

The Bible From 20,000 Feet Part 23 - Joshua 1:1 – 5:12

Tuesday Night Bible Study, March 31, 2009

OUTLINE:

OVERVIEW OF JOSHUA 1:1-5:12 AND CENTRAL THEME OF SANCTIFICATION
SANCTIFICATION IN OUR LIVES TODAY
SANCTIFICATION ON A DEEPER LEVEL
THE SPIRITUAL BATTLE OF SANCTIFICATION

--OVERVIEW OF JOSHUA 1:1 – 5:12

--one word that sums up God's plan for Israel as they enter the Promise Land is "sanctification"

--Joshua 3:5-6: Right before Israel crossed over the Jordan and entered the Promise Land, Joshua gave the command to Israel: "**Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you.**"

--to "sanctify" means to be "separate, set apart for a special purpose"

--while this command for Israel to "sanctify" themselves related specifically to ceremonial cleansing in preparation for crossing over the Jordan, similar to the ceremonial cleansing before they received the law on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19:10-15), sanctification is one of the main themes of God's plan for Israel in the Promise Land – **Israel was to be set apart from the rest of the world for the special purpose of serving the Lord.**

--1:1-11: the Lord commissions Joshua

--key advice for Joshua: "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." (1:8)

--and the same principle applies to us! Psalm 1: "Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.
3 He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper. 4 The ungodly are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind drives away. 5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish."

--ch 2: Joshua sends 2 spies into the land and they return with news that the entire land is in a state of fear because of Israel

--2:24: "And they said to Joshua, "Truly the LORD has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us."

--however, the spies narrowly escape death because of the help of a harlot named Rahab. Without her help they would have been killed; and given Israel's past, their death could have easily bred fear in Israel which could have led to a fate similar to the previous generation's aborted entry into the land

--Rahab, once a harlot, came to faith in the Lord – and sanctified, set apart for the Lord's purpose of protecting the Israelite spies. Rahab's actions were a step of faith, without which Israel could have failed to enter the land! Hebrews 11:31 includes Rahab in the "hall of faith".

Rahab's son Boaz married Ruth and became the father of Obed, the grandfather of Jesse, and the great-grandfather of David; and thus she became a part of the Messianic line! (Matthew 1:5)

--3:14-17: Israel crosses the Jordan (during flood season)

--3:14-17: "So it was, when the people set out from their camp to cross over the Jordan, with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, 15 and as those who bore the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest), 16 that the waters which came down from upstream stood still, and rose in a heap very far away... 17 Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan."

--4:20-24: memorial made from stones in the river

--4:20-24: "And those twelve stones which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal. 21 Then he spoke to the children of Israel, saying: "When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, 'What are these stones?' 22 then you shall let your children know, saying, 'Israel crossed over this Jordan on dry land'; 23 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, 24 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."

--"fear the Lord" in the sense of having reverence for Him and following Him

--5:2-8: all males circumcized

--circumcision was a sign of sanctification – being set apart to serve the Lord

--after the circumcison they celebrated the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread, and then manna ceased...

--and thus the wilderness wandering officially ended and Israel was ready (sanctified) to begin establishing the Promise Land – to begin sanctifying the Land, setting it apart as a land dedicated to the Lord, a land that reflects His character rather than the desparately wicked heart of natural man.

SANCTIFICATION IN OUR LIVES TODAY

--How many times do people ask what is God's will for their life? And why couldn't His will be more clear? In many ways His will is much more simple and clear than most people realize... Sanctification is one of the things that Scripture directly states as being God's will!

--1 Thess 4:3-7: "**For this is the will of God, your sanctification:** that you should abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. 7 For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness."

--**in a sense, sanctification is the key that unlocks God's will for our lives on a practical level!**

--when we are sanctified we become vessels for the Lord to work through... a "**vessel of honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.**" (2 Tim. 2:21)

--**the Lord's will for our lives is not about what we can do but what He can do through us!**

--and when we are not sanctified, when we live in disobedience, we cut ourselves off from God working through us!

--time and again Israel illustrates that all the military might in the world can't make up for the absence of the Lord's blessing.

--a classic passage that sums up this principle is found in the life of King Asa... Hanani the prophet said to King Asa, "Because you have relied on the king of Syria, and have not relied on the LORD your God, therefore the army of the king of Syria has escaped from your hand. ... 9 **For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.** In this you have done foolishly; therefore from now on you shall have wars." (2 Chron 16:7-10)

--practical ways the Lord's blessing makes all the difference...

--**the joy of the Lord** deep in our heart is a source of strength to endure and persevere – "the joy of the Lord is your strength." (Nehemiah 8:10)

--**teamwork**... when we live a sanctified life we function more as a member of the body of Christ, and when we work as a team in the body of Christ there is a powerful synergy where the sum of our efforts working together is much greater than the sum of our efforts working individually.

--**providence**... all the perfect planning in the world can't make up for a lack of providential timing

--all these areas start to come undone when we fall into persistent sin and don't live a sanctified life.

--how many Jordan rivers in our lives have been parted... and how many without us even being aware of it? There have probably been many times as we have lived a sanctified life where the Lord removed major obstacles that we weren't even aware of!

SANCTIFICATION ON A DEEPER LEVEL

--the essence of sanctification is becoming more like Christ.

--on a deeper level the reason all Christians are sanctified is because the source of sanctification is the Holy Spirit who began to dwell in our hearts the moment we were saved.

--the Holy Spirit is also "the Spirit of Christ" so, in a sense, the moment we were saved Christ was born in our hearts – He began to dwell in our hearts.

--and the rest of life is the process of becoming more like Christ who dwells in our hearts

--Romans 8:11-13: "**And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit, who lives in you.** 12 Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation-but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. 13 For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live..."

--we are changed from the inside out

--the essence of all false religion is an effort to change people from the outside in

--sanctification is one of the key marks of authenticity of a true Christian

--Heb 10:14: "For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified."

THE SPIRITUAL BATTLE OF SANCTIFICATION

--the main reason for the sanctification of Israel (for God setting Israel apart for a special purpose) was to bring the Messiah into the world through whom salvation would be brought to the entire world.

--the conquering of Canaan changed the course of history and laid the groundwork for the ministry of Christ and even the launch of the church that would serve as a messenger to bring the message of salvation in Christ to the entire world.

--Revelation 12:1-5 provides an overview perspective on Israel's special purpose of bringing Christ into the world...

--Revelation 12:1-6: "Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. [Israel is often depicted as a woman] 2 Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. [*the birthpains of Israel bringing Christ into the world*] 3 And another sign appeared in heaven: [*then the picture takes a shocking turn*] behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. 4 His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. [*this is clearly a picture of Satan who took a third of the angels in heaven with him during his fall*] And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. 5 She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne."

--throughout history Satan has repeatedly tried to destroy Israel and the Messianic line to prevent Christ from being brought into the world through Israel, and once Christ was born Satan tried to prevent Christ from completing His ministry. Major examples:

- Pharaoh's attempt to kill all Hebrew male babies
- Haman's plot to have all Jews in the Persian empire killed
- Israel's numerous wars throughout history
- Herod's mass murder of Hebrew male babies
- Satan's temptation of Christ during His 40 days in the wilderness
- Judas' betrayal of Christ – John 13:27: "As soon as Judas took the bread [*at the last supper*], Satan entered into him..."

--and so it is in our lives... Satan tries to prevent Christ from being born in people, and once people are saved Satan tries to prevent Christ from being formed in them – to prevent Christ completing His ministry of sanctification in people!

--we are in the midst of an age-old spiritual war!

--at times an intense battle rages and we lose ground, but by the power of the Holy Spirit we regain our footing and continue to press on.

- just as Satan failed to derail Christ's ministry on the earth so Satan will fail to derail Christ's ministry in us because "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world." (1 John 4:4)
- James 4:7-8: "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."
- Mark 14:38: Jesus said, "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."