

Joshua 13:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the land of the Giblites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrising, from Baal-gad under mount Hermon unto the entering into Hamath.

Analysis

Continuing the catalog: 'And the land of the Giblites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrising, from Baal-gad under mount Hermon unto the entering into Hamath.' The Giblites (from Gebal/Byblos, famous Phoenician city) remain unconquered. 'All Lebanon' with its famous cedar forests and the territory from Baal-gad to Hamath represents significant northern regions never fully possessed. Mount Hermon marked the northern limit of actual conquest, but God's promise extended further—to Hamath, well into what became Aramean Syria. The gap between promise and possession creates tension requiring faith. The passage teaches that God's promises often exceed immediate fulfillment, requiring successive generations to appropriate by faith what God has declared by promise. Canaan represents the 'rest' God promised (Hebrews 3-4), yet that rest requires ongoing faithfulness to enter. Promises declared don't eliminate responsibility to pursue.

Historical Context

Gebal (Byblos) was ancient Phoenician port city, its name survives in English 'Bible' (books came through Byblos). Lebanon's cedar forests were legendary, providing timber for ancient world (Solomon imported Lebanese cedar for the temple, 1 Kings 5:6). Baal-gad marked the northern extent of Joshua's actual conquests (11:17, 12:7), probably near modern Damascus. Hamath was city-state far to the north in Syria, well beyond Israel's actual control except briefly during David-Solomon's empire when they had treaty relationships. The extensive

territory described—from Mediterranean coast inland through Lebanon range to Syrian territories—represented God's maximum promise. That Israel never fully possessed it raises theological questions about conditional versus unconditional promises. Reformed theology generally understands that while God's ultimate purposes are unconditional, experiential appropriation requires covenant faithfulness. Israel's incomplete possession resulted partly from incomplete obedience (Judges 1-2).

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 – God is love

John 15:13 – Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How do you understand the relationship between God's unconditional promises and the conditional nature of their experiential realization?
2. What promised blessings remain unrealized in your life, and what role might your faithfulness play in appropriating them?
3. How does incomplete possession of promises develop dependence on God and faith for future generations?

Interlinear Text

בַּשְׁמָשׁ מִזְבֵּחַ פְּלִבְנָה יְכָלֵל הַגִּבְלִי וְאֶתְּנָא רַץ
And the land of the Giblites and all Lebanon toward the sunrising H3605 H3844 H4217 H8121 H1382 H776

מִבְּעֵל	בְּאַגָּדָה	מִתְּחִתָּה	בְּרֵרָה	בְּרֵרָה	בְּרֵרָה	בְּרֵרָה
H0	from Baalgad	H8478	under mount	Hermon		
H1171			H2022		H2768	H5704

לְבָבָן חַמָּתָן
unto the entering into Hamath

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 12:7 (Parallel theme): And these are the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel smote on this side Jordan on the west, from Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon even unto the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir; which Joshua gave unto the tribes of Israel for a possession according to their divisions;

1 Kings 5:18 (Parallel theme): And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew them, and the stonesquarers: so they prepared timber and stones to build the house.

Psalms 83:7 (Parallel theme): Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre;

Ezekiel 27:9 (Parallel theme): The ancients of Gebal and the wise men thereof were in thee thy calkers: all the ships of the sea with their mariners were in thee to occupy thy merchandise.

Joshua 11:17 (Parallel theme): Even from the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir, even unto Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon under mount Hermon: and all their kings he took, and smote them, and slew them.

Numbers 34:8 (Parallel theme): From mount Hor ye shall point out your border unto the entrance of Hamath; and the goings forth of the border shall be to Zedad:
