

# Joshua 24:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat.

## Analysis

**I have given you a land for which ye did not labour** (אֶתֶן לְכֶם אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לֹא יָבֹא—*bab'a*)—the verb *yaga* (עַבַּד, to labor/toil) emphasizes unmerited gift. Israel neither cleared forests, built terraces, nor developed agriculture—they inherited completed infrastructure. This fulfilled God's promise: 'Houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not' (Deuteronomy 6:10-11).

**Cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat**—the threefold negation (not labored, not built, not planted) contrasts with present blessing (given, dwell, eat). This recapitulates grace theology: salvation is pure gift, not reward for human effort. The Canaanites labored; Israel inherited. Christians inherit salvation accomplished by Christ: 'By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast' (Ephesians 2:8-9).

## Historical Context

Canaanite cities featured advanced architecture, water systems (like Gezer's tunnel), agricultural terracing, and established olive/grape cultivation—centuries of development. Israel, former nomadic shepherds, suddenly possessed urban civilization. This created temptation: forgetting the Giver and crediting themselves or Canaanite gods for prosperity. Joshua's reminder 'which ye planted not' echoes

Moses's warning against pride (Deuteronomy 8:11-18). The principle 'freely ye have received' (Matthew 10:8) requires gratitude, not entitlement. Failure to remember grace breeds apostasy—Israel's subsequent history proved this warning necessary.

## Related Passages

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**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

## Study Questions

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1. How does inheriting 'a land for which ye did not labour' illustrate salvation by grace apart from human merit?
2. What spiritual dangers accompany blessing—how does prosperity tempt us to forget the Giver?
3. In what ways do Christians inherit 'cities we built not' through Christ's finished work on the cross?

## Interlinear Text

אַתָּה	לֹא	אַשְׁר	אַתָּה	כִּי	לְכָמָן	עָתָה
And I have given		you a land			for which ye did not labour	
H5414	H0	H776	H834	H3808	H3021	
בָּהּ	לֹא	אַשְׁר	בְּנִיתָם	וְתַשְׁבֵּה	בָּהּ	
and cities	H834	H3808	which ye built	not and ye dwell	H0	
H5892		H1129		H3427		
אַתָּה	לֹא	אַשְׁר	נִטְعָתָם	אַתָּה	נִטְעָתָם	
in them of the vineyards		and oliveyards		H834	H3808	which ye planted
H3754		H2132			H5193	H859
אַכְלִים:						
not do ye eat						
H398						

## Additional Cross-References

**Deuteronomy 8:7** (Parallel theme): For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills;

**Proverbs 13:22** (Parallel theme): A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.

**Joshua 21:45** (Parallel theme): There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.

**Joshua 11:13** (Parallel theme): But as for the cities that stood still in their strength, Israel burned none of them, save Hazor only; that did Joshua burn.