

Joshua 11:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war.

Analysis

This verse summarizes the conquest's completion, emphasizing divine faithfulness to promise. The phrase 'Joshua took the whole land' (vayikach Yehoshua et-kol-haarets, וַיִּכָּח יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶת-כָּל-הָאָרֶץ) indicates comprehensive military success, though later passages show some cities remained unconquered (13:1-7; Judges 1). This apparent tension resolves by understanding 'whole land' as the entire territory promised, with remaining pockets of resistance to be conquered gradually. The phrase 'according to all that the LORD said unto Moses' roots Joshua's success in divine promise and Mosaic revelation—God fulfilled every word He spoke. The distribution 'for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes' shows systematic, equitable land allocation maintaining tribal identity. The concluding statement 'the land rested from war' (vehaarets shaqatah milchamah, וְהָאָרֶץ שָׁקְטָה מִמִּלְחָמָה) indicates cessation of major military campaigns, though not elimination of all enemies. This rest foreshadows the greater rest Christ provides (Hebrews 4:1-11)—positional peace accomplished, though experiential conquest continues.

Historical Context

Joshua's conquest lasted approximately seven years (compare Joshua 14:7, 10), though major campaigns occupied shorter periods. The statement of

comprehensive victory doesn't claim every Canaanite was killed but that Israel controlled the land and broke Canaanite military power. The conquest followed ancient Near Eastern patterns of destroying urban centers, defeating coalitions, and establishing territorial control without necessarily occupying every village. Archaeological evidence shows destruction layers at numerous sites (Hazor, Lachish, Debir) in the Late Bronze Age, consistent with Joshua's campaigns. The tribal allocation detailed in Joshua 13-21 shows systematic distribution maintaining Israel's confederation structure rather than centralized monarchy. The 'rest from war' established conditions for Israel to settle, cultivate land, and worship at the central sanctuary. This rest proved temporary—Judges records renewed conflicts when Israel failed to complete conquest and fell into apostasy. The pattern of conditional rest based on faithfulness runs throughout redemptive history, finding ultimate fulfillment in the eschatological rest promised believers.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How do you reconcile God's fulfilled promises ('Joshua took the whole land') with ongoing struggles and unconquered areas in your Christian life?
2. What does the systematic tribal distribution teach about God's concern for both corporate unity and individual inheritance?
3. How does the temporary rest of Joshua's era point forward to the eternal rest believers receive through Christ?

Interlinear Text

וַתֵּחַבֵּר אֶשְׂרָר כָּכָל וְהָאָרֶץ
took **So Joshua** H853 H3605 **And the land** H3605 H834 **said**
H3947 H3091 H776 H1696

יְהוָה אֶל מֹשֶׁה וַתֵּן יְהוֹשֻׁעַ
according to all that the LORD H413 **unto Moses** **gave** **So Joshua**
H3068 H4872 H5414 H3091

לְנַחֲלָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל כַּמְחִלָּקֹתָם לְשִׁבְטֵיהֶם
it for an inheritance **unto Israel** **according to their divisions** **by their tribes**
H5159 H3478 H4256 H7626

וְהָאָרֶץ מִמִּלְחָמָה: שָׁקֵטָה
And the land **rested** **from war**
H776 H8252 H4421

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