

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

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

Part IV: Concluding Events Concerning Israel's Inheritance Of The Promised Land, Joshua 22:1-24:33

B. Joshua's Final Admonition To Israel's Leaders: A Plea For Biblical Separation For Survival (Joshua 23:1-16)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

The welfare of many people is being upheld by very fragile props, a fact we can readily illustrate:

(1) Many investors are feeling uneasy over the world's markets: the lead story in The Wall Street Journal on Thursday, August 27, 2015, p. A1, by Corrie Driebusch and Michael S. Derby ("U. S. Stocks Come Charging Back") reported: "Stocks snapped a six-day losing streak Wednesday, soaring by the highest percentage in nearly four years," but "few investors were ready to call an end to a selloff that has left the Dow down 8.6% on the year," for they "are concerned about weakness in China and the damage that it is doing to other . . . countries . . . The prospect that the Fed will lift interest rates . . . is only adding to the uncertainty. The result is likely to be weeks of apprehension . . ."

(2) Then there is the physical risk of terrorist attacks: on Wednesday when a reporter and her cameraman were taping a live interview, a former employee of their station in Roanoke, Virginia gunned them down before fleeing, posting on the Internet a video he made of the shooting and taking his own life. (Devlin Barrett and Valerie Bauerlein, "Social Media Amplifies Live-TV Shooting," Ibid., p. A3) "A fax sent to ABC News . . . believed to be from the gunman, said the attack was revenge for a racially motivated shooting in a Charleston, S. C. church in June," Ibid.

News of this event caused local radio talk show host Brad Davis on "The Talk of Connecticut" show Thursday morning to tell his radio audience, "None of us is safe anymore!"

(3) The fragile nature of our doctrinal welfare is seen locally, too: while recently visiting a home of Christians who attend a conservative, Gospel-preaching Baptist Church, I saw a theology book there by Wayne Grudem. This author "says very plainly that God now speaks as He has never previously spoken . . . [that] the words God speaks have been redefined, for they are no longer His very words, inerrant and authoritative," but that they offer "fallible practical guidance," or errant guidance! Thus, Grudem asserts that we must discern the truth from the error in God's revelation, an errant view! Yet, unwary conservative Christians buy his book! (R. Fowler White, "Does God Speak Today Apart From The Bible?", cited in John H. Armstrong, gen. ed., The Coming Evangelical Crisis, 1996, p. 83)

Need: Accordingly, we ask, "In view of the fragile nature of man's welfare today, how should we think and live?!"

- I. When Joshua was very old, he summoned Israel's leaders to warn them about a significant danger they faced after he had passed away, Joshua 23:1-2; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 367.**
- II. Specifically, Joshua had led Israel to break the control the Canaanites had on the Promised Land, but he had "observed a growing complacency on the part of Israel toward the remnants of the Canaanites" that could have led to "an easy acceptance of joint occupancy of the land" with the Canaanites, Ibid.**
- III. Such a joint occupancy was a grave threat to Israel's *WELFARE*, and realizing as much, Joshua explained this in a threefold admonition to Israel's leaders in Joshua 23:3-16, Ibid.:**
 - A. In his first admonition to Israel's elders, Joshua reminded them that their entire welfare depended on God's blessing, that they thus had to separate from the Canaanites around them, Joshua 23:3-8; Ibid., p. 367-368:
 1. Joshua noted how Israel's conquest of the land had occurred due to God's fighting in her behalf, Jos. 23:3.
 2. The land had been divided by lot in divine blessing, and the rest of the Canaanites were to be expelled by God's power and provision for Israel to finish taking all of the land, Joshua 23:4-5.
 3. However, for that remaining conquest to occur, Joshua admonished Israel's leaders to be very courageous in order to heed precisely all of God's Words through Moses, and especially not to fellowship with the pagan Canaanite idolaters in their land, but rather to cleave to the Lord for His blessing, Joshua 23:6-8.
 - B. In his second admonition to Israel's leaders, Joshua reminded them that only by God's help had they defeated great and powerful nations, that they needed to avoid intermarrying with the Canaanites and thus incurring God's judgment where He would cause the Canaanites to be troublesome to them, Jos. 23:9-13; Ibid., p. 368:
 1. Joshua explained how God had given Israel victory over great and powerful nations, that no man had been able to stand against Israel since her men had each chased a thousand of the enemy in accord with God's promise in His Word, Joshua 23:9-10 with Deuteronomy 32:30.
 2. However, Israel was to love the Lord and not to intermarry with the pagan Canaanites lest God no longer drive out such pagan foes from the land, but in judgment make them problematic for Israel, Jos. 23:11-13.

- C. In his third admonition to Israel's leaders, Joshua reminded them that only because of God's faithful fulfilling of His Scriptural promises had Israel inherited the Promised Land, that she thus not follow the false gods of the pagan Canaanites lest God judge her to lose all of His blessings relative to the land, Joshua 23:14-16; *Ibid.*:
1. In his last admonition to them, Joshua told Israel's leaders that in light of his coming death, they were to realize that God had blessed them to gain the land based on His promises to give it to them, Joshua 23:14.
 2. Accordingly, just as God had kept His Word to bless Israel with the Promised Land, He would also keep His warning to punish Israel by removing her from the land were she to disobey His Word, Joshua 23:15.
 3. The disobedience Joshua specifically had in mind and named in this admonition was the disobedience of Israel's turning to false gods promoted by the pagan Canaanites around her, Joshua 23:16.
- IV. **This threefold Joshua 23:1-16 admonition was based on Moses' charge to Israel back in Deuteronomy 7:1-5, for in that charge, Moses had similarly called Israel to destroy the Canaanites from the land, not to make any covenant with them, not to show them mercy nor to intermarry with them, warning that if Israel did made a covenant with them and did intermarry with them, she would be led astray after false gods, leading to God's judgment and withdrawal of blessing.**
- V. **However, God's REASON behind the Deuteronomy 7:1-5 charge was explained in Deuteronomy 7:6 as God's desire that Israel's PEOPLE SEPARATE from SIN like their LORD was SEPARATE from SIN:**
- A. Behind Moses' Deuteronomy 7:1-5 call to which Joshua 23:1-16 alluded was God's will that Israel be "holy":
 - a. Deuteronomy 7:6a is introduced by the Hebrew conjunction, *ki*, that here means "for, because" in the causal sense, Kittel, *Biblia Hebraica*, p. 274; B. D. B., *A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T.*, p. 471-475.
 - b. Thus, the call that Israel be "holy" in Deuteronomy 7:6a is the reason for the Deuteronomy 7:1-5 charge.
 - B. Then, the Hebrew word for "holy" in Deuteronomy 7:6a is *qadosh* (*Ibid.*, Kittel), with the meaning of "separate, apart" (*Ibid.*, B. D. B., p. 872; Robert B. Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament*, 1973, p. 175-179; H. A. W., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 1980, v. II, p. 788).
 - C. Thus, since the Canaanites wickedly and lewdly worshiped false substitutes for the True God, an intolerable sin to Him (Exodus 20:1-6), God wanted Israel to **separate** from such false worship.
 - D. To accomplish this holy separation, Israel's people were also to be **separate** in their *relationships* from the **Canaanites** lest the Canaanites influence them to soften their intolerance of idolatry so as to lead them to sin.

Lesson: *Since Israel's entire welfare was based on God's blessing, and since tolerating so as to befriend, join and intermarry with the Canaanites who worshiped false gods was sin before the Lord and led to the abominable sin of idolatry itself, Joshua strongly warned Israel's leaders not to become complacent so as to tolerate any associations with the Canaanites, but to remove them from the land as God willed.*

Application: *(1) May we believe on Jesus Christ to be saved, John 3:16. (2) As believers, may we rely on the indwelling Holy Spirit of God for the behavior control (Galatians 5:16-23) needed to (3) SEPARATE from unbiblical practices and associations that influence us to compromise with sin to the loss of God's blessing.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

Several issues were raised in our introduction, and following Scripture in **holiness** very *separate* from the world and its errant views on these issues leads to holy thinking and living in regard to such matters (as follows):

(1) On the issue of the global financial crisis that is leaving many investors unsettled, (a) Ecclesiastes 11:1-6 directs that in view of mankind's great ignorance of future economic events, we should invest in bold but diversified business ventures for the long-term, and regularly add to each venture out of our regular income. (b) On the issue of our regular income, Matthew 6:25-34 calls us to trust the Lord for its provision. (c) In summary, we should ignore the world's reactions and recommendations to the global economic uncertainties since the world's viewpoint is so futile and instead stay the Biblical investing course and trust God to meet our daily income needs.

(2) On the issue of the rise of acts of terrorism in today's world, Psalm 127:1 KJV claims: "(E)xcept the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." We should prudently guard ourselves, but ultimately trust the Lord.

(3) On the issue of Wayne Grudem's theology that claims God communicates today in errant ways so that we need to discern the truth from error in God's revelation, Psalm 12:6 claims God's Word is purified seven times over, that it is thus infallible, and Jesus in John 8:32 said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Also, 2 Timothy 3:15-17 teaches that the closed canon of written Scripture is sufficient for our needs until Christ returns. Thus, we can know, trust and apply all of Scripture as God's sufficient truth versus Mr. Grudem's theology!

May we trust in Christ as Savior, and separate from sin and sinful relationships in line with Scripture.