TALKING POINTS

Lessons of Faith from Joshua

Quarter 4, Lesson 12
"God is Faithful"

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MEMORY VERSE: "Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass." Joshua 21:45, NKJV

LESSON STUDY INTRO

This week's study draws lessons from the completion of Israel's allotment of Canaan and the farewell address of Joshua.

1. God finishes what He starts (Sun)

- Some 500 years after He promised it to Abraham, God finally established Israel in the land of Canaan.
    - From God's call to Abraham to the Exodus was 430 years (Gen. 12:1-5; Ex. 12:40, 41).
    - Israel's faithlessness added an additional 40 years of wandering (Num. 14). At that time, Joshua was likely in his 30s (Josh. 14:7).
    - Joshua led Israel from the death of Moses to his own death at age 110 (Josh. 24:29).
- Joshua 21:43-45, the "climax of the book and its theological summary," (Qtly, Sun, par 1) succinctly recounts this history of God's faithfulness.
    - Glory belongs solely to God as everything was accomplished by His promise according to His power (in contrast with repeated shortcomings of His human partners).
        - "The repeated use of the word *kol*, "all," six times in three verses emphasizes once again the truth that the land is the gift of Yahweh, and Israel can take no credit for receiving it." Qtly, Sun, par 2
- The same God that promised and delivered Canaan to Israel has promised and will deliver heavenly Canaan for us. (Jn. 14:1-3; 1 Thes. 5:23, 24; Phil. 1:6).

2. A covenant requires maintenance (Mon, Tue, Thu)

- After again recounting God's victories on their behalf, Joshua alludes to Israel's responsibility to deal with the remaining inhabitants of Canaan (Josh. 23:1-5).

- It seems that the Lord intentionally left some inhabitants in Canaan for Israel to take an active role in dispossessing.
    - "Victory is not an accomplished, unchangeable reality for Israel but an ever-present possibility by constant reliance in faithfulness on God's available help." Qtly, Mon, par 3

- Joshua emphatically reiterates Israel's need to keep God's law—especially regarding idolatry and intermarriage (Josh. 23:6-13).
    - God's people are always in the greatest spiritual peril when we face the least opposition.
        - "The danger facing Israel is not the threat of the remaining nations' animosity but the risk of their friendship." Qtly, Tue, par 2

- The key to Christian victory is active, intentional love for the Lord and His law (Josh. 23:8, 11; Dt. 6:5; 10:12, 13; Ps. 1:1-3; 40:8).

3. God's wrath is fair and finite (Wed)

- Joshua's farewell address closes with a stark warning against the wrath of God (Josh. 23:14-16).
    - To the same extend that God had blessed Israel, there was a proportional warning of possible wrath: "as all the good things have come upon you… so the Lord will bring upon you all harmful things."
        - It is only fair that if Israel were to disobey, they would be treated like the other Canaanites and be removed from the land, too.

- The wrath Joshua warned against is a type of the final destruction of the wicked.
    - Like the wrath of God Joshau warned about, the destruction of the wicked at the end of time will be fair and finite (Lk. 12:47, 48; Rev. 20:12, 13).

CONCLUSION

> Satan deceives many with the plausible theory that God's love for His people is so great that He will excuse sin in them; he represents that while the threatenings of God's word are to serve a certain purpose in His moral government, they are never to be literally fulfilled. But in all His dealings with His creatures God has maintained the principles of righteousness by revealing sin in its true character—by demonstrating that its sure result is misery and death. The unconditional pardon of sin never has been, and never will be.... That so-called benevolence which would set aside justice is not benevolence but weakness. PP 522 (Qtly, Fri, Par 1)