TALKING POINTS

Lessons of Faith from Joshua

Quarter 4, Lesson 9

"Heirs of Promises, Prisoners of Hope"

www.MichiganSSPM.org

MEMORY VERSE: "'Return to the stronghold, You prisoners of hope. Even today I declare That I will restore double to you.'" Zechariah 9:12, NKJV

LESSON STUDY INTRO

This week's lesson studies the significance, both temporal and spiritual, of the dividing of the promised land among the tribes of Israel.

1. The land was promised on condition of obedience (Sab-Mon, Wed)

- God is owner of the whole earth (Ps. 24:1), and therefore
    - "the promised land was a gift of God based on His initiative. Israel had no inherent right or claim to own the land." Qtly, Sun, par 2
- The promise of Canaan was real and tangible (Josh. 13-21), despite the conditions.
    - The division of the land into lots apportioned to each tribe demonstrated the legitimacy of God's promise to Israel.
    - This promise, however, was conditional upon obedience (Lev. 18:26-28; Num. 33:56; Heb. 3:17-19).
        - Similar to Eden, "movement from the place designed by God marked the consequence of disobedience." Qtly, Teacher's Comments, p. 120, par 1
- God designated the sabbatical and jubilee years as a safeguard against social and economic disparity resulting from greed, oppression and poor life choices.
    - "Land ownership legislation provided every Israelite with the opportunity to be freed from inherited or self-induced oppressive circumstances and to have a fresh start in life." Qtly, Wed, par 4
    - This all, of course, had significant gospel implications.
        - "In essence, this is the main purpose of the gospel: to erase the distinction between rich and poor, employer and employed, privileged and underprivileged, putting us all on equal footing by recognizing our complete need of God's grace." Qtly, Wed, par 5

2. The land, though appointed, still had to be appropriated (Tue)

- The promise of the land was not equivalent to its inheritance. God expected *and required* each tribe to conquer their respective territories.

Having a knowledge of Canaan, singing the songs of Canaan, rejoicing in the prospect of entering into Canaan, did not bring the children of Israel into the vineyards and olive-groves of the promised land. They could make it theirs in truth only by occupation, by complying with the conditions, by exercising living faith in God, by appropriating his promises to themselves." Youth's Instructor, Feb. 17, 1898 (Qtly, Fri, par 1)

- This was designed to illustrate the relationship between faith and works.
  - "God's initiative must be matched by human response…. The complexity of the conquest illustrates the dynamics of our salvation." Qtly, Tue, par 2, 3

Day by day and year by year we shall conquer self, and grow into a noble heroism. This is our allotted task; but it cannot be accomplished without help from Jesus, resolute decision, unwavering purpose, continual watchfulness, and unceasing prayer. Each one has a personal battle to fight. Not even God can make our characters noble or our lives useful, unless we become co-workers with Him. Those who decline the struggle lose the strength and joy of victory. MH 487.2

3. There remains a rest for the people of God (Thu)

- The earthly Canaan was never the real "promised land."
  - God's faithful of Bible times understood that the land of Canaan was only a type of the heavenly Canaan (Heb. 11:9, 10; 11:13-16, 39-40; 4:8, 9).
- The subduing of the land was intended to be spiritual.
  - "…Israel struggled most of the time to maintain control over the land." Qtly, Teacher's Comments, p. 121, par 2 (see AA 105.2)
  - Jesus illustrated God's plan for conquest in His life and ministry.

Our Saviour's power lay not in a strong array of sharp words. It was His gentleness, His unselfish, unassuming spirit, that made Him a conqueror of hearts. The secret of our success lies in revealing the same spirit. 7T 156.2

CONCLUSION

Through the chosen nation, God had purposed to bring blessing to all mankind…. The children of Israel were to occupy all the territory which God appointed them. Those nations that rejected the worship and service of the true God were to be dispossessed. But it was God's purpose that by the revelation of His character through Israel men should be drawn unto Him…. All who, like Rahab the Canaanite and Ruth the Moabitess, turned from idolatry to the worship of the true God were to unite themselves with His chosen people. As the numbers of Israel increased, they were to enlarge their borders until their kingdom should embrace the world. PK 17, 19