

# 30th

Text  
Joshua 13:1

Topic  
An aging Joshua is told by God  
there is still much work to be done settling the Promised Land

Title  
*"New Country for Old Men"*

## Introduction

The article in the NY Post was titled, *Hollywood Loves its Aging Action Heroes*.

Here's an excerpt from the article:

Age is just a number, at least when it comes to action heroes. Grab a juice box and take a hike, Taylor Lautner. The biggest names in action movies today are virtually identical to the 1980s and early 1990s. Sylvester Stallone is 68. Arnold Schwarzenegger is 67. Liam Neeson is 62. Wee pup Bruce Willis is 60.

The writer also made this comment: "these guys don't mind working around all those loud gunshots; *their hearing probably went years ago.*"

Joshua and Caleb were the aging action heroes of the Israelites at the time of the conquest of the Promised Land.

About 45 years earlier, Joshua and Caleb had been two of the twelve spies sent in by Moses to give a report on the Promised Land.

You remember the story: Ten spies emphasized the strength of the walled cities, and the terrifying presence of giants, while Joshua and Caleb emphasized walking by faith, and believing that God had already given them the victory.

The Israelites defied God and refused to enter the Promised Land. As a discipline, God decreed that all those above twenty years of age would die-off wandering in the wilderness over the next almost forty years.

All, that is, except for Joshua and Caleb. God preserved them, and they entered the Promised Land along with the younger generation.

The initial conquest of the Promised Land took about seven years. The Israeli military broke the backbone of Canaanite power in three decisive battles:

1. In the central region they had taken the strategic fortified city of Jericho.
2. In the south they had defeated a combined force at Gibeon.
3. In the north they had defeated a huge enemy contingent by the waters of Merom.

It was time for each tribe to receive its inheritance of land and to take the individual responsibility of driving out any remaining resistance.

Thus we read in verse one of Joshua thirteen,

Jos 13:1 Now Joshua was old, advanced in years. And the LORD said to him: "You are old, advanced in years, and there remains very much land yet to be possessed.

We know from the last chapter that Joshua died at the age of 110 (24:29), so he probably was at least 100 in chapter thirteen.

You might not think that 100 is very old, for a Bible character in the Old Testament. Some of those guys had extremely long life spans.

But the phrasing God used indicates that his years of serving had left Joshua battle worn.

Another translation, the Complete Jewish Bible, translates the opening phrase "Now Joshua was old; the years had taken their toll."

The Lord was saying, *"Man, you're tore up, Joshua!"*

I've never been big on reunions, but I've been to a couple. There are always a few guys and gals to whom the years have not been kind. You don't normally go up to them and say, "Man, the years have taken their toll on you."

God was simply stating a fact. If you're in the battle, familiar with spiritual warfare, you're gonna look like you were.

It's my favorite scene from the movie, *Jaws*. Chief Brody, Hooper and Quint, in the galley of their boat, the *Orca*, get to comparing scars.

It starts with Brody touching a recently acquired abrasion on his forehead. Quint pulls his hair aside to show a permanent lump from being hit with a spittoon in a bar on "Saint Paddy's Day."

Hooper shows a scar, on his forearm, where a classmate bit him during recess. Quint responds by showing a scar on his forearm, attributed to a wire burn.

Next, Hooper rolls up his sleeve to show the bite of a Moray eel.

Quint counters with a knife wound he received in a fight.

Hooper shows a bull shark bite on his leg; Quint, the scar from a thresher shark.

About that time, Chief Brody sheepishly checks the scar from his appendectomy.

Finally Hooper points to his heart, telling them it was broken by Mary Ellen Moffat.

Wounded and scarred isn't how we normally think of Christians - but we should.

After His resurrection, Jesus invited Thomas to examine the scars on His glorified body. Charles Spurgeon said,

For did he not say to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing." I wish to draw your attention to the ample fact, that our Lord Jesus Christ, when He rose again from the dead had in His body the marks of His passion.

If He had pleased He could readily have removed them. He rose again from the dead, and He might have erased from His body everything which could be an indication of what He had suffered and endured before He descended into the tomb. But, no! Instead thereof, there were the pierced hands and feet, and there was the open side.

When He steps forward, in Heaven, to take the scroll and open the seals of the Tribulation, Jesus does so as the Lamb Who was slain, bearing His scars.

Serving the Lord can take its toll on you. I can't help but think of the apostle Paul and the weight of the physical and emotional toll serving the Lord took on him.

He described it in his own inspired words, in his most autobiographical letter, Second Corinthians.

2Co 11:23 ... in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often.

2Co 11:24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one.

2Co 11:25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep;

2Co 11:26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

2Co 11:27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness -

2Co 11:28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.

Amy Carmichael powerfully expressed this aspect of walking with Jesus in her classic poem, *No Scar?*

*Hast thou no scar?  
No hidden scar on foot, or side, or hand?  
I hear thee sung as mighty in the land;  
I hear them hail thy bright, ascendant star.  
Hast thou no scar?*

*Hast thou no wound?  
Yet I was wounded by the archers; spent,  
Leaned Me against a tree to die; and rent  
By ravening beasts that compassed Me, I swooned.  
Hast thou no wound?  
No wound? No scar?*

*Yet, as the Master shall the servant be,  
And piercèd are the feet that follow Me.  
But thine are whole; can he have followed far  
Who hast no wound or scar?*

While we all, as Christians, would consent to the truth that we are soldiers, we need to come to the awareness *we are wounded warriors - not weekend warriors.*

We are not reservists who may or may not be called into active duty. And there is no term to our tour of duty; we are lifers in the Lord's army.

Ideally, in our culture, we now retire around age 55. We see retirement as a time of leisure and pleasure; a time to do what we want with our time.

Joshua was almost twice that old when God gave him maybe the most difficult task he had yet faced - the dividing of the land. It would be followed by his needing to fight to drive-out enemies who remained in his inheritance.

As long as you are alive, there will be **more** work to do for the Lord, *never* less. If it's true that when we are weak, He is strong, you'd expect much more difficult spiritual tasks as you age.

It's not by might, nor by power, but by God's Spirit that we claim our inheritance.

Jeremiah understood this when God said to him,

Jer 12:5 "If you have run with the footmen, and they have wearied you, Then how can you contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, In which you trusted, they wearied you, Then how will you do in the floodplain of the Jordan?

Remember the movie, *Top Gun*? At the end, after Maverick and Ice Man defeat the Russian MIGS, they're told they can have any assignment they want.

In one successful dogfight, they had arrived.

Tom Cruise chose to go back to get the girl and be an instructor at Top Gun school.

He peaked in his very first combat mission, and lived off its glory for the rest of his career.

That kind of thinking has no place in our walk with the Lord. If Joshua and Caleb were Maverick and Ice Man, they'd have gone on to Russia and wiped-out their entire air force.

Joshua's advanced age did not excuse him from making continued spiritual progress. He had unfinished business.

Until you die, or the church is raptured, **you and I** will have unfinished business with the Lord.

Ask Him, today, to show you some. What has been left undone? What is He leading you to do?

It was time for the Israelites to divide the land and turn loose each tribe in their inheritance to continue the conquest.

How'd they do? There's a report card in the sequel to Joshua, the Book of Judges.

Jdg 3:5 Thus the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

Jdg 3:6 And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons; and they served their gods.

Tribe after tribe failed to drive out their enemies, and instead they quite literally got into bed with them.

I'm not sure when it became popular to name each generation. According to a professor at Texas A&M, "in America, there are six living generations, which are six fairly distinct groups of people. As a generalization each generation has different likes, dislikes, and attributes."



Her list reads like this:

- Born before 1927 - The Greatest Generation.
- Born between 1927 and 1945 - The Silent Generation.
- Born between 1946 and 1964 - The Baby Boomers.
- Born between 1965 and 1980 - Generation X.
- Born between 1981 and 2000 - Generation Y (or Millennials).
- Born after 2001 - Generation Z (not for zombie, btw; it's because they are too young to have characteristics, so 'Z' is a place-holder until they can be identified).

Some are calling the current generation, Generation Like, because of Facebook and Instagram 'likes,' and the trauma of not receiving 'likes' for your postings.

I'd call the generation that Joshua led in to the Promised Land Generation Epic Fail.

Joshua had won a decisive victory; but their enemies remained - fierce enemies, needing to be battled.

Sounds just like us, does it not? Our Joshua, the Lord, Jesus Christ, defeated our enemies. Speaking of the Cross at Calvary, in Colossians 2:15 we read,

Col 2:15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

The devil and his minions were soundly defeated. Yet until Jesus returns to earth, the devil goes on warring against us.

Israel's tribes were to fight from a position of assured victory in order to secure their inheritance.

The Promised Land is a type, for us, of the Christian life. With no disrespect intended toward many popular hymns, the Promised Land is *not* typical of Heaven, because there are enemies in it, and battles to be fought, and wounds to be earned doing so.

The question for us, today, whether we've been here thirty-years or thirty-minutes, is, *Where am I living?*

What is *your* spiritual address? You have five choices.

Here is what I mean. Warren Wiersbe, in his Joshua commentary, *Be Strong*, compares four geographic locations associated with Israel to four possible spiritual 'states' we may occupy. I add a fifth.

- **Egypt** was the place of death and bondage, from which Israel was delivered. This illustrates the salvation we have by faith in Jesus Christ, our Passover Lamb. Are you saved? If you are not, you are living in Egypt, living according to your natural appetites, not realizing your purpose for living. Worse, you're final destination is Hell, separated from God, in a place of eternal conscious torment for eternity.
- The **Promised Land** represents the Christian life as it ought to be: conflict and victory, faith and obedience, spiritual riches and rest, where we are constantly claiming more of our inheritance in Jesus. It is cooperating with Jesus, Who promised to complete the work He has begun in you.
- The **Wilderness Wandering** of Israel depicts believers who live in unbelief and disobedience to God. They come to a place of decision, or crisis, and they refuse to obey the Lord. They are delivered from Egypt, but Egypt is still in their hearts. They meander through life as wanderers. You're in the wilderness if

your life is mostly characterized by carnal, worldly pursuits; and if you choose to disobey the clear teachings of the Bible.

- Two of the Jewish tribes, Reuben and Gad, settled on the border of the Promised Land rather than going in as God had decreed. The land east of the Jordan River was great for their livestock - for their livelihood. This tells me it's possible to be a **Borderland** believer. You're content to be saved, but you want to be left alone to pursue your own best interests. You're not living in sin, but you are falling short in total commitment to Jesus. You're a Christian, but you're not a disciple.
- The fifth location is **Babylon**. It was to Babylon the Jews were exiled for a time of discipline for willful rebellion. You might be enduring a time like that, now. If so, rejoice, knowing whom the Lord loves, He disciplines, in order to restore you.

Where am I living? What's my address?

It ought to be in the Promised Land, in a walk with Jesus in which I am growing more like Him everyday.

As for our thirty years... **We** are aging action heroes and heroines. Thirty-years is a warm-up.

"There remains **very much** land yet to be possessed."

Let's get folks out of Egypt; and let's stay out of the wilderness, and the borderland, and Babylon, and conquer our enemies, claiming more-and-more of our inheritance on our way home.