

# “What Is Your Inheritance?”

## Joshua 22, 23

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We are about ready to finish our study in Joshua. There have been some good things, and I hope that the sermons have done some justice to the material that we have considered. I want to consider some things today from these last chapters of Joshua. I will finish the book next week, the Lord willing, by examining Joshua’s farewell address to Israel in chapter 24

Chapter 22. Two things to think about in this chapter:

I. The Dismissal of the 2 and ½ tribes to return across the Jordan River. They had done what they had promised to do, and there was no longer any pledge that bound them to continue away from their homes and families.

II. The building of the memorial altar, and the offence taken by the other tribes.

A. Their intentions were of the very best, for the altar was a memorial of their solidarity with Israel, but they should have had regard for their brethren. I do not think the verse “abstain from every appearance of evil applies,” for that does not mean to abstain from doing good if it looks like evil, but rather abstain from every evil, no matter how good it looks. But we are not to give offense to others, although we are not to allow our good to be evil spoken off. The best thing to do is to keep communications open and consult with one another.

B. The offense of Israel was hasty, perhaps. We are not to answer a matter before we hear it, nor condemn any man rashly and unheard as we read in the Heidelberg Cat., Question 112

Q112: What does the ninth Commandment require?

A112: That I bear false witness against no one,[1] twist no one’s words,[2] be no back-biter or slanderer,[3] join in condemning no one unheard and rashly;[4] but that on pain of God’s heavy wrath I avoid all lying and deceit [5] as the very works of the devil;[6] and that in matters of judgment and justice and in all other affairs I love, speak honestly and confess the truth;[7] also, insofar as I can, defend and promote my neighbor’s good name.[8]

C. We are not to judge after appearances, Jesus said in John 7, indicating that we have the right interpretation on I Thess. 5:22.

D. But, although the offense was hasty, yet Israel did right and sent ambassadors to find out exactly what was being done. It was not wrong to build a memorial altar, when it was not to be used for sacrifice.

#### Chapter 23:11-16 Joshua's old age exhortation.

I. The people had not be fully obedient unto the Lord in claiming their inheritance, for many people of the original inhabitants remained in the land. They had not cut them off, or driven them out. We do not know the reason, but perhaps they were tired of war, and maybe they thought they would be useful as laborers or slaves.

II. Joshua warns the Israel not to become ensnared with the idolatry and wickedness of these people.

III. Because they had not been obedient, the Lord chastised them by not driving out the former inhabitants, but leaving them there to be thorns and irritants. There is always a cost for disobedience. For many centuries these people would be trouble for Israel, and sometimes they would bring Israel into bondage and cruel persecution as we read in the time of the judges. Because they did not drive them out when they had opportunity, the time came when they could not drive them out.

IV. Joshua knew that the time would come when Israel would break the covenant that they had made with the Lord at Mt. Sinai and that they would be driven from the land. God's promise of grace and truth in the sending of Messiah was unconditional and He came to give the Holy Spirit to all flesh, but God's promise to Israel concerning the land was conditioned upon their obedience and fellowship with God, although He was kind and long-suffering with them, and sent them many prophets and warnings before the last disaster fell upon them and their nation.

#### Application.

I. God's everlasting covenant with the elect is not conditioned upon their obedience, but upon faith. As Paul said in Romans 3:

21. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

22. Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

23. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

24. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

25. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

26. To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

27. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

II. Our eternal inheritance is therefore secure, for Paul says that the promise to Abraham of the blessing of the Holy Spirit was by promise and not by the Law.

III. But just as God would take away the land and the riches of Canaan for the disobedience of Israel, so He will often take away many things from us for our disobedience. Creaturely comforts, peace of mind, joy and confidence in Christ, health and prosperity are often lost because of disobedience.

IV. This is because God loves His people and chastens them so they will learn righteousness and faith.

1. God gave them manna so that they might learn righteousness 2. De 8:16 Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end;

3. God looks to the future, and not just to the present condition. He calls us also to consider the long view: "O that they were wise, [that] they understood this, [that] they would consider their latter end!" (De 32:29-31 AV)

V. The writer of Hebrews spoke of this in Hebrews 12:1-14, which we read earlier in our worship.

1. We are runners of a great race, and must lay aside the weights that hold us down.

2. We must keep our eye on the eternal reward. If Israel had done this, they would not have gone after idols and broken the covenant, for the promise to them was the coming of Jesus and the blessings of the Spirit.

3. The triumph of Christ over trials will keep us from being weary and faint in our minds. We will endure hardship as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

4. We are not to faint under the chastening of the Lord. He will not give you more than you can bear.

5. This chastening is evidence of His love and His adoption of you as His child.

6. The reward of the trials comes later, and is primarily designed to school us in holiness.

7. We are to be strong and work hard: "Lift of the hands" Our work is our praise. The time to work hardest is under trials.

8. Strengthen the feeble knees. Stand up strong. Tribulations do not mean that you are rejected of God. God would make you strong, not weak. God told Isaiah that ministers should strengthen the feeble knees by preaching hope and faith, but we all are to this, by precept and by example. Show yourself to be strong and you will inspire others who have trials.

9. Make straight paths for your feet. Don't turn to the left hand or to the right, but keep straight on in your obedience to Christ. When trials come, we are tempted to turn from the path of obedience.

10. Follow peace. When our trials disquiet our minds, then we are tempted to fight with our relatives and friends.

Amen and Amen. May God bless you.