right now.

A. W. Tozer gives this challenge to us to keep us possessing Christ here and now. This is taken from "That Incredible Christian" and it is entitled, "Our Unclaimed Riches."

In this brief chapter he recognizes that there three classes of our riches or inheritance in Christ.

First, those which come when we accept Christ as personal Savior, forgiveness, justification, regeneration, sonship to God, and being placed into God's family, the church.

Secondly, there are the riches of the inheritance which we will not enjoy fully until our Lord returns. These include ultimate mental and moral perfection, the glorification of our bodies, the completion of the restoration of the divine image in our redeemed personalities and the admission into the very presence of God to experience the Beatific vision.

Thirdly, there are the spiritual treasures which are ours by blood atonement but which will not come to us unless we make a determined effort to possess them. They are the deliverance from the sins of the flesh, victory over self, the constant flow of the Holy Spirit through our personalities, fruitfulness in Christian service, awareness of the Presence of God, growth in grace, in increasing consciousness of union with God and an unbroken spirit of worship. These do not come automatically nor must we wait to claim them at the day of Christ's coming. They are to us what the Promised Land was to Israel, to be entered into as our faith and courage mount.

To make things clearer let me set forth four propositions touching this heritage of joy which God has set before us.

(1) You will get nothing unless you go after it.

God will not force anything non you. As Joshua fought his way into possession of the Promised Land, you must also fight on toward perfection, meeting and defeating whatever enemies would stand in the way to challenge your right of possession. The land will not come to you; you must go to the land and on up into it by the way of self-renunciation and detachment from the world. John of the Cross says, "Those who travel on this road will meet many occasions of joys and sufferings, hopes and sorrows, some of which are the result of the spirit of perfection, other of imperfection."

(2) You may have as much as you insist on having.

"Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you," said God to Joshua, and this principle runs through the Bible. There are those like Caleb who boldly pressed on to take his possessions. There were the daughters of Zelophehad who stood before Moses and pleaded for a possession among the brethren of their father. Moses granted their request, not by his indulgence, but by the command of God whose promise was involved. When our requests are such as honor God we may as largely as we will. The more daring the request the more glory accrues to God when the answer comes.

(3) You will have as little as you are satisfied with.

God gives to all men liberally, but it would be absurd to think that God's liberality will make a man more godly than he wants to be. The man, for instance, who is satisfied to live a defeated life will never be forced to take victory. The man how is content to follow Christ afar off will never know the radiant wonder of His nearness. The man who is willing to settle for a joyless, barren life will never experience the joy of the Holy Spirit or the deep satisfaction of fruitful living.

It is disheartening to those who care, and surely a great grief to the Spirit, to see how many Christians are content to settle for less than the best. Personally, I have for years carried a burden of sorrow as I have moved among evangelical Christians who somewhere in their past have managed to strike a base compromise with their heart's holier longings and have settled down to a lukewarm, mediocre kind of Christianity utterly unworthy of themselves and of the Lord they claim to serve. And such are found everywhere.

(4) You now have as much as you really want.

Every person is as close to God as he wants to be; he is as holy and as full of the Spirit as he wills to be. Our Lord said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." If there were but one man anywhere on earth who hungered and was not filled the word of Christ would fall to the ground.

Yet we must distinguish wanting from wishing. By “want” I mean wholehearted desire. Certainly there are many who wish they were holy or victorious or joyful but are not willing to meet God’s conditions to obtain.

That God has placed before His redeemed Children a vast world of spiritual treasures and that they refuse or neglect to claim it may easily turn out to be the second greatest tragedy in the history of the moral creation, the first and greatest being the fall of man.

The Lord is using Tozer to challenge us this morning to go for our inheritance in Christ right now.

- (1) We will get nothing unless we go after it.**
- (2) We may have as much as we insist on having.**
- (3) We have as little as we are satisfied with.**
- (4) We now have as much as we really want.**

Let’s go for our inheritance in Christ this week, while we keep looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of the Great God and our Savior Jesus Christ!