

The Bible From 20,000 Feet Part 26 Joshua 10:28 –24:33

Tuesday Night Bible Study, May 26, 2009

--OUTLINE:

- HOW ISRAEL FELL SHORT IN THEIR CONQUEST OF THE PROMISE LAND
- THE DANGER OF FALLING SHORT IN OUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY
- THE SAFETY NET IN OUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

--HOW ISRAEL FELL SHORT IN THEIR CONQUEST OF CANAAN...

--after Israel's initial mistakes in their military campaign through the central region of Canaan, they picked up speed and plowed through the southern and northern regions like an unstoppable freight train!
--they were victorious "because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel..." (Joshua 10:42)

--Joshua 13:1: "Now Joshua was old, advanced in years. And the Lord said to him: **You are old, advanced in years, and there remains very much land yet to be possessed.** This is the land that remains..."

--maybe Israel would have been further along at this point if they had avoided the mistakes they made at the beginning of the conquest of Canaan, but the land that God intended for them to inherit was still within reach at this point.

--after listing the areas yet to be conquered, God commanded Joshua to divide the unconquered land among the tribes of Israel along with the land that they had already conquered.

--from this point forward further conquest would be on a smaller scale with individual tribes limiting their military campaigns to the land specifically given to them rather than the entire nation fighting together.

--in the middle of the process of dividing the land, complacency appears to set in among the tribes, causing Joshua to say, "How long will you neglect to go and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers has given you?" (Joshua 18:3)

--some tribes drive out pockets of Canaanites still living in their inherited land while others failed to drive them out. Examples:

--Caleb once again is an example of faith and leads a portion of his tribe in the final conquest of the land of Hebron that Moses promised to him because of his faith when Israel first reached the Promise Land 40+ years earlier. (Joshua 14:6-15)

--the tribe of Dan also had further victory..."the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem and took it; and they struck it with the edge of the sword, took possession of it, and dwelt in it." (Joshua 19:47)

--tribe of Ephraim failed to drive out all the Canaanites... "And they did not drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites to this day and have become forced laborers." (Joshua 16:10)

--Judah failed to completely conquer Jerusalem... "As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem to this day." (Joshua 15:63)

--to better understand where Israel is at the end of Joshua and how far they fell short of God's ideal we need to look at God's previous statements to Abraham, Moses, and Joshua about Israel's inheritance of the Promise Land.

--Genesis 15:18-21: "...the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: 'To your descendants I have given this land, **from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates** — 19 the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, 20 the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, 21 the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.'" (God reiterated for Joshua the same boundaries reaching all the way to the Euphrates river – Joshua 1:2-4)

--this land was promised at the end of ceremony which signified that fulfillment of this covenant was totally dependent on God's performance and not Abraham's.

--Exodus 23:27-32: "I will send My fear before you, I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come, and will make all your enemies turn their backs to you. 28 And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before you. 29 I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you. 30 **Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased, and you inherit the land.** 31 And I will set your bounds from the Red Sea to the sea, Philistia, and from the desert to the River. For I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out before you."

--so the conquest under Joshua was really meant to be the first step in a gradual process occupying the Promise Land

--the "very much land yet to be possessed" (13:1) referred only to the portion of the land that God planned for them to occupy at that point in time.

--as we will see, Israel's progress goes from bad to worse as they never even get close at any point in their history to reaching the far border of the Euphrates River.

--after the expansion under King David, Israel grew weaker and rather than expand began to shrink until they were completely destroyed as a nation in 586 BC with only a small population surviving as prisoners in Babylon!

--the book of Joshua ends with Israel vowing to follow the Lord and Joshua's final address before he died in which he warned about the consequence of living in sin... "You have seen all that the LORD your God has done to all these nations because of you, for the LORD your God is He who has fought for you.... 6 Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left, 7 and lest you go among these nations, these who remain among you. ... 8 but you shall hold fast to the LORD your God, as you have done to this day. 9 For the LORD has driven out from before you great and strong nations; but as for you, no one has been able to stand against you to this day. 10 One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the LORD your God is He who fights for you, as He promised you. 11 Therefore take careful heed to yourselves, that you love the LORD your God. 12 Or else, if indeed you do go back, and cling to the remnant of these nations — these that remain among you — and make marriages with them, and go in to them and they to you, 13 know for certain that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations from before you. But they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the LORD your God has given you...." (Joshua 23:3-13)

--THE DANGER OF FALLING SHORT IN OUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

--could Joshua's words to Israel be said to many Christians? "How long will you neglect to go and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers has given you?" (Joshua 18:3)

--how many Christians start off great and then hit a plateau of complacency!?

--when we were first saved there were initial changes in our lives, like Israel's initial conquest of Canaan under Joshua's leadership, but then it's easy to let old bad habits and patterns of sin remain.

--growing in the love of Christ...

--the key to progressing in the Christian life is not focusing on what we do but rather focusing on who we serve...the Christian life can be reduced to simply growing in our relationship with Christ!

--we have been brought into an incredible relationship with the Creator of the Universe, therefore we need to pursue that relationship and invest in that relationship just like people invest in human relationships, such as marriage.

--in a very real sense we are "married" to Christ (Romans 7:4, Revelation 21:9)

--God doesn't want us to focus on following a bunch of rules, but rather He wants us to seek Him first and experience His love for us...and as we experience His love for us **we are**

transformed from the inside out to love others with a sacrificial, supernatural love!

--1 John 3:16: "By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren..."

--Galatians 5:13-14: "For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

--the more we grow in the love of Christ and are motivated by his love, the less underlying fear there is in our lives... "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear..." (1 John 4:18)

--Romans 7:4: "Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another — to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God..."

--Ephesian prayers for spiritual growth...

--Ephesians 3:14-21: "For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to **be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man**, 17 that **Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith**; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to **comprehend with all the saints** what is the width and length and depth and height — 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; **that you may be filled with all the fullness of God**. 20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."

--Ephesians 1:15-20: "Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you **the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him**, 18 **the eyes of your understanding being enlightened**; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is **the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe**, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead..."

--THE SAFETY NET IN OUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

--in the Christian life we can never reach the point where we have made too many mistakes and God gives up on us...

--we can suffer extreme chastening (Hebrews 12:5-6), which should be a source of healthy fear, but no matter how bad we mess up the hope of heaven is always a source of strength to get back on our feet!

--we have been "sealed" (Ephesians 1:13) with the Holy Spirit and once He enters our life He never leaves...

--it is a profound truth that He doesn't come and go in our lives, but rather we are "married" to Him! (Romans 7:4)

--in the New King James translation the word "guarantee" is only used 3 times in the entire Bible and all three times it refers to the Holy Spirit being the guarantee of our salvation!

--we can always look to the future with great anticipation for all that the Lord wants to do in our lives!

--and we can always look forward to heaven... **"we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness [in our glorified bodies in heaven] by faith."** (Galatians 5:5)

--1 Peter 1:13: "Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and **rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ** [*His second coming*]..."

--it is the same for Israel as a nation... no matter how much they mess up, as they have done repeatedly, God will be faithful to complete the work He began in Israel, and one day when Christ returns and reigns during the Millennial Kingdom, Israel will experience peace in the Promise Land as God originally intended!

--Israel's rebirth as a sovereign nation in 1948 (after an unprecedented 2500 years without national sovereignty) is a powerful sign that God has not forsaken Israel and that His plan for them is not yet finished!

--the Millennial Kingdom is summarized in Revelation 20:4-6

--misc passages that talk about Israel's regathering to the Promise Land: Ezekiel 34:12, 36:22-24, 36:34-35, 37:1-28; Zechariah 7:14; Jeremiah 16:14-15, 23:7-8, 33:7; Ezekiel 34:12.

--Arnold Fruchtenbaum, a Christian Jewish Scholar, in his book *The Footsteps of The Messiah*, masterfully explains all Scripture in the Bible that gives us a picture of the Millennial Kingdom and Israel's place there.