

You Eat the Fruit of Vineyards You Did Not Plant

Joshua 24:13-14

- I. The historical context here is that of God speaking to the Israelites whom He had just delivered into Canaan. The land was a rich one, but the wealth of the land did not historically belong to the Israelites. How could they ethically possess that which they had not worked for?
- II. Point one: the Canaanites were the original owners, but since they worshipped false gods they were not true, authentic owners. They were stealing from God that which he created, using it for themselves, and worshipping idols. Therefore it never really belonged to them.
- III. What God has created really belongs to the children of God. In this case, Israel was the children of God. Therefore God gave them their inheritance.
- IV. Expansion on the point of us receiving that which we did not plant ourselves:
 - Family level: we did nothing to be born, but received life, food, shelter, love, etc. from our parents.
 - Society level: we received education – knowledge that we did not create, develop or discover ourselves. Literature, culture, science, arts and crafts, which we had nothing to do with in creating, are ours by inheritance.
 - Further, we benefit from institutions we did not create: the hospital we were born in, the protection of medical science, the convenience of transportation and communication, the protection of public and private institutions, the media, the church.
- V. This last point is crucial: the inheritance of salvation through the church. We did nothing to deserve the love of God, is forgiveness. We did not shed blood as martyrs. We did not pioneer the gospel in unfamiliar lands, against great misunderstanding and persecution. (Etc., on how much we received from God, which we did not deserve and did nothing to earn.)
- VI. Yet how ungrateful we are. When we are ungrateful, when we do not thank God, when we do not humble ourselves before God for what we have received at His hand, we are like the Canaanites who worshipped idols. What we have will be taken away.

- VII. The Israelites did nothing, except follow God. Thus they were in the position to receive His inheritance. It is the same this us: though it may seem futile to serve God, though we may have nothing, materially to show for it, God is preparing a blessing for us, as he did for the Israelites.
- VIII. But the price was, as always, to fear and serve the Lord; to put away false gods, and serve Him in sincerity and in faithfulness.
- IX. And put away the false gods your fathers worshipped. What kind of false gods do we worship today in our society? They are not graven images of stone and wood, but money, fame, physical pleasure, worldly “causes” which we think will save the world (such as a political program or leader, or a new technology, or a reform). (This can be expanded greatly.)
- X. We can possess things, but we should do so in the fear and service of God. We must realize that all we have is from God, ultimately, not ultimately from our own work, our own skill or cleverness, not from our fathers who served idols. And we should realized the lesson of the Canaanites: if we worship false gods, what we have will be taken away.