

1. Why does v23 say Joshua “took the whole land,” but in 13:1 God says “there is much land left to possess?”
2. Why did God instruct the Israelites to take land that was occupied? Why not unoccupied territories?
3. Turn to your neighbor and make sense of v20!
4. Is God different in the OT and NT? How so?
5. Are you equipped to address LGBTQ issues from scripture? What can you do to prepare?

Three key lessons:

- Faith is contingent upon its object! Question is not *how strong is your faith* but in *whom* is your faith?
- Faith is not a *momentary exercise* but a *permanent disposition*. When we walk in obedience, it’s not a quick decision but flows from faith.
- Faith is expressed in *obedience* not *inactivity*. James: faith without works is dead. Faith produces works.

Faith in Christ is evidence of regeneration and the means by which we have peace with God. It is not a meritorious work; it is a gift from God via covenant.

Israel’s (conquered) promised land

The war of conquest had been successful, but it took a long time. Primary occupation of the nation was not settling the land but driving out occupants of the land.

V23 says “Joshua took the whole land,” but 13:1 says “much left to conquer.” Yahweh called to Abraham in Ur and told him to “Go from your country and your kindred ...to the land I will show you” (Gen. 12:1). As part of his covenant with Abraham, Yahweh promised, “I will give to you and to your offspring ... the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God” (Genesis 17:8).

Victory allows Joshua to divide the land among the tribes. Still peoples to be driven out and land to be taken, but the focus was shifting from conquest to settlement. For the first time, the people of Israel had a land.

V16-17 give a comprehensive description of the land. Victory after victory had been decisive “because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel” (10:42). Israel had been obedient, Yahweh had been faithful, and for the first time, Israel had an inheritance from Yahweh.

Yahweh’s judicial hardening

Why take a land that was already occupied? Simple answer: *this is the land Yahweh promised to Abraham*. The Canaanites were living in open rebellion— idols, witchcraft, divination, human sacrifices. After 4 generations, Gen. 15:16, judgment was decreed; Israel was his chosen instrument of wrath.

In v20: “it was the LORD’s doing to harden their hearts that they should come against Israel in battle, in order

that they should be devoted to destruction... just as the LORD commanded Moses.” Without the context of the rebellion of the peoples of Canaan, this would seem arbitrary; in fact, it is a righteous judgment of Yahweh.

IS GOD DIFFERENT IN THE OT AND NT? Modern notions of free will and individual liberty offend many at the thought of Yahweh hardening hearts. In Exodus, Yahweh hardened Pharaoh’s heart so that he might judge Egypt and her gods. In Romans 11, Paul tells us that “God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear...” (v8). He is not referring to the Romans, or other gentile groups; he is referring to the nonelect of Israel: “Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but “the rest were hardened” (v7). This was for God’s glory and the benefit of the nations: “a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until fullness of Gentiles has come in” (25).

Yahweh is just, righteous, and holy. All his actions and all his judgments are just, righteous, and holy. He does not make a person what he is not in a negative sense. The essence of salvation is that Yahweh makes us new.

Romans 1:24-28 “²⁴Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity ... ²⁸And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.”

Yahweh’s judicial hardening is for his purposes and his glory. Our rebellion cannot thwart the sovereign will of Yahweh. The Canaanites had 400 years to repent.

Deuteronomy 2:30 – The Lord hardened Sihon, king of Heshbon. **Exodus 10:2** -- “The Lord said to Moses, “Go in to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart ...” **Romans 9:14-15** “What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God’s part? By no means! ¹⁵For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy...”

Joshua’s resilient faith

v21-22 – Campaign against Anakim, (where the conquest narrative began). In Num. 13, Yahweh leads Israel to the border of the Promised Land: “Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the people of Israel.” This is where the Anakim lived. All the spies said no to entering this land except Joshua and Caleb, who believed Yahweh. “Do not fear them.” Here the conquest ends with eradication of the Anakim, the very people that had led Israel to doubt Yahweh.

The land’s rest from war meant rest for Israel. They had a home, free from war. Not the fulness of the promised rest, but a shadow of that which is to come. **Heb. 4:8** “For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. ⁹So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.”

The rest to which the author of Hebrews alludes and to which the book of Joshua points is a person: Jesus Christ. He is our sabbath rest.