

THRU THE BIBLE SYNTHESIS

"Part VII: Joshua - Overcoming A Bad Past To Inherit Blessings NOW"

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) This last Wednesday, in New Haven, Connecticut, a woman and her boyfriend were taken into custody on murder charges. The live-in boyfriend had thrown the child around the house in an abusive way so much and had beaten him so badly in the process that he had died, **and the mother had not intervened!** The medical authorities said that they had never seen a child's body so badly mangled as this child's was!

(2) Upset by the atrocity, Frank Lovallo and Beth Bradley, hosts of Torrington Radio WSNG's talk show, "Talk of the County," examined what could be done to avoid such abuse in the future. They called in a family therapist who regularly deals with child abuse and she shared some chilling news: **children who grow up in an abusive situation tend to continue that behavior themselves in later life as that behavior is all they know!** Abuse is very prevalent where children come home from school as "latch key kids" while both parents are still at work. With inadequate emotional guidance themselves, these children learn all sorts of sordid behaviors that promote abuse later on!

The announcers and therapist concluded that until something happens in the economy to enable one of the parents to stay at home instead of having both work to keep the family afloat, around **40** per cent of **current** American 10 through 14 year olds are heading towards being abusive in their adult lives!

(3) On Tuesday, I also heard of a young woman in our area who has never been married who is expecting her third child, herself the product of severe abuse by a stepfather. She keeps looking for a man to love her like she's never been loved before, and keeps getting used, abused and ending up alone! She's an emotional, mental mess!

(4) From information I gather from other pastors along with what I myself know, I estimate that from 5 to 10 per cent of an average American **Evangelical** congregation has either already been abused as children, or is in some way connected with it in their family lives!

Well, is there any hope for breaking this cause-effect chain in our society? Are we destined to go on generation after generation repeating the teeming fury of past misdeeds done upon us to our children, all with the result that they become as abusive to our grandchildren as were our parents to us?!

(We turn to the "Need" section of the sermon . . .)

Need: "Some people achieve happiness even though they have come through rough childhoods where others just never get on top of their difficult pasts! Are some case histories so awful that even God treats these people as permanently impaired in life?! What about ME?!"

- I. **Joshua records God's advancing His rule by taking a nation with distressed childhoods into Canaan with mixed blessing results!**
 - A. In Joshua, God's Genesis 15 promise to promote His earthly rule by **bringing** Abraham's seed **into** the Promised Land finds fulfillment!
 1. Though God created the world with man as ruler, sin caused chaos and Satan ended up being the god of this world, Gn. 1-5; 2 Co. 4:4.
 2. God renewed history through the Noahic flood, Gen. 6:1-9:7.
 3. Yet, Noah's descendant, Nimrod began an apostasy, Rev. 17:5-6.
 4. God thus chose Abraham to start a nation to check this evil, Gen. 12:1-3. That nation would inherit the land between the Euphrates and Nile rivers, Gen. 15:18; Leupold, Genesis, vol. I, p. 490.
 5. After many challenges to the contrary, God took Abraham's seed out of Egypt to head on into Canaan, Ge. 12:4 - Exodus.
 - B. However, Israel's adults doubted God's getting them into Canaan, so God judged **the adults over 20 years of age** (Nu. 14:22-29) along with **Moses** to **die** in the wilderness **all within 40 years**, Numbers - Deuteronomy! Thus, the book of Joshua is a record of God's bringing a **new generation** with clearly **distressed** family histories into Canaan!
 1. With Moses gone, God told Joshua to lead Israel's new generation with its troubled childhoods into Canaan successfully, and that by **trusting** and **obeying written Scripture**, Joshua 1!
 2. Joshua 2:1-12:24 records an imperfect but effective obedience of Israel's new generation to Scripture, enabling the nation to conquer!
 3. Finally, the land was divided for inheritance of the tribes, ch. 13-22.
 - C. In the end, some Canaanites still remained, and the land taken did not include **all** that God had promised, Gn. 15; Jos. 11:23; 23:1-5 (Ibid., Leupold). The **obstacle** was the same **unbelief** that marked the **previous** generation, so Joshua made a fervent but futile appeal for this **new** generation to obey God, chs. 23-24 (B.K.C., O.T., p. 370).
 - D. In **contrast**, Caleb, of an horribly vile Canaanite background took **full** and blessed possession of his parcel promised to him by God!

1. Though a Kenezite, one of the peoples of Canaan destined to be overrun in Gen. 15:19, Caleb believed in Israel's God, Jos. 14:6!
 2. His Canaanite background was full of vile child abuse, gross sexual perversions and sorcery, cf. Lev. 18:1-28; Dt. 18:9-12.
 3. In **spite** of his bad roots, for trusting that God would keep His Word to give Israel the land against the unbelief of the 10 spies who feared the Anakim giants, God promised to Caleb a land inheritance in his native Canaan, Ex. 3:7-8; 4:30-31; Num. 14:24!
 4. God sustained him while Israel wandered so that, at age 85, Caleb trusted God's promise of inheritance to ask for and to conquer **Hebron** where the Anakim giants lived, 14:7-15; Nu. 13:33!
- II. **Graciously, the "thread of redemption" in Joshua furthers the hope of God's unconditional giving of the whole Land to Israel!**
- A. When God promised Abraham the land from the Euphrates to the Nile, He **alone** passed between the bisected carcasses to show that He **alone** would **give ALL** the land to him, Gn. 15:17-21 (Ry. St. Bi., KJV, fn.)
 - B. Yet, Abraham **died without** getting his land, Ge. 15:7-16: He buried Sarah at the Cave of Macphelah, claiming he was still a sojourner (Gn. 23:1-4) still hoping for his land, He. 11:13! Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were all later buried in the same cave with this hope, Gn. 49:29-50:13!
 - C. Heeding Joseph's Gen. 50:25 order, Joshua closes with the transfer of Joseph's mummy from Egypt to the Canaan plot given to him by Jacob (Jos. 24:32), for Joseph adopted **their** hope as his **own**, Gn. 48:21-22!
 - D. Thus, the book of Joshua foresees God's **full, unconditional** land grant to Abraham in the **resurrection** in the **Kingdom**, Dn. 12:11-13 NIV; Rv. 20:4-6! Israel will then get **all** of her land! (Heb. 11:13-16)
- III. **But BETTER, by trusting Scripture, Kenezite Caleb, of southern, base, Canaanite roots near Hebron's giants (New Bib. Dic., 689) not only gained the land of his vile ancestors plus the hope of his own resurrection, but he ALSO inherited the very Cave of Macphelah in Hebron where the patriarchs were buried in hope of their future inheritances (Mac. Bib. At., p. 28), and all in THIS life!**

***Application:** In spite of a bad background, we can enjoy God's rich solutions to it today by (1) believing on Christ as Savior, Jn. 1:11-13. (2) Then, fellowship with God, (a) confessing sins (1 J. 1:9) and (b) relying on the Spirit for behavior control (Ga. 5:16-23) to (c) obey Scripture in FAITH that God will reward us with blessings in THIS life, 1 John 2:3-6. (3) God will thus make this life a rich blessing in spite of any bad start in life that we've had, Heb. 4:8-11; 6:1 NIV!*

***Lesson:** Though every believer gains full divine blessings regardless of his past when resurrected, like Caleb, we don't have to wait until then to overcome our troubled pasts! All we must do is trust God for this today!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon's lesson . . .)

When Frank Lovallo of WSNB's "Talk of the County" talk show discussed the recent tragic child abuse death in New Haven with a family therapist, he asked her what could be done about it. She replied that in her estimation, the problem lay with unsupervised "latch key kids" learning all sorts of sordid things, but that parents were doing their best to make ends meet and were having trouble staying on top of their "latch key kids" who were left alone after getting off the bus. It was **her** conclusion that we need to look broader than just in the **home** -- she believed that the answer had to come from society at large! She agreed with Lovallo's statement that "It takes a village to raise a child!"

Well, the Bible partly agrees and partly disagrees with this conclusion: Scripture teaches that man cannot change himself, for man is a sinner, helplessly so, Romans 7:15-23. Because man is a sinner, men taken collectively in a "village" or society as a whole cannot change the problem of abuse at home, for he lacks the willpower to do so as a group of sinners. However, the **answer** is not in society, but in **God's** supernatural intervention as **INDIVIDUAL** man **believes** the Gospel to be saved, and then continues to **trust** and **obey** Scripture as did Caleb, the Kenezite from raw Canaan roots!

A case in point -- Ernst Gaither, a black, atheistic, death row prisoner-- as reported by Josh McDowell in his book, A Ready Defense, p. 457ff. One day while playing cards and waiting to beat up another prisoner, Ernest was asked by a fellow black, Mrs. Flora Jones of Olivet Baptist Church, to come to a prison worship service. When he laughed at her, she challenged him, "If you don't believe in God, just try this little experiment. Before you go to sleep tonight ask Him to awaken you at any time; then ask Him to forgive you your sins."

Ernest Gaither didn't know what got into him, but that night, as he lay on his cot, he prayed for God to prove Himself by waking him at 2:45 a.m. Later, Ernest awoke during the night all restless, breaking out in a hot sweat. He then asked the passing guard what time it was, and he replied, "fifteen minutes to three!" Ernest got on his knees and prayed to receive Christ! He never beat up the man he had promised to whip, either! He later went to the electric chair with a black hood over his face, telling his nervous guards, "What are you fellows shaking for? I'm not afraid!" Christ **does** cure those with troubled pasts and abuse!