

Forward: Claiming the Life God Gave You
How To Leave A Legacy Worth Leaving
Joshua 12:1-13:7

Introduction: By the end of Joshua chapter 11 the Israelites had not yet conquered every territory God gave them, nor had they driven out all of the Canaanites, but the military campaign to conquer the land had succeeded. Every significant King and military in the heart of the Promised Land had been routed and killed by the Israelites, so much so that the final sentence of Joshua chapter eleven states,

“And the land had rest from war.” (Joshua 11:23b)

But God didn’t call them to just conquer the land, He called them to claim it and thrive on it! Conquering the land had to happen to claim it and thrive on it, but its only one step of the process. Just because you are successful at conquering something doesn’t mean you will be successful at thriving on it. The American Revolution had to happen to become a nation, but being a nation is an entirely differing thing than becoming one! By definition success can’t be a one-time event. Success is a present tense term and concept, meaning having success in the past doesn’t mean I’m successful now. Winning a game isn’t what it means to thrive and be a success, continually winning games does!

Up to this point, Israel *had been* successful, but God had called them to *be continually* successful, present tense, not past tense; therefore, it’s time for Joshua to lead them to that next step. However, before the Bible tells us what Joshua did, it takes time to concisely summarize what got them to this point.

Although past success is no guarantee of future success, it’s certainly the foundation of it. So, it was really important to make sure the future generations concisely understood what God did with their ancestors in conquering the Promised Land. Joshua 12 summarizes it all up by the two key figures He raised up to lead it.

(1) Joshua 12:1-6 summarizes all that God conquered with Israel through the leadership of Moses east of the Jordan River.

- A. 1 Now these are the kings of the land whom the people of Israel defeated and took possession of their land beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise, from the Valley of the Arnon to Mount Hermon, with all the Arabah eastward:**
- B.** The text then spells out the kings and locations of all Moses led the people on the east side of Jordan to conquer. For time’s sake, I’m not gonna read it, but I posted it in my notes online

Note: 2 Sihon king of the Amorites who lived at Heshbon and ruled from Aroer, which is on the edge of the Valley of the Arnon, and from the middle of the valley as far as the river Jabbok, the boundary of the Ammonites,

that is, half of Gilead, 3 and the Arabah to the Sea of Chinneroth eastward, and in the direction of Beth-jeshimoth, to the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, southward to the foot of the slopes of Pisgah; 4 and Og king of Bashan, one of the remnant of the Rephaim, who lived at Ashtaroth and at Edrei 5 and ruled over Mount Hermon and Salecah and all Bashan to the boundary of the Geshurites and the Maacathites, and over half of Gilead to the boundary of Sihon king of Heshbon.

- C. I do, however, want to skip ahead to verse number six. It reads,
- D. **6 Moses, the servant of the LORD, and the people of Israel defeated them. And Moses the servant of the LORD gave their land for a possession to the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh.**
- E. Note that verse six is something that we have seen a couple times in Joshua, the reason being there was a legitimate worry of jealousy, envy and even suspicion of those who lived on the other side of the river. The Jordan river was a legitimate geographical barrier that inhibited trade and communication. It wasn't an insurmountable barrier, but certainly a significant one. Kind of like a church that meets in one more location, the people had to remember that despite being in two different geographical locations, they were still one nation.
- F. Furthermore, the nation needed to remember the risk these 2 ½ tribes took for the other tribes of Israel. All of their fighting men left to go fight with the other tribes on the west side of the Jordan while their wives, children, elderly and non-fighting men stayed behind on the east side. Some may have been tempted to be jealous that they were able to start settling in their cities sooner than everybody else, however, they had to do so without their fighting men to protect them.
- G. But the point I want to make here is that when the author of Joshua writes about this arrangement, he does so clearly stating that Moses was a servant of the Lord in this action, and as such, it was the Lord's doing. There's no need to spend any more time on this subject at this point in our study because we are going to address it in much more depth when we get to chapter 22.

(2) Joshua 12:7-24 summarizes all that God conquered with Israel through the leadership of Joshua west of the Jordan River.

- A. **7 And these are the kings of the land whom Joshua and the people of Israel defeated on the west side of the Jordan, from Baal-gad in the Valley of Lebanon to Mount Halak, that rises toward Seir (and Joshua gave their land to the tribes of Israel as a possession according to their allotments, 8 in the hill country, in the lowland, in the Arabah, in the slopes, in the wilderness, and in the Negeb, the land of the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites):**

- B. Below is the list of 31 Kings that Joshua led the Israelites to defeat. For time's sake I'm not going to read them.

Note: 9 the king of Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which is beside Bethel, one; 10 the king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one; 11 the king of Jarmuth, one; the king of Lachish, one; 12 the king of Eglon, one; the king of Gezer, one; 13 the king of Debir, one; the king of Geder, one; 14 the king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one; 15 the king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one; 16 the king of Makkedah, one; the king of Bethel, one; 17 the king of Tappuah, one; the king of Hopher, one; 18 the king of Aphek, one; the king of Lasharon, one; 19 the king of Madon, one; the king of Hazor, one; 20 the king of Shimron-meron, one; the king of Achshaph, one; 21 the king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one; 22 the king of Kedesh, one; the king of Jokneam in Carmel, one; 23 the king of Dor in Naphath-dor, one; the king of Goyim in Galilee, one; 24 the king of Tirzah, one: in all, thirty-one kings.

Now, there is no taking away from the significance of what God accomplished through Moses and Joshua, but when I say what's been done so far is not a success, I mean that conquering the land was not the point; owning it and thriving on it as a nation was the point! This was the foundation for success, but this wasn't success. By definition, success is a reality of today and for the future, not of yesterday and the past. And here's where things get interesting. Joshua is old and out of gas. He can't keep leading the people the way he had done for more than four decades. Therefore, it was time to posture Israel for the future; time to lead them towards being a success not just today, but in the generations to come.

God had raised up Moses and Joshua to leave a legacy, not a memory! A memory is of something in the past that's no longer happening, but a legacy is something that happened in the past and continues on today and in the future. A legacy started in the past, but it didn't end there! God raised up Moses and Joshua to lead Israel to accomplish things that would lead to better things. God had raised up Moses and Joshua to leave a legacy, not a memory, and more importantly, a legacy of Him not just a memory of Him! Joshua 13:1-7 is where God makes that clear.

Proposition: In Joshua 13:1-7 we find the four realities God shared with Joshua to equip him to leave the legacy God raised him up to leave.

The first reality had to do with Joshua himself.

(1) God made sure Joshua understood his mortality and limits. (13:1a)

- A. **1 Now Joshua was old and advanced in years, and the LORD said to him, "You are old and advanced in years,**

- B.** Joshua 13:1 reminds me of what Clint Eastwood said while playing the role of a police detective in a movie—"A man's got to know his limitations."
- C.** I think we all tend to forget the reality that we are going to die and that we have no idea when that will be, nor control over when that will be. In addition, many forget our limitations, in that we think we can do whatever we put our minds to. There are things we are simply not capable of doing, one of which is making sure people do what they are supposed to do when we are gone!
- D.** D.K. Campbell wrote that Joshua was likely 100 years old at this point.¹ He would live for another decade after this but his ability to effectively lead was diminishing. We are seeing that in the United States right now with some of our political leaders who refuse to acknowledge they have hit that point in their life as well. It's a fact that at some point, not to be determined by an arbitrary number, a person's effectiveness as a leader begins to diminish with age in the same way our physical abilities diminish with age.
- E.** At 50 I can't do the things I used to do at 25. The wear and tear on my body over the years diminishes what I can physically do. I used could dunk a basketball on a ten-foot goal but now I would have to put ice on my knees just for thinking about it; not to mention I likely can't even touch the rim anymore!
- F.** In the same way our body slows down, eventually our mind starts to slow down. The processor eventually gets slower! Many leadership authors believe your peak decade as a leader is your 50's. But no matter if it's your 50's, 60's or 70's, at some point a person's mental and physical ability as a leader starts to decline. That doesn't mean we go from 100 to 0 over night, but it does mean our effectiveness as a leader will decrease at some point.
- G.** In Joshua's context, there are battles yet to be fought and as you will see they need to be fought by each tribe individually on the land they will inherit rather than as a united front. So, in addition to the fact that Joshua's body and mind are starting to decline, there is also the reality of a much more complex organization that needs to be led differently than what Joshua and Moses have done up to this point. Joshua has to set Israel up to be a tribal nation of God's people who are ruled by God through the Law He gave Moses and not by a singular leader with authoritarian power. However, his ability to effectively transition them into this reality, as well as the amount of time he has left to do it is decreasing, therefore its time to get 100% committed to making sure he's leaving a legacy instead of a memory!
- H.** Don't get me wrong, without everything Moses and Joshua accomplished, there would be no legacy to leave, but if Joshua doesn't set the people up to move

¹ Campbell, D. K. (1985). [Joshua](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 355). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

forward on their own on the foundation he and Moses had led them to build, then all that they did would be nothing more than a memory.

The second reality had to do with the mission God had given him.

(2) God made sure Joshua understood the mission was incomplete. (13:1b-6a)

- A. 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. 2 This is the land that yet remains:**
- B.** As I read these places, I don't know if you will be able to see them on the map we are going to put on your screen, but the list of places I'm about to read are in the bright green areas of the image.

Note: all the regions of the Philistines, and all those of the Geshurites 3 (from the Shihor, which is east of Egypt, northward to the boundary of Ekron, it is counted as Canaanite; there are five rulers of the Philistines, those of Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron), and those of the Avvim, 4 in the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that belongs to the Sidonians, to Aphek, to the boundary of the Amorites, 5 and the land of the Gebalites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrise, from Baal-gad below Mount Hermon to Lebo-hamath, 6 all the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon to Misrephoth-maim, even all the Sidonians.

- C.** The following is a map that demonstrates what Moses and Joshua had led the people to conquer and what remained.



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- D. In all that Moses and Joshua accomplished, there was still land that God had promised to the descendants of Abraham that had not been conquered. However, Joshua was at a point in his life that he wasn't going to be able to lead them to finish this large task. So, what Joshua needed to do is set them up to continue moving forward, to keep winning, but he's going to need to set them up to do it without him. Now on paper this would have worried Joshua to death, but the ultimate Coach, God, took that burden from Joshua.

The third reality had to do with God's commitment to the legacy.

(3) God made sure Joshua understood He would do what neither Joshua nor the Israelites could. (13:6b)

- A. "I myself will drive them out from before the people of Israel."
- B. The legacy was not all on the people. God had stuff that He was going to do to make sure what had been accomplished in Canaan wouldn't end up a memory but rather a legacy right to Jesus! He took the responsibility to make sure that was going to happen as He had promised.

² Brisco, T. V. (1998). *Holman Bible atlas* (p. 81). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

- C. However, He also specifically says here that He will drive all the Canaanites out of the land. Later the book of Judges tells us that God decided not to do that because of the disobedience of the people and it was devastating. We are going to come back to that in our next two sermons in Joshua, but know that all throughout the Bible, just because God accomplishes something doesn't mean we aren't required to join Him in some fashion. For instance, Jesus accomplished the work of salvation on the cross. He paid the penalty of our sin and He rose from the grave totally conquering the curse of sin and death! However, if you don't repent and believe in Him you will not be saved. Listen to one of the times Jesus made this abundantly clear,
- D. **1 There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 And he answered them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? 3 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. 4 Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? 5 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." (Luke 13:1-5)**
- E. So, its hugely encouraging to Joshua that God is committed to continue His covenant relationship with Israel and fight for them, but this doesn't mean Israel was necessarily going to always live in and claim what God had provided. More on that in the coming weeks. Unfortunately, Israel failed and never truly enjoyed what God had given them, but nonetheless, the ultimate purpose of God in Israel was Jesus and that was never thwarted.

The fourth reality had to do with Joshua.

(4) God made sure Joshua understood what Joshua was supposed to do. (13:6c-7)

- A. **Only allot the land to Israel for an inheritance, as I have commanded you. 7 Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance to the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh."**
- B. For the nation to grow strong and prosperous they needed to get busy inhabiting the cities they conquered and building their wealth. For Israel to effectively conquer the land they had yet to conquer, they needed to first become a nation that could stand on its own two feet. To date, they had conquered a bunch of land, but it had yet to be decided which tribes were going to get to live where. Half of Manasseh had already inherited land on the east side of the Jordan along with Reuben and Gad, but the other half of the tribe of Manasseh and the other 9 tribes had not received their inheritance. They were still very much a nomadic people with no place called home!

- C. Now from this point in the Book of Joshua all the way through Joshua 21:45 we get the details of who inherited what. We are not going to go through that section of Joshua verse by verse, however, over the next 5 weeks we are going to mine out some of the golden nuggets contained in what amounts to a legal document for Israel to know what land belongs to who. From things like how to deal with spiritual complacency and Biblical femininity, throughout this detailed explanation of who gets what, we end up finding all kinds highly relevant subject matters to dive deeper into Biblically. Each golden nugget is an opportunity for our heads and hearts to be turned towards Jesus and teach us how to go forward in His life. These nuggets don't necessarily of themselves reveal what the Bible teaches on the subject, but they should cause us to stop and ask the question they present and look to Bible to find the answer.

Similarly, today I want to finish our time together by talking about a subject Joshua 13:1-7 brings up. Clearly the primary Biblical application of Joshua 13:1-7 is that it points us to the inheritance we have in Christ. Ultimately our inheritance is the Kingdom of God and His life, and it's not divided up among us—we all have access to all of it! It is an inheritance we have full rights to because of Christ's death on the cross. We are righteous, that is deserving of Him, because Jesus has given us His righteousness! It is an inheritance that we can certainly experience now, and thus called by God to live in now. But it is also however an inheritance that we will not fully receive until Christ returns. The fact that we don't have it all in our possession yet leads some to worry they may mess it up, that is, fall short of God's expectations and get written out of the Kingdom will or something. But the Bible says,

13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:13-14)

We've discussed this inheritance throughout our study, and we will continue to do so. As a matter of fact, there's likely never going to be a day that I preach that we don't talk about that inheritance in some way because it's the only thing in this life that brings life! But instead of taking you to the doctrines of the faith that spells out that inheritance, I want to talk about another subject the passage brings up—how do we leave a Godly legacy? In Joshua 13, God gave instructions to Joshua on how to leave a legacy with Israel that matters to Him, but what about us? How do we leave a legacy that matters?

Proposition: There is a lot we could talk about from the Bible on this subject, but today I want to give you four Biblical keys to leaving a Godly legacy.

We could certainly add to this list, but I would confidently argue nobody we can't take these off the list.

The first key to leaving a Godly legacy is to ...

(1) Live your life for His glory, not your own.

- A. 31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 10:31)**
- B. 10 As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: 11 whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies-- in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 4:10-11)**
- C. This is about as basic as it gets. If you want your life and the fruit of your life to be a Godly legacy for others to continue, then it needs to be for His glory and not yours. If your life and the fruit of your life is all about you, then it's by definition NOT a Godly legacy that you're leaving.**

The second key to leaving a Godly legacy is to ...

(2) Labor to leave what lasts – His Word and His Love!

- A. 8 The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. (Isaiah 40:8)**
- B. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. 13 So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Corinthians 13:8-10, 13)**
- C. 4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. (Deuteronomy 6:4-7)**

The third key to leaving a Godly legacy is to ...

(3) Teach people to be followers of Jesus instead of followers of you.

- A. As David wrestled with the reality of his sinful actions he cried out to God in repentance. In doing so we don't hear David longing to be able to live his life as a respected King, or to leave a legacy of his greatness as one, but instead to be able to turn people toward God!**

B. 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. 13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. (Psalm 51:12-13)

C. When Paul wrote 2 Timothy he knew he didn't have long to live which adds some serious context to the depth of his appeal.

Note: 2 and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. (2 Timothy 2:2)

D. Finally, after planting the church in Thessalonica, Paul later wrote something to them that demonstrates this principle. He wrote,

E. 4 For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, 5 because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. 6 And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, 7 so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. ... 19 For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? 20 For you are our glory and joy. (1 Thessalonians 1:4-7; 2:19-20)

The fourth key to leaving a Godly legacy is to ...

(4) Never forget the way you live your life defines your life.

A. Ultimately you may trick people into believing your life was for His glory but one day you will stand before God, and it will truly be known for eternity.

B. Note: 13 each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. (1 Corinthians 3:13-15)

C. But furthermore, as we saw with Achan in Joshua 7, it's not just in eternity that the work of our life can be totally undone, but in this life as well. We don't know how Achan's life was lived, but unfortunately, we know how it ended. His legacy was a testimony of God's wrath on sin instead of God's blessing on faithfulness.

D. Ravi Zacharias was one of the most effective communicators of the Gospel in modern times. His books impacted millions. He was invited to explain and defend the Gospel all over the world. When he died, he left a thriving Gospel

ministry that was continuing his work. A true legacy! However, it wasn't long after his death that serious accusations came out against his character. The Board of Directors over his ministry hired a law firm and a private investigative firm who soon discovered beyond a shadow of a doubt that Zacharias had been deeply involved in illicit sexual behavior, manipulation, harassment, and abuse. He was even accused of rape.³ To make matters worse, he had used tons of money from the ministry to fund his behavior. As a result, the publishers of his books stopped selling his books and the ministry he spent a lifetime building basically closed shop. Instead of leaving a Godly legacy, he left a sinful memory.

Challenge: What kind of legacy are you building? Are you creating a legacy of sin or a legacy of His life? Is it a legacy you hope your family continues, or one you hope they never discover?

Everybody who's alive on this earth today, is one day closer to not being here than they were yesterday. So, listen, the fact of the matter is that your life is leaving a legacy of some sort, the only question is what kind.

When Billy Graham died, Focus On The Family published a quote from him. They posted,

“The greatest legacy one can pass on to one's children and grandchildren is not money or material things accumulated in one's life, but rather a legacy of character and faith.” - Billy Graham (1918-2018). Well done, Billy. Well done.”⁴

Today is not the day to procrastinate on building a Godly legacy, one that when you see Jesus He says,

“23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'” (Matthew 25:23)

Stop, delaying, living your life in a way that matters to Him. Stop worrying about the glory that comes from men, and hunger for the glory that comes from God. Stop worrying about how many people love you and how well they love you and start worrying about loving others the way He loves you! Enjoy the peace and purpose that exists when you spend whatever days, months, years or decades you have left in this life building a legacy of His life in your family, business, and community! Enjoy the anticipation of looking forward to His reward and in so doing leave a legacy of it.

³ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/report-ravi-zacharias-sexual-abuse/>

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/focusonthefamily/posts/the-greatest-legacy-one-can-pass-on-to-ones-children-and-grandchildren-is-not-mo/10155530116183520/>