

Go over this Jordan (Quality: Good)

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[0 : 00] The words found in the book of Joshua in the first chapter and at the first verse. Joshua chapter 1 at verse 1.

Now after the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Joshua, the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses, my servant, is dead.

Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.

Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

Led by Moses, the children of Israel journeyed toward the land of promise. Because of their waywardness, what might have been traversed in less than a month took them many years.

[1 : 20] They wandered in the wilderness, up and down, round and about, having lost their sense of direction.

And it seems to me, in the light of the New Testament, that the children of Israel in this situation are a perfect picture of many Christian people traveling through the wilderness of this world.

They are out of Egypt. They will eventually know the peace that passes understanding to perfection.

But in the meantime, much of their march, much of their pilgrimage, much of their life is aimless, is goal-less, and they make little progress in the things of God and the things of grace.

Now, the message of our text is indeed the message of the entire book of Joshua.

[2 : 36] And that message is that it is possible to enter into heavenly blessing here and now by act of faith while we are still in the wilderness.

If you want it in New Testament terms, you will find it in Paul in the epistle to the Ephesians where more than once he speaks of our being seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, even though we are still working our way through the wilderness of this world.

There is not only heaven set before us, but there is also an earnest, an Arab earn, a pledge of our inheritance, available in advance of total and final possession.

We which have believed, says Paul to the Hebrews, do enter into rest. The intention is not only the final rest, but the rest of a relationship with God here and now in this life and in this world.

many Christians, I fear, are saved in one sense, yet they spend all their days wondering whether they are saved.

[4 : 22] Or they spend all their days seeking salvation in another sense. there are, we have to remember, two sides to the matter.

We are saved from and we are saved to. But I fear that very many Christians know a great deal more about what they have been saved from than they do about what they have been saved to.

In other words, they are more familiar with the negative side than with the positive side. And because of that, there is little satisfaction in their Christian life.

There is little joy in their Christian experience. They are in effect like the children of Israel, wandering up and down in the wilderness.

Now, I think that is something that is set before us here in the book of Joshua. Indeed, the whole book of Joshua can be divided into three stages.

[5 : 41] The first four or five chapters show Israel entering the land. the second section, the middle part of the book of Joshua shows Israel conquering the land.

And the last part of the book of Joshua shows Israel possessing the land. Joshua is here at the beginning here we are faced with the situation that Moses is dead.

Joshua is his successor and this is God's commission to Joshua in respect of all the children of Israel. Joshua and the children of Israel and the children of God have an inheritance.

The question before us is quite simply is this where am I in relation to the inheritance? Have I come into it at all?

If I have am I just over the border or have I possessed the land the inheritance?

[7 : 15] Arise says God to Joshua arise go over this Jordan thou and all this people unto the land which I do give them even unto the children of Israel.

Now here is the statement then of an inheritance. Joshua the children of Israel and the children of God have this inheritance.

The question before us then is have I possessed my inheritance? Or do I live in terms of experience of professed Christian life which in fact is devoid of possession of that which is mine by grace and therefore by gracious gift?

Well there are three things I would like to do with regard to this subject this morning and the first is that I want to make an assessment of the inheritance. That surely seems to be the first thing to do.

That's the logical thing. To make an assessment of the inheritance. No analogy is perfect and when we use the analogy of Jordan in the Old Testament in relation to death we must never think that that is the only possible usage of that figure.

[8 : 52] there is not only a Jordan of death there is a Jordan of indecision and of hesitance and of fear and of uncertainty on the part of the people of God.

If we can view if we can assess the purchased possession of the people of God with the eye of an enlightened understanding we may be able to cross this Jordan of hesitation of fearfulness and possess our possessions in Christ.

Now then by way of assessing this inheritance it seems to me that we are told three things about it. The first is that it is an exceeding broad inheritance.

exceeding broad that is to say there is plenty of it. There is a great deal to it. Look at verse 4 look at the extent of the inheritance territorially from the wilderness of this Lebanon even unto the great river the river Euphrates all the land of the Hittites and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun shall be your coast.

Now you take that verse and compare it with a map of that area in ancient times and it gives you the boundaries first to the east and then to the west.

[10 : 33] It was an extensive territory but at this point the Israelites had not conquered that territory. they were content with the narrow limits of Canaan.

They began well but their vision became contracted. If Paul were writing to them he might well have said ye did well but who has hindered you?

God intended the Israelites to bring about the extinction of the Canaanites who were an exceptionally evil and wicked people.

The intention was that they should be exterminated but instead of that the Israelites went into the land and became friendly with them and fraternized with them in certain ways and certain places and marriages were entered into.

And for centuries the greater part of the territory defined in verse 4 was unconquered unoccupied and unpossessed by those to whom it belonged.

[12 : 00] You come to chapter 13 and the first verse and you find Joshua saying to them there remaineth therefore now very much land to be possessed.

It was theirs but they had not possessed it. They had no more than a foothold on what was theirs by inheritance.

And my friends in the light of the New Testament here is the principle for us that the inheritance God has given his people to enjoy in Christ is an exceeding broad inheritance.

But we limit ourselves. We get no farther than the bare margin of the land. All we can think and all we can ask is in the covenant of grace.

And in the territory of grace there are measureless breadth and measureless lengths. But we limit ourselves to close quarters.

[13 : 20] Some grace you must have of course. For you are not saved at all. but that all Christians have explored still less exploited the vast dominions of grace is far far far from being the case.

In the land of grace there are territories of deep knowledge high experience and great joy. yet how few Christians it seems travel very much and very far in those territories at all.

things and the Lord comes with reproof. He says as he did to Joshua arise he comes and he says as our Lord said ye are straightened but ye are not straightened in me ye are straightened in yourselves the inheritance of the saints in light is exceeding broad the possession of that inheritance in experience and in practice alas is exceeding narrow.

Very well let us try and assess this inheritance let us survey the broad acres of grace what do they contain? Well there is the acreage of pardon for sin that's the beginning beyond that there are the broad acres of acceptance in the beloved have you travelled in that land and rejoiced in the fact that you are a son a child of God there is the blessing of sonship and that is something over and above and beyond regarding yourself as a poor sinner what do you know about those broad acres beyond that there is the acreage of heirship if children then heirs heirs have gone and joined heirs with

Jesus Christ that's when a Christian knows that he's come into an inheritance that's when a Christian stops talking about himself as a poor sinner because he knows he's nothing of the kind he knows that he is an heir of God and in Jesus Christ heirs oh look at this inheritance from the standpoint of regeneration beyond that initial acreage in the territory of grace new birth is followed by new life and new life introduces us to the beauty of holiness how much do you know about that there are many Christians who think they cannot possibly know anything about that and if the minister speaks about it they go away and they say he flew too high for me out of my reach who said it's out of your reach when God says I am holy be ye holy who are you to say that it's out of your reach possess the possession arise go over this

[17 : 22] Jordan of self imposed limitation and take possession of all the inheritance not just the fringes and the borders seek after holiness for without it no man shall see the Lord says Paul in the epistle of the Hebrews follow on to know the Lord and you discover that the acreage of this inheritance is exceeding broad God again look at this inheritance from the standpoint of security as soon as you believe on Jesus you are safe as soon as you are born of God you are taken under God's wing and he shall preserve you from all evil and the next providence in the inheritance in the territory of grace is peace of heart and soul ought it not to be so what is your security worth if it doesn't give you peace of heart and soul what does a man look for when he looks for security in whatever realm whatever way aspect of life how few travel that far and possess that peace they believe the doctrine of eternal security they take no possession of the broad acres of the peace of God that passeth understanding real security can only produce real peace and yet how few

Christians have possessed their possession the inheritance of Christians in grace is exceeding broad second thing in the assessment of this inheritance is this the inheritance is very desirable the Israelites entered a country of a very choice kind Palestine it was said in the ancient world is the whole earth in miniature between the tropics and the temperate zone it possessed and possesses the advantages in a climatic way of both extremely fertile it was not called the land of milk and honey out of poetic license you can't get plenty of milk without lush verdure you can't get plenty of honey without the earth brings forth plentifully and fertility in the land ensured wealth and everything had been prepared for the true heirs of this land it was a desirable land and when a

Christian by faith gets his heritage in Christ he comes into a wealthy place when sin is driven out we come and live in God's own land there's a precious treasure to be discovered to be dug to be cultivated to be exploited we have all things in Christ in Christ there is the utmost our souls can ever need or require as he has gone into heaven to prepare a place for us so on earth he has prepared all we need on the way down assessing the inheritance it's exceeding broad and it's exceeding desirable yet some

Christians jump at an earthly inheritance and neglect the inheritance of grace arise go over this Jordan of hesitation of fear of doubt of hesitation and possess your possession in Christ the third thing that arises in the assessment of this inheritance is this it is full of variety full of variety Palestine was a land of fertile plains and rich valleys rising hills towering mountains it was a land of brooks and rivers it was a land which the Lord God thought upon it was in those days in common estimation the joy of all the earth the garden of the Lord and it's a picture of what there is in Christ in terms of rich spiritual variety for Christian people there is a hermon of experience there is a tabor of communion there is a jabbok of prevailing prayer there is a cherish cherith of divine providence they who live in

Christ live in a blessed country full of all manner of varying delight and above all it is said it is thy land oh Emmanuel that is the best of all names where Jesus is tis heaven there a Christian says old Thomas Brooks has two heavens one to come and one below in Christ arise go over this Jordan thou and all this people unto the land which I do give unto them even unto the children of Israel who can assess the inheritance of grace grace is glory in the bud yes and everything is in the bud later it will come to full flower but here we are meant to know that all is in

[24 : 15] Christ is meant for all believers and therefore all believers may have all that is in Christ why are we content with little when God gives us much God all sufficient is our inheritance and as such he more than meets our deepest need and highest aspiration there is a fullness of variety in the inheritance of grace so I have tried to assess the inheritance between it and most Christians there is sadly a Jordan of doubt a Jordan of hesitation a Jordan of indecision of fear and of lack of possession now therefore arise and go over this

Jordan that is the message do you possess your possession in Christ the inheritance is vast do you behave as a pauper when in fact your wealth is immense in Christ that's the first thing the second thing I want to say is this having assessed the inheritance now let us look at the title deeds of the inheritance but I hear somebody saying what right have you to say that all this is mine what right well I will tell you my right here it is here is the title deed verse 2 the land which I do give unto thee even to the children of Israel verse 3 every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon that have

I given you that is the abstract of title it's a title that will stand in any court on earth or in heaven I ask you to notice a few things about this title deed first notice its covenant character the land which I do give there it is was given to their father Abraham it was given to their father Abraham to descend to them generation by generation you'll find the full the initial the original deed of conveyance at the end of Genesis 15 I have given it was theirs by covenant and my

Christian friends our tenure of the kingdom of grace is as well established our title deed our covenant was not made with us personally or individually it was made with our covenant head and representative on our behalf he sealed it with his blood he ratified it by his resurrection and from that covenant God will never turn he has done it in sovereign grace he gave us to his son and his son gave himself for us and the engagement of those commitments can never be forgotten the result is that each believer has an incontestable right an incontestable title deed to the inheritance of grace it is covenantal in its character seed shows that the inheritance is one of grace how does it run in the text does it say the land which I will sell unto thee no there's no payment does it say the land which

I do offer unto thee if you will no it's not an offer it is a gift it is an unconditional gift of sovereign love verse 2 I do give verse 3 I have given gift is grace grace is gift and nothing is freer the gift of God is eternal life God has given all and all and for nothing so we say that we have a title to the exceeding riches of his grace not simply the initial experience but the exceeding riches of his grace for the inheritance is not only covenantal it is gracious thirdly the title deeds to the inheritance are just there is justice in our title to this inheritance because all depends on the ability of the giver to give if one party to the covenant has nothing to give there is not much point in trying to make a covenant

[30 : 29] I the God of heaven and earth do give the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof and out of that fullness out of that rightful possession he gave a portion to his people Israel it was theirs justly it was theirs rightly it was theirs righteously God gave to Israel and of his own God gave to Christ and of his own he gives by inheritance to those who are Christ he sacrificed his son he satisfied every claim of justice and he acts in perfect justice when he demands righteousness of his people and when he gives righteousness to his people in Christ the inheritance is God's to give salvation the title is just shall I not do as I will with my own he asks the blessings of the covenant of grace are a matter of royal gift and therefore are absolute what grace gives the

Christian is his by superior title and by more perfect justice than anything else he can ever receive the inheritance is under the title of covenant of grace and of justice and above that the title shows that the inheritance is sure I do give I have given lawyers look for unmistakable clarity of expression in establishing and framing a title so does God I do give words of one syllable words of unmistakable meaning and interpretation there is no loophole

God gives Christ and his grace to Christians every day the blessings of his inheritance are fresh every day the gift and calling of God are without repentance a Christian stands possessed of the kingdom of grace by the gift of him who has the right to give what he pleases and as he pleases it is your father's good pleasure I do give I have given well compare your title with your felt possession does God give you and you decline to accept the highest privileges of the covenant of grace are not the monopoly of advanced believers they are the common property of all believers now says

God arise and go over this Jordan this Jordan of doubt this Jordan of despair this Jordan of hesitation of fear go in and possess your possession don't linger on the border your title deed is that of an inheritance which is covenantal and gracious and just and sure so the final the third thing that I want to say is that action is called for go over this Jordan I repeat what I said at the beginning there is more than one Jordan the Jordan of death no analogy is permanent there are many Jordans that believers have to cross in terms of Christ all the way through their pilgrimage the final

Jordan rolls between us and final possession the other Jordan is whatever stands now between a saved soul and the possession the felt possession of his inheritance in Christ he is saved from he knows that saved to ask him to tell you that that's where his problems begin he calls for an act of faith he calls for an act of understanding every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon that have I given unto you where do you place your foot in relation to the rock the firm ground of the inheritance of grace where do you place your foot on what promises what blessings what assurances what resources of

[36 : 00] God's grace do you stand every place in the land of grace on which the sole of your foot shall tread is yours the hand of faith the foot of faith it is the same thing you can take possession by hand you can take possession by foot arise go over over what well over the Jordan of disbelief disbelief that such an inheritance is yours many Christians are guilty of that disbelief arise go over over what over the Jordan of ignorance in the matter you never realized that the whole inheritance was yours you thought as long as you got across the threshold of being saved from eternal damnation that was all and that was enough someone has told you it's presumptuous for you to take possession of what

God has given you so you hesitate in fear and trepidation and uncertainty you're like Israel just inside on the fringes of the land arise go over this Jordan the Jordan of hesitation and indecision you're not sure whether you're ready for it you think perhaps you ought to become a better Christian before you take possession arise go over this Jordan and possess your possessions in Christ arise go over this Jordan what Jordan the Jordan of sheer indolence and apathy and laziness in spiritual things for those are all things that afflict Christians here's a besetting sin among

Christians they're content to dwell just inside the border what stops them is procrastination what stops them is preoccupation with this world with the wilderness what stops them is excuses unwillingness contentedness with the little things while the inheritance is barely touched arise go over this Jordan oh there are many Jordans you've got to cross before you come to the final Jordan many crises many bridges they all have to be crossed if you are going to possess your possession if you're going to know and feel and understand the worth and the wealth of the inheritance of grace in Christ Jesus the

Lord give us faith to hear and to heed this call and to obey it arise go over this Jordan thou and all this people unto the land which I do give to them even to the children of Israel every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon that have I given unto you as I said unto Moses Amen