

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Joshua: God's Faithful Giving Of The Promised Land To Israel

Part II: God's Giving Israel Victory Over The Canaanites, Joshua 5:13-12:24

H. Rightly Responding To Hardship In God's Calling

(Joshua 11:16-12:24)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

We Christians need to know what to do if we face hardship in doing what we initially thought was God's will:

(1) Take for example the issue of the hardship of taxes that all of us who live in the State of Connecticut face: The Wall Street Journal, May 30-31, 2015 editorial, "Worse Than Illinois," p. A12, reported that our state's "economy isn't growing," that it is "tied for tenth worst in the U. S.," that "(s)low growth means less tax revenue but spending never slows down," and it added that matters "will only get worse if the state Assembly gets its way."

Of note is the reaction to such woe by many, for the editorial added that "about half of Nutmeg Staters would migrate if they could," Ibid. This tendency for flight amid tax increases can tempt even a believer to leave the state.

(2) Last Friday morning, my wife and I got into a discussion about multiple cases we know of believers who face hardships of one kind or another, and that at times with disillusionment: one believer last week asked me if it was at all unusual for Christians to mistreat other Christians on important issues like he had recently faced.

Need: So, we ask, "If I face hardship after starting to do what I thought was God's calling, how must I respond?!"

- I. Before he had led Israel to start to conquer Canaan, Joshua had heard the Lord promise to give him the entire land, that no foe would be able to withstand him if he obeyed the Word of God, Joshua 1:1-9
- II. However, the Joshua 11:16-22 summary of the actual conquest of Canaan presents a record of varied **HARDSHIPS** in that mission of conquest by Joshua and Israel (as follows):
 - A. First, in invading Canaan, Joshua lacked the manpower to destroy all of the Canaanites, Jos. 11:16-17; 13:1:
 1. Joshua 11:16-17 reports that Joshua took the whole land of Canaan, but Joshua 13:1 KJV reveals that even in his old age, Joshua claimed that "there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed."
 2. This seeming contradiction is explained by understanding the Hebrew view that "the part stands for the whole," that "Joshua took key centers in all parts of the land" without defeating all of the Canaanites since he lacked "sufficient manpower to leave a controlling garrison in each place," Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 354. Joshua could not spare the soldiers to set up garrisons in every part of the land since he had to keep his force large enough to wage a successful war on key areas of Canaanite resistance.
 - B. Second, Joshua had to fight a long war, Joshua 11:18:
 1. Though the battles of Gibeon and of the Waters of Merom quickly broke the dominance of the Southern and of the Northern Canaanites, many Canaanite city states were left to be conquered as seen in the 31 city states and kings that were defeated under Joshua's leadership in Joshua 12:1-24; Ibid., p. 355.
 2. This war actually lasted seven long years (Ibid., p. 357), *yamim rabim*, or "many days" as Joshua 11:18 reports; Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 340.
 - C. Third, Joshua faced many successive conflicts with Canaanite city states, Jos. 11:19: only the Gibeonites made peace with Israel (Jos. 9:1-27), but "it came to pass" (*hayah*, Ibid.; B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 224-228) -- meaning, **over TIME** -- that all the other Canaanite city states eventually hardened their hearts against Israel so that Israel's soldiers **needed** to destroy them for Israel's protection.
 - D. Fourth, Joshua had to fight the giant Anakim that Israel had feared at Kadesh-Barnea, a fear that had led God to judge Israel's past generation to die in the wilderness, Jos. 11:21a; Numbers 13:32-14:23.
- III. **Yet, Israel did not let such hardships curb her faith in God or her obedience to Him, Jos. 11:16-12:24:**
 - A. With the lack of manpower needed to eradicate all of the Canaanites, Joshua broke their dominance in every part of the land while leaving manageable pockets of Canaanites for Israel's local tribes to defeat after they had inherited their portions, Ibid., p. 354. [Joshua "conquered sites on the coastal plain, the Shephelah (foothills), the central plateau, the Jordan Valley, and the Transjordan plateau. No area was totally bypassed," Ibid., citing A. J. Mattill, Jr., "Representative Universalism and the Conquest of Canaan," Concordia Theo. Monthly, 35, Jan. 1964:8-17.] Joshua thus budgeted his manpower to provide for a workable transition from Israel's functioning as a successful invasion force with limited garrison ability to occupying the entire land as a nation.
 - B. In having to fight a long, seven-year war, Joshua faithfully persevered, not letting the many days it took to complete the task deter him from finishing God's assignment, cf. Hebrews 12:1-3.

- C. In having to face constant resistance from the Canaanites, Joshua realized that God's will was for Israel to destroy the Canaanites for their sin, that Israel's conflict with them was by divine design to fulfill God's plan to judge the guilty people while also preserving Israel's holiness, Jos. 11:19-20 with Deut. 7:1-2; 20:16-18:
1. God had initially told Israel to destroy all of the Canaanites due to their sin while simultaneously keeping separate from their vile and potent idolatry, Deuteronomy 7:1-2 and 20:16-18.
 2. However, God Himself aided Israel's heeding this directive by also working to *harden* the remaining Canaanite city states in **successive order** against Israel that Israel might be *required* to destroy them and their idolatry with them for the safety of Israel herself, Joshua 11:20.
- D. With his need to fight the giant Anakim, Joshua trusted God's Joshua 1:5 promise to deliver all of his foes into his hand, and God rewarded his faith by giving him victory over those giants, cf. Exodus 23:21-22.
- IV. As the result, Israel under Joshua finished heeding God's Word in conquering the land, and Joshua gave it as an inheritance to Israel in its tribal divisions, and the land finally had rest from war, Joshua 11:23.**

Lesson: *Though facing varied, great hardships in trusting God and heeding His Word to give them victory over the Canaanites, Joshua and Israel (1) budgeted their manpower resource to their best ability to fulfill the task, (2) they faithfully persevered in heeding the Lord to complete His assignment, (3) they accepted even repeat conflict when God's will called for it as a directive from God both to punish the ungodly and to preserve Israel's own safety and holiness and (4) they courageously trusted God to provide victory over humanly superior giants.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ to be saved and be equipped by God's spiritual resources to handle life's hardships, John 3:16; Romans 8:9b; 12:3-8. (2) If facing hardships, (a) may we first check Scripture to be sure we are doing what God has truly assigned us, and correct our path if we must. (b) Then, if we know that we are doing God's will but we still face hardships, may we ((1)) budget our resources best to fulfill our calling, ((2)) may we persevere faithfully in God's assigned work, ((3)) may we face even extensive conflict with others, knowing God is allowing such conflict to occur to discipline the ungodly and/or to preserve us and His holiness in us and ((4)) may we trust God to be able to tackle all other "giant" obstacles that we face.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

In our introduction, we mentioned the hardship of a believer's being very mistreated by another believer(s), so in this section it would be good for us to review the 2 Timothy 3:1-5 prophecy about relationship hardships in our era:

(1) The Apostle Paul predicted that in the latter days of Church History, in our era (2 Timothy 3:1a), "hard, difficult, stressful, violent" (*chalepos*, used also of the demoniacs in Matthew 8:28; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 882) times would come as people both outside or at times even within the Church, affected by a decadent society and a dysfunctional family heritage, would exert the destructive traits named in 2 Timothy 3:2-5a, and we translate from the Greek text (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 735; *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich): they would be "selfish, lovers of money, boasters, haughty, verbally abusive, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, profane, without natural affection, irreconcilable, slanderous, lacking self-control, untamed, without love of good, traitors, reckless, puffed up with pride, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form, appearance of piety but having permanently been made deniers of its power." Though these characteristics in smaller portions have long existed even in "normal" people, in the latter days of Church History, they would become notoriously, destructively enhanced.

To respond, one must (a) budget his emotional, mental and material resources by avoiding such people to the degree needed to protect oneself (middle voice of *apotrepho*, "turn [for your own benefit] away from," *Ibid.*, p. 101), 2 Tim. 3:5b; one must (b) not attack them as that would be counterproductive, but leave them alone for their own folly to expose their error to others, 2 Tim. 3:9 and one must (c) stay focused not on their evil persecution of others, but recognize they will go from bad to worse anyway (2 Tim. 3:13). (d) The believer must also accept the reality of persecution from evil men (2 Tim. 3:12) and (e) heed what other godly believers with good track records have taught and convinced them was true, paying special, final heed to written Scripture for God's truth, 2 Timothy 3:14-17.

(2) In comparing today's lesson of Joshua 11:16-12:24 with this 2 Timothy 3:1-17 passage, we note several key points with some similarities: (a) the importance of carefully managing our resources, mental, emotional, physical, material, of (b) focusing on Scripture's leading to discern reality, (c) of persevering amid hardships to fulfill God's calling and (d) of holiness, of separating from sin and highly sinful people to associate with other godly people.

May we thus trust in Christ to be saved from sin, John 3:16. Then, if we face hardships in doing God's will, may we stay focused on God's Biblical will for us that we might fulfill His calling with His blessing!