

hold your ground

The war is done.

The clash of iron, the cries of men, the thunder of marching feet, all of it fades into the night. Fires burn low across the hills of Israel, and one by one the warriors return to their tents, to their wives, to their children. But I do not sleep.

Seven long years of warfare. Brutal, bloody. I choose a large log and stoke the fire. Blessed, too. Seven years of dust and blood, and of victories that can only be attributed to the hand of the Lord. Walls fell without a hand touching them. Kings rose in defiance and crumbled in a single day. The stories we carry sound like fables, but I witnessed each one.

I am an old soul, weathered. My hands are not the hands they once are. They are worn now, lined with years of battle and burden. I carried a sword so long that my muscles strain under the weight even when it is not there. And yet, tonight, it is not the sword that rests beside me.

I strived to live a life of honor and service to the Lord. Now, that mission is complete. I choose a scroll from the basket beside me, intricate maps drawn with precision as we walk the land of our promise.

I swipe my finger against a stone in the fire pit, and it comes up black with ash. The lot lines are set for each tribe. I blot my finger to the papyrus, making the first mark of inheritance.

“Every place that the sole of your foot treads upon I give to you, just as I promise to Moses.”

I marvel at the Lord’s faithfulness despite ours.

Caleb sits beside me. A brother in arms, an encourager, a warrior.

He gestures toward the map. “May I?”

I poke at the fire while he traces his finger upward. A few moments later, he taps the papyrus.

“Inheritance,” he says, and grins. He taps the mark again, firmer this time. “This hill country.”

I study him, the lines in his face, the strength still set in his shoulders. “You are not a young man, Caleb.”

“Nor are you,” he counters. “Joshua, give me this hill country.”

I look back down at the map, the ink, the lines, the promise laid out before us. Inheritance.

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definitions

Using a Bible app or the word glossary at the back of this book,
look up each Strong's number to find the definitions.

possess

STRONGS DEFINITION | H3423

Joshua 13:1 Now Joshua was old and advanced in years, and the Lord said to him, "You are old and advanced in years, and there remains yet very much land to possess

inheritance

STRONGS DEFINITION | H5159

Joshua 14:13 Then Joshua blessed him, and he gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance

Chapter 13-21 shifts from the conquest of the land to the division of the land.
What in world can we learn from this?

decode the text

READ JOSHUA 13:1

Review the definition of “possess”. What does the statement “there remains yet very much land to possess” reveal about the shift in Israel’s situation after the major conquest campaigns have ended? How does this redefine Joshua’s role moving forward in the narrative?

READ JOSHUA 14:6-12 & NUMBERS 14:24

What details in Caleb’s request for Hebron show the kind of spirit he is operating with? How does his appeal to past promises and present conflict define the significance of his inheritance?

Explain the difference between taking the land and truly possessing it. In light of the definition of “possess,” what does this imply about the continual responsibility to defend, drive out, and retain what had been given?

READ JOSHUA 16:10 & JOSHUA 17:12-13 & JUDGES 1:28-29

What pattern emerges in the response of Ephraim and Manasseh toward the remaining Canaanites, and how does the shift from “did not drive them out” to “could not drive them out” develop the narrative consequence of incomplete obedience?

READ JOSHUA 17:14-18

How does Joshua’s response to Ephraim and Manasseh’s complaint about limited land expose the tension between what has already been allotted and what still requires action to fully possess?





city of refuge

As Israel moved deeper into the inheritance of the Promised Land, the Lord's wisdom was not only displayed in borders and tribes, but in the way justice and mercy were woven together.

Among the twelve tribes, the Levites received no territory of their own. Their inheritance was not marked by fields or cities under their control, but by something far greater: the service of the Lord Himself.

They were set apart as priests, entrusted with the sacred responsibility of carrying, guarding, and ministering in the tabernacle.

Because they were not given a single region to call home, the Levites were instead placed throughout the land. Forty-eight cities were assigned to them, scattered among the tribes so their presence would be felt across Israel. Within these cities, six were designated as cities of refuge, a provision shaped by both justice and mercy.

Under the Law of Moses, the shedding of innocent blood carried the weight of death. Yet the Lord distinguished between murder born of intent and death caused by accident.

For those who killed unintentionally, a place of safety was made available. They could flee to a city of refuge and find protection from the avenger of blood, the family member tasked with upholding justice.

There the accused would remain until a fair trial determined the heart of the matter. If found innocent of murder, he still stayed within the city until the death of the high priest, only then was he allowed to return home in safety. Leaving the city early meant stepping outside of protection and into danger, where justice could still be carried out.

Placed among the Levites, these cities reflected a deeper purpose. The Levites, devoted wholly to the Lord, were positioned as steady guardians of truth, order, and mediation within Israel.

In a greater fulfillment, these cities point forward to Christ. He becomes the true refuge for the soul, the One to whom all can flee for safety.

In Him is protection from judgment, mercy for the guilty, and rest for the weary who come in humility and faith.

heed

READ 2 TIMOTHY 1:5 & 2:2

What do these passages reveal about the responsibility not only to hold fast to what we have received, but to deliberately multiply it into the lives of others? Are we faithfully receiving and intentionally passing on the legacy of faith entrusted to us?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 4:1-2 & COLOSSIANS 1:12-13

What do these passages reveal about the call to stand firm, guard what has been given, and remain faithful in what the Lord has placed under our care? Are we being faithful stewards of the inheritance the Lord has given, actively occupying and retaining the ground for Him?

There is still much “land to possess” in our walk with Jesus. Are we pressing forward into all that He has made available, or settling where we are?

WRITE EPHESIANS 3:16-19
