TALKING POINTS

Lessons of Faith from Joshua

Quarter 4, Lesson 3

"Memorials of Grace"

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MEMORY VERSE: "'…for the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed over, that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty, that you may fear the LORD your God forever.'" Joshua 4:23, 24, NKJV

LESSON STUDY INTRO

This week's lesson emphasizes the importance of remembering our spiritual needs.

1. Man's necessity is God's opportunity (Sun, Mon)

- God's prescribed preparation for the Jordan crossing was to remind His people of their absolute need of Him.
    - The people were instructed to "sanctify" ("consecrate" – ESV, NIV) themselves to the Lord (Josh. 3:5). This is very similar to the directions given at Sinai (see Ex. 19:10, 11).
        - "This consecration involved the laying aside of sin and the removal of all ritual impurities…. Before God can fight for Israel in battle, they must show their allegiance to Him and trust in Him as their Commander." Qtly, Sun, par 3
    - They were then commanded to carry the Ark of the Covenant at the forefront.
        - This was to remind them that God was leading them into battle, and He would give them the victory.
    - Finally, God declared He would do "wonders" among His people.
        - The Hebrew word, niphla'ot, "is used primarily with God as its subject, expressing actions that are beyond the bounds of human powers or expectations." Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, Vol. 1, p. 149
- All of these things set Him apart as the "living God" (Josh. 3:10).

> God would have us recall His dealings with His people in the past to save them from their enemies. He has always chosen extremities, when there seemed no possible chance for deliverance from Satan's workings, for the manifestation of His power. Man's necessity is God's opportunity. 5T 713.4

2. Jesus succeeded where Israel failed (Thu)

- Thursday's lesson highlights the interesting parallel between Jesus' earthly ministry and the experience of ancient Israel.
    - "The earthly ministry of Jesus, as the Representative of Israel, follows the pattern of the history of ancient Israel." Qtly, Thu, par 4
        - Both were called out of Egypt (Ex. 4:21; Hos. 11:1; Mt. 2:15)
        - Both are referred to as God's "firstborn" (Ex. 4:22; Heb. 1:6), "My Servant" (Is. 49:3; Mt. 12:16-18), and the "Seed of Abraham" (Is. 41:8; Gal. 3:16), and the vine (Ps. 80:8; Jn. 15:1).
        - Israel was "baptized in the [Red] Sea" (1 Cor. 10:2); Jesus was baptized in the Jordan (Mt. 3:13f).
        - After their "baptism," Israel went into the wilderness 40 years; After His baptism, Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness.
    - What Israel couldn't accomplish as a nation Jesus accomplished as their representative (see Dan. 9:24).

3. We must fear to forget (Tue, Wed, Fri)

- The institution of memorial stones was a reminder of God's miraculous redemptive power (see Josh. 4:6, 7, 22-24).
    - The crossing of the Jordan was an evidence to the younger generation of the validity of the miraculous Exodus experience.
        - These were intended to lead His people to seek a personal experience with Him (see Qtly, Tue, last par).
- Today, we would do well to follow this example.
    - "Even today, if we want to maintain our identity as a people with a peculiar calling and mission, we will have to create occasions for refreshing both our individual and corporate spiritual memory in order to keep in focus where we are coming from, who we are, and what we are here for." Qtly, Wed, par 3

In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what the Lord has wrought, I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as leader. We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history. LDE 72.1 (Qtly, Wed, last par)

CONCLUSION

Modern Israel are in greater danger of forgetting God and being led into idolatry than were His ancient people. Many idols are worshiped, even by professed Sabbathkeepers. God especially charged His ancient people to guard against idolatry, for if they should be led away from serving the living God, His curse would rest upon them, while if they would love Him with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their might, He would abundantly bless them in basket and in store, and would remove sickness from the midst of them. 1T 609.1 (Qtly, Fri, par 2)