

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

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

Part III: God's Dividing The Land For Israel's Inheritance, Joshua 13:1-21:45

D. The Inheritance Of Joseph's Sons: A Lesson On How To Avoid Debilitating Compromise (Joshua 16:1-17:18)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

It is rather obvious that a lot of compromise occurs today, and with it comes a weakening of institutions:

(1) For example, one Biblical principle that helped develop Western civilizations is the 2 Thessalonians 3:10 idea that one should work to earn his own livelihood versus living off of the wealth or off of the income of others.

However, in shifting from this principle, the nation of Greece has suffered economically: a letter in The Wall Street Journal, July 6, 2015, p. A12 by Thomas Subler of Versailles, Ohio told how "Margaret Thatcher noted: "The problem with socialism is that eventually you run out of other people's money," but "(t)he Greeks expose the folly of this belief in ever expanding government . . . and the support of citizens who have become dependent on subsidies."

(2) We know that such weakening of institutions by the compromise of Bible truth weakens many Christian institutions, too: Ken Ham's article, "Playing the Harlot in our Scientific Age?" in the July-September 2015 issue of Answers, p. 45 told how Neil deGrasse Tyson in episode 8 of the recent pro-evolution *Cosmos* television series said: "Our ancestors worshipped the sun. They were far from foolish. It makes good sense to revere the sun and stars because we are their children . . . Our planet, our society, and we ourselves are stardust."

Though many evangelicals would not heed Mr. Tyson's words to revere stellar bodies, Ken Ham observed: "(M)any Christians, including many Christian leaders . . . have adopted evolutionary . . . astronomy," and with such compromise in time has come an adoption of "the world's views in regard to marriage, abortion, and so on," Ibid.

Need: *So, we ask, "What must I do to STAY aligned with Biblical truth and not yield to debilitating compromise?"*

- I. Though God gave Joseph's sons, the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, an excellent inheritance, they suffered in taking possession of it due to a debilitating compromise of Biblical truth, Joshua 16:1-17:18:**
- A. Joseph's descendants in the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh were greatly blessed of God in their inheritances:
 - 1. These tribes were granted by divine lot "central Canaan" that was "in many respects the most beautiful and fertile" part of the Promised Land, Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament, p. 359.
 - 2. They also gained in unity with some Ephraimite cities being put in Manasseh (Jos. 16:9; Ibid., p. 360) and Zelophehad's daughters in Manasseh got land to preserve their father's name, Jos. 17:3-6; Num. 27:1-11.
 - B. However, though God in Deuteronomy 20:16-18 had directed Israel to destroy the Canaanites in the Promised Land to avoid their idolatry, both Ephraim (Jos. 16:10) and Manasseh (Jos. 17:12-13) did not drive out the Canaanites in their respective territories, but instead put them to forced labor.
 - C. This compromise led to a short-term difficulty and to long-term tragedy in the histories of both tribes:
 - 1. In the short-term, their compromise left Ephraim and Manasseh with a shortage of land, Joshua 17:14-18:
 - a. The leaders of these tribes came to Joshua asking why he had given them such a small inheritance as they were many and God's blessing to date indicated He wanted them to stay numerous, Jos. 17:14 ESV.
 - b. Joshua was himself an Ephraimite ("Hoshea" in Num. 13:8 became "Joshua," Ibid., p. 229), but he countered his fellow tribesmen, charging that if they were so many, they should clear the forests in their hills where the Perizzites and giant Rephaites lived to give themselves more room, Joshua 17:15 NIV!
 - c. These tribes replied that the hills would not be enough, and all the Canaanites in the plain on Manasseh's northern border had iron chariots, Joshua 17:16; The MacMillain Bible Atlas, 1968, p. 50, map 68.
 - d. Joshua answered that they were not merely numerous (*rab*), but of "great" (*gadol*, Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 349; B. D. B., A Heb-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., 152-153) "strength, power, ability" (*koha*, Ibid., p. 470-471), Jos. 17:17a,b. These tribes would thus not only inhabit their lot's easily gained lands, but they would be able to clear the woods in the hill country, displacing its Canaanites and so inhabit the "outgoings" (KJV) or "extremities" (*tosa'ah*, Ibid., B. D. B., p. 426) of the hills, and they would displace the Canaanites in the lowlands even though these pagan people possessed iron chariots and were strong, Joshua 17:17c-18.
 - 2. In the long-term, for leaving the Canaanites in their lands, Ephraim and Manasseh became enslaved to the Canaanites in the era of the Judges (Ibid., Bib. Know. Com., O. T., p. 360), and their Canaanite idolatry was adopted by Israel (1 Kings 16:29-33), leading in time to their judgment in captivity, 2 Kings 17:7-23.
- II. Yet, their compromise was inexcusable in light of Scripture, God's precedents and Joshua's example:**

- A. The compromise by Ephraim and Manasseh was inexcusable in light of ***God's precedents***:
 1. These tribes had seen God give them victory over the giants of Bashan east of the Jordan, Deut. 3:8-11, so they had no excuse for not trusting Him to give them victory over the giants in their own hills, Jos. 17:15.
 2. These tribes had seen God equip them to conquer five Canaanite nations at once in the battle of Southern Canaan (Jos. 10:1-28), so they did not need to fear attacking two people groups in their own hill country.
 3. These tribes had seen God equip Israel to defeat an innumerable number of foot soldiers and chariots at the Waters of Merom (Joshua 11:1-9), so they did not need to fear battling Canaanites who had iron chariots.
 - B. The compromise by Ephraim and Manasseh was inexcusable in light of ***Joshua's example***:
 1. Since both Caleb and Joshua had stood in faith in favor of trusting the Lord to invade Canaan against the unbelieving generation in the wilderness (Numbers 14:6-10), God had promised them special inheritances (Numbers 14:24, 30), and in Joshua's case, he would get what he personally chose, Joshua 19:49-50a.
 2. What Joshua chose was "the rugged, infertile, mountainous district of his own tribe, Ephraim" (Jos. 19:50b; *Ibid.*, p. 362), and there he drove out the Perizzites and giants and built up (***banah***, *Ibid.*, B. D. B., p. 124-125) Timnath Serah, exemplifying the faith and achievement God wanted in all of Joseph's offspring!
 - C. The compromise by Ephraim and Manasseh was inexcusable in light of ***God's Word***:
 1. In Deuteronomy 20:1a, God through Moses had promised Israel's soldiers victory over greater numbers of foes with horses and chariots so that they were not to fear attacking such humanly superior forces in battle.
 2. This promise was based on God's precedent of miraculously delivering Israel from Pharaoh's pursuing powerful chariot army by crushing that army in the waters of the Red Sea, Deut. 20:1b; Exodus 14:1-31.
- III. Of note, an INITIAL failure to PAY ATTENTION to SCRIPTURE had LED to this COMPROMISE:**
- A. Ephraim and Manasseh had compromised by subjugating instead of destroying the Canaanites in their local territories in mimic of Israel's having subjugated versus destroying the Gibeonites back in Joshua 9:1-27.
 - B. Joshua had then had no choice but to subjugate the Gibeonites due to his being tricked into making a treaty with them in God's name (Joshua 9:18-22), but that event had become a stumbling block to Joseph's offspring.
 - C. Nevertheless, Joshua had been blameworthy in the matter: he had been tricked by failing to heed Numbers 27:18-21 in Scripture that told him to get God's guidance in the Urim and Thummin through Eleazar the priest before leading Israel out or in, meaning in guiding the nation in all his oversight, cf. Joshua 9:7-14! God had also told Joshua in Joshua 1:8 to pay attention to such written Scripture he had to succeed, and doing that would have led him to recall Numbers 27:18-21 so he could have avoided being tricked by the Gibeonites!
 - D. Thus, failure to keep paying attention to Scripture led to a stumbling block that led to weakening compromise!

Lesson: *Though Ephraim and Manasseh tragically suffered in their acquisition of an otherwise excellent land inheritance due to spiritual compromise, their compromise was inexcusable in light of their knowledge of God's precedents, of Joshua's personal example and of God's Word. Yet, it was the drift away from paying attention to Scripture in the first place that had created the stumbling block that led toward this debilitating compromise.*

Application: (1) *May we trust in Christ to be saved, John 3:16. (2) If lured to compromise the truth, may we resist it by recalling (a) God's precedents, (b) godly examples and (c) Scripture, 2 Timothy 3:12-17. (3) Above all, to avoid stumbling blocks that lure us into debilitating compromise, may we always pay attention to written Scripture.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

An e-mail by Thomas M. to Answers magazine, July-Sept., 2015, p. 9 asked, "How does a layman encourage his pastor to stand firm on the authority of Scripture, especially with regards to the real history in Genesis?" [The editor referred him to Terry Mortenson's Answers article, "What If My Pastor Avoids Genesis?" (available online)]

Actually, any conscientious Christian who pays attention to Jesus' Matthew 19:4-6 words will not compromise with evolution. Christ's argument there relies on the **literal** interpretation where God made a "male" and a "female" pair of humans in Genesis 1:27 and 2:19-24 to join into a "one flesh" union. Jesus even **labored** the **literal sense** of these Genesis passages, noting that their becoming "one flesh" meant they were **no longer two**, but **one** entity before God that was **not** to be **divided** again into a party of **two** beings by way of the separation of **divorce!**

Well, if Jesus Christ our Lord interpreted Genesis 1:27 and 2:19-24 **literally**, we should interpret Genesis 1-2 **literally** as well, and that leads us to pure creation: after all, God created the universe in six consecutive solar days as each consisted **literally** of an "evening" and a "morning," an interpretation that allows only for pure creationism!

May we heed God's precedents, His godly examples and His Word, and may we keep paying attention to Scripture to avoid debilitating compromise!